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Madagascar: Human Rights Defender Thomas Razafindremaka sentenced to two years in prison

On 21 November 2023, human rights defender **Thomas Razafindremaka** was sentenced to two years in prison and a 100 000 ariary fine by the Antananarivo Criminal Court for fraud and usurpation of title.

[Thomas Razafindremaka](#) is a human rights defender fighting against corruption in the Ihorombe region of Madagascar. He is the president of "Gny To tsy mba Zainy" (GTZ) and leader of the human rights commission of Rohy Madagasikara, organisations fighting against corruption, and promoting the rule of law and good governance. He is also a member of the Ihorombe Regional Civil Society Organisations Platform (Pfnoscm Madagascar).

On 21 November 2023, human rights defender Thomas Razafindremaka was sentenced to two years in prison for fraud and usurpation of title. This is an intimidation strategy that has been denounced by grassroots organisations in Madagascar, who have demanded that authorities drop all charges against the human rights defender. Civil society organisations see this case as an example of the retaliation faced by those who call out corruption and are taking the opportunity to stress once again the need for legislators to adopt new laws in protection of whistle-blowers.

The human right defender Thomas Razafindremaka has been the subject of excessive judicial harassment since the beginning of September 2023 for exercising his right to freedom of expression to call for accountability and report corruption within the government.

[On 16 February 2020](#), Thomas Razafindremaka was previously arrested and detained under similar charges of usurpation of office and fraud after filing a complaint against the President of the District Electoral Commission, and the deputy candidate of Ihosy, concerning alleged corruption during the legislative elections of 27 May 2019.

Front Line Defenders expresses its concern for the safety of human rights defenders in Madagascar, acknowledging that all human rights defenders should be able to carry out their work freely and safely without fear of harassment, threats, or restrictions. It also expresses its concerns at the targeting of human rights defender Thomas Razafindremaka as it considers these recent acts of judicial harassment against him to be in retaliation to his legitimate work in defence of human rights. The organisation also calls on the Madagascar authorities to review the decision of the Antananarivo Criminal Court and to drop all charges against human rights defender Thomas Razafindremaka.