

## A STATEMENT

**“Repeal the Government decision ultimately aimed at dictatorship”**

**Stop using the health emergency to justify silencing opponents. It only results in weakening the responses to the Covid-19 epidemics, as well as undermining democracy, the foundation of power and government in Madagascar.**

In view of the Government decision forbidding the airing of all programmes and discussions, whether political, economic or social on the medias during the health emergency enforced in five of the regions in the Republic of Madagascar, the Order of Journalists and civil society organisations, the signatories of this statement, feel that **the rights of citizens to express their opinions and get information, as well as the rights of the medias to freely express opinions and publish information, are seriously threatened.**

Those are fundamental rights which are enshrined and made mandatory in Articles 10 and 11 of the Malagasy Constitution. They are also contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which Madagascar is party:

“Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;”

“Article 19 Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

**Therefore, we demand that the decision be repelled immediately, the medias be free to do their work, and the citizens to express their opinions.**

Multiple sources of information, propositions, criticism and discussion are the means through which the government, as well as all the actors and citizens, are enabled to take decisions and put on more responsible behaviours in their responses to the Covid epidemics.

It should be emphasized that we are now facing a situation of health emergency, not of civil or political unrest. Consequently, the political and economic activities of the nation should be carried out smoothly, along with the fight against the epidemics, while scrupulously observing the law and the health emergency measures.

**The power in the hands of the Executive**, which is intended to lead the organization and implementation of the Covid-19 response, **SHOULD BY NO MEANS be used to silence dissenters or kill democracy in Madagascar.**

We are calling on the following institutions and international NGOs **to take action and immediately condemn that treacherous decision:**

- The citizens of this country;
- All the national actors;
- The private sector, particularly those working in the medias
- The trade unions;
- The Churches, in particular FFKM
- The traditional leaders;
- The leaders and members of all political parties;
- The institutions working in the defence of human rights and the rule of law (CNIDH, HCDDDED);
- The judicial institutions (the *Conseil d'Etat*, the High Constitutional Court), the law making institutions (the Senate and the National Assembly), the Human Rights institutions and NGOs (the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, CIVICUS, Frontline Defenders, Reporters Sans Frontières, etc.) as well as the international partners represented in Madagascar (the African Union, SADC, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund,

the United Nations System, the European Union, France, Germany, Switzerland, the USA, South Africa, Russia, China, Norway, United Kingdom, etc..

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Signatories of this statement include:

Ordre des Journalistes de Madagascar (OJM)	Observatoire de la Jeunesse
Alliance Voahary Gasy (AVG)	Observatoire des élections SAFIDY
Centre d'Echange et de Documentation Inter-Institutionnel (CEDII)	ONG AIM
Coalition des radios de Madagascar	ONG FIANTSO
Coalition Nationale de Plaidoyer Environnemental (CNPE)	ONG HITSY
Collectif des Citoyens et des Organisations Citoyennes (CCOC)	ONG IVORARY
Conseil national des femmes de madagascar (CNFM)	ONG LALANA
Dinika sy Rindran'ny Vehivavy (DRV)	ONG RAVINTSARA
Fikambanan'ny Tanora Miaro ny Fahamarinana (FTMF)	ONG SAF/FJKM
Gny To Tsy mba Zainy (GTZ)	ONG SAHA
ILONTSERA	ONG TOLOTSOA
JAI Association	PACA
KMF/CNOE-Fanabeazana Olompirenena	Plateforme des Fédérations des Personnes Handicapées (PFPH)
Liberty 32	Plateforme Nationale des OSC de Madagascar (PFNOSCM/Vohifiraisana)
Mouvement pour l'Education pour tous (MonEPT)	Sehatra Iombonana ho an'ny Fananan-tany (SIF)
Mouvement ROHY	TAFO MIHAAVO
MSIS-TATAO	Transparency International – Initiative Madagascar (TI-MG)
	Young Men/Women Christian Association (YMCA)