

# URGENT ACTION

## TEACHER CONVICTED OF DEFAMATION FOR FACEBOOK POSTS

On 17 March, the Criminal Court of Mananjary sentenced human rights defender and secondary school teacher Jeannot Randriamanana to two years imprisonment after convicting him of charges of “defamation and humiliation of members of Parliament and public servants and identity fraud”. Throughout February 2022, Jeannot Randriamanana exposed on his social media the local authorities’ alleged embezzlement of humanitarian aid for the populations impacted by cyclones, Batsirai and Emnati, that hit Madagascar on 5 and 23 February respectively. The Appeal Court is due to rule on the appeal on 10 May.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

**Minister of Justice**

François Rakotozafy  
43 Rue Joel Rakotomolala Faravohitra  
Antananarivo  
Madagascar  
Email: [spminjus@yahoo.fr](mailto:spminjus@yahoo.fr) or;  
[doleancesminjus@gmail.com](mailto:doleancesminjus@gmail.com)

Dear Minister François Rakotozafy,

I am writing to bring to your attention the case of **Jeannot Randriamanana**, a human rights defender and public-school teacher in Madagascar’s center eastern coastal city of Mananjary.

On 17 March, the Criminal Court of Mananjary sentenced Jeannot Randriamanana to two years of imprisonment for “defamation and humiliation of members of Parliament and public servants” (under article 20 of the 2014 Law 2014-006) and identity fraud (article 258 of the Penal Code). He was convicted solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression in denouncing, in February on his social media, the alleged mismanagement and embezzlement by public authorities of humanitarian aid for the population impacted by cyclones, Batsirai and Emnati in the district of Nosy Varika. The cyclones Batsirai and Emnati hit Madagascar on 5 and 23 February, respectively.

On 2 March, the Public Prosecutor presented charges against Jeannot, and, since then, he has been detained in the Maison Centrale de Mananjary.

On 21 March, Jeannot Randriamanana’s lawyers filed an appeal against his sentence. The Court of Appeal of Fianarantsoa will rule on the appeal on 10 May 2022.

***In light of the above, I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Jeannot Randriamanana, quash the verdict against him and drop all charges against him as he is being detained solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of information. I also urge you to ensure that Malagasy human rights defenders and whistle-blowers are not detained under trumped-up charges for exposing and denouncing cases of corruption, and to accelerate the process of adopting the law on the protection of human rights defenders and activists, including whistle-blowers.***

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Jeannot Randriamanana is a 38-year-old public secondary school teacher living and working in Mananjary, in the region of Vatovavy, in the center east of Madagascar. He is a father of four children aged 18, 14, 9 and 4 years old. In addition to his work as a public schoolteacher, he also works as a communication officer for the local branch of the NGO, *Independent Observatory of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Madagascar* (Observatoire Indépendant des Droits Economiques, Sociaux et Culturels à Madagascar - OIDESCM). He is passionate about human rights, mainly concerned with the right to information and good governance. He has been posting on his social media about the poor state of school infrastructure in the district of Nosy Varika since December 2021. In December 2021, he exposed that he had been targeted for harassment and intimidation for denouncing cases of corruption on his social media account. Jeannot mentioned that he has received threatening messages on his Facebook from anonymous profiles.

[Cyclones Batsirai and Emnati](#) hit Madagascar on 5 and 23 February 2022. They resulted in landfalls in the districts of Nosy Varika and Mananjary, prompting a global call for international humanitarian aid. At the end of February 2022, Jeannot Randriamanana, started to denounce on social media that the local population had not received any of the humanitarian aid promised by the local authorities.

On 2 March, the Public Prosecutor brought charges against Jeannot Randriamanana for defamation and humiliation of members of Parliament and public servants and identity fraud. He was also charged with fraudulent use of the function of a journalist (identity fraud), solely for having shared information on his social media, as he never claimed to be a journalist. Jeannot was arrested on the same day.

Since his arrest, Jeannot Randriamanana's wife and children have lost the sole income earner of their family and have been living off loans and support from family and friends.

### **PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French, English**

You can also write in your own language.

### **PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 28 June 2022**

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PRONOUN: Jeannot Randriamanana (he/him)**

## ADDITIONAL TARGET

Dr Thomas John Bisika  
Embassy of the Republic of Madagascar  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, One Knightsbridge Green SW1X 7NE  
ambamad.contact@madagascarembassy.org.uk