



SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Enabling Environment

Snapshot

Madagascar

June 2026

Context

Period covered by the report: January–June 2026

In September 2025, following [protests](#) led by the Generation Z citizens' movement – initially sparked by difficulties in accessing basic services, particularly water and electricity – and after the fall of Andry Rajoelina's regime, Madagascar entered a transitional phase. [Colonel Michaël Randrianirina](#) seized power, establishing a regime known as the 'refoundation'. The refoundation regime envisages a transitional period focused on [institutional reform and the redefinition](#) of relations between citizens and the public authorities.

Against this backdrop, the political landscape remains in a state of flux. The Generation Z movement has gradually contributed to a more visible expansion [of freedom](#) **Error! Bookmark not defined.** [of expression and](#) civic [participation](#), notably through public [debates](#), social mobilisation and the use of digital platforms by the younger generation. However, several human rights organisations continue to report persistent irregularities in the exercise of civil liberties, notably the erosion of the right to [demonstrate and express one's opinions](#), as well as the independence of institutions.

Since January 2026, a number of significant political developments have taken place. In March 2026, the first government of the Refoundation regime was [dismissed](#). A new Prime Minister, Rajaonarison Mamitiana Jeannot Ruffin, was appointed on 15 March. As early as 17 March, the new head of government signed an [order lifting the restrictive measures](#) imposed on civil servants since the regime came to power.

Furthermore, the regime's gradual hardening led, in April 2026, to the arrest of [Colonel Dr Patrick Rakotomamonjy](#), a former high-ranking officer who was imprisoned at the Tsiafahy detention centre for attempted coup and destabilisation. The former interim president, [General Richard Ravalomanana](#), was also arrested at his home under an arrest warrant and subsequently placed in pre-trial detention at Imerintsiatosika prison.

The Refoundation regime also launched a wide-ranging judicial offensive targeting former supporters of the ousted regime. Carried out with the support of the Minister of Justice, [Fanirisoa Ernaivo](#), this crackdown led to the imprisonment of key figures from the former regime: the former director of presidential communications, [Rinah Rakotomanga](#), was arrested on charges of corruption and embezzlement; and in May 2026, [Naivo Raholdina](#), an influential MP from the former ruling party, was arrested in the middle of the night at his home, a few hours after his return from abroad. It is within this sensitive political context, marked by a crackdown that is both targeted and selective, that civil society actors are operating.

1. Respect for and protection of fundamental freedoms for civil society

Articles 10, 13 and 14 of the [Malagasy Constitution](#) guarantee the freedoms of expression, association and assembly, as well as the right to participate in public and political life without discrimination. However, the effectiveness of these protections remains severely compromised, as civil society actors continue to be subjected to violations.

Although the legislative provisions governing civil society provide a climate of freedom, this freedom is not absolute, as it is subject to restrictions that may threaten civil society organisations or act as an obstacle. These include the requirement to comply with the demands of public order and security, public morality or national unity; failure to do so may result in their existence being deemed null and void (Article 4 of [Ordinance No. 75-017](#) of 13 August 1975 and Article 3 of [Law No. 96-030](#) of 14 August 1997).

Between January and May 2026, these restrictive clauses relating to public order and national security ceased to serve merely as legal limitations and were instead used by the authorities as tools of censorship. Prefects and regional governors rely disproportionately on these decrees to ban gatherings or arrest demonstrators. This was documented in the [Deep South](#) in February 2026.

Critical voices continue to be treated as disruptive elements, forcing human rights defenders to operate in a threatening environment. Following a call to demonstrate in April 2026, four members of Génération Z, including one of their leaders, as well as the activists [Herizo Andriamanantena](#), [Miora Rakotomalala](#), [Dina Randrianarisoa](#) and [Nomena Ratsihorimanana](#), were [brutally arrested](#) by the Antananarivo Criminal Investigation Brigade. Defence lawyers and certain international organisations, such as [Amnesty International](#) and [the Human Rights Foundation](#), have strongly condemned the raid carried out by hooded men in unmarked vehicles, as well as the allegations of ill-treatment. The Gen Z 261 movement has also reported the arrest of two further activists in the days that followed, including Dr Carine and Rija.

These arrests have raised serious [concerns](#) within [civil society](#). [Ketakandriana Rafitoson](#), a board member of Transparency International Madagascar, stated that they reflected a pattern already observed under the previous administration, which many had hoped would be broken with the transition. The presidential spokesperson, [Harry Laurent Rahajason](#), for his part, asserted that decisions regarding law and order were a matter for the police and not for the presidency. [Todisoa](#), a founding member of Gen Z 261, denounced the return to authoritarian practices, stating: “We were supposed to be experiencing a revolution; instead, we have returned to dictatorship with a new face.”

Overall, the extractive sector remains one of the [critical sectors](#) within the landscape of Malagasy civil society. The sector is associated with a climate characterised by [heightened security vigilance](#). In the [Anosy](#) and [Atsimo-Andrefana](#) regions, citizen and environmental movements denouncing corruption and the devastating impacts of natural resource

exploitation continue to operate against a backdrop of tensions between communities, mining companies and public authorities. Leaders of local communities and CSOs who oppose strategic mining projects, such as the Vara Mada and QMM projects, remain vigilant regarding the impacts of these activities on their communities.

Despite the official resumption of [consultations](#) from 17 to 19 February 2026 on a draft law on the protection of whistleblowers, organised by the Ministry of Justice and the Anti-Corruption System (SAC) with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the operating environment remains characterised by profound [legal uncertainty](#). The persistent absence of a comprehensive and enforceable framework for the protection of whistleblowers undermines the exercise of fundamental freedoms by civil society actors, journalists and anti-corruption advocates, in particular the freedoms of expression, association and access to information. In practice, the lack of legal safeguards contributes to self-censorship, discourages the reporting of cases of corruption and abuse, and undermines civic participation and efforts to ensure public accountability.

2. Supportive legal and regulatory framework

Under the legislation currently in force in Madagascar, the associations, NGOs, foundations and cooperatives that make up civil society enjoy legal protection which defines and guarantees their establishment, their mode of operation, and their rights and obligations. These texts remain the only ones applicable to date. They comprise the 2010 Malagasy [Constitution](#), in Articles 10 et seq.; [Ordinance No. 60-133](#) of 3 October 1960 on the general regime governing associations, as amended by [Ordinance No. 75-017](#) of 13 August 1975; [Ordinance No. 62-117](#) of 1 October 1962 on the regulation of religious worship, and [Act No. 2003-030](#) of 19 August 2004 on the regulation of religious denominations, [Act No. 96-030](#) of 14 August 1997 on the special regime for NGOs in Madagascar and its [implementing decree No. 98-711](#) of 2 September 1998, as well as [Act No. 2004-014](#) of 19 August 2004 on the regulation of foundations in Madagascar and [Act No. 99-004](#) of 25 March 1999 on cooperatives.

In any event, the freedom of association guaranteed by the Constitution is the cornerstone of civil society organisations, whatever form they may take. Furthermore, for associations (Article 6) and NGOs (Article 37) (with the exception of those recognised as being in the public interest), their independence from the State – ensured by the prohibition on the State subsidising their activities – is a key factor in their effective functioning.

To date, no new legislation directly restricting the registration of CSOs or their foreign funding has been adopted under the 'Refondation' regime. However, the extensive use of provisions relating to national security (see section 1), [administrative delays, obstructions and](#) various forms of [informal pressure](#) create a deterrent effect that hampers the activities of critical organisations.

A legal reform [programme](#) on an unprecedented scale is now under way, centred on three complementary pieces of legislation: the revision of [Law No. 2016–029](#) on the Code of Media Communication; the recasting of [Law No. 2014–006](#) on combating cybercrime, in particular Article 20 thereof; and the long-awaited adoption of the Law on Access to Public Information (LAICP). The project was officially [launched](#) on 18 February 2026 under the leadership of the Ministry of Communication and Culture, with the support of UNESCO, the OHCHR and the UNDP as part of the Rary Aro Madagascar II project. The process aims to bring Madagascar’s legal framework into line with international standards on freedom of expression, to decriminalise online expression offences, to redefine more precisely the concepts of insult and defamation, and to strengthen the independence of the National Regulatory Authority for Media Communications (ANRCM).

If these reforms are successful, their impact would be substantial. A clearly defined redefinition of digital insults and defamation would directly reduce the risk of Article 20 being misused against organisations that document, expose or challenge the authorities online. The adoption of the LAICP, which CSOs have been calling for for twenty years, would, for its part, provide a structural lever: by imposing a duty of disclosure on public authorities, it would reduce the grey area between legitimate secrecy and arbitrary concealment, thereby facilitating advocacy, monitoring and citizen oversight. Finally, independent media regulation would create an environment in which CSOs producing digital content would be less exposed to discretionary blocking or suspension decisions.

These potential advances, however, raise several points for concern. The [blocking](#) of the LAICP in the National Assembly in May 2026 illustrates the persistent gap between stated political will and effective legislative implementation – a gap that CSOs have been observing for two decades. Furthermore, the very same government championing these reforms announced, in January 2026, legal proceedings (detailed in section 6) against internet users on the basis of the very provisions targeted by the revision, creating a direct tension between reformist rhetoric and ongoing repressive practices. The final content of the legislation, as well as its effective implementation, will be the true indicators of the quality of the environment that this transition aims to build.

3. Accessible and sustainable resources

Access to funding by Malagasy civil society actors is not subject to any formal restrictions in the fundamental legislation. They are eligible for global funding. Furthermore, under the Refoundation regime, effective access to these resources has become considerably more difficult on the ground, following a radical shift in international priorities. Global funding allocations were massively redirected towards emergency aid, security and natural resource management during the first half of 2026. However, this cannot be presented as the sole cause of the deterioration in the funding environment for CSOs; it is nonetheless a significant factor, insofar as the security crackdown on civic space, the politicisation of critical actors and the

emphasis on sovereignty in the management of external partnerships all contribute to restricting effective access to resources.

With regard to the Green Climate Fund: any civil society organisation applying for funding must undergo approval procedures before gaining access to it. In addition to the need to demonstrate that the actions undertaken are [aligned](#) with national policies, a submission to the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) is required, as [the National Designated Authority](#) (NDA) for the Green Climate Fund is hosted by the MEDD.

In all cases, CSOs' almost exclusive reliance on international funding undermines their autonomy and their ability to ensure the long-term sustainability of their actions, independently of donors' priorities.

The state often receives funding through international aid, for example the [Integrated Financing Strategy](#) presented in collaboration with the UNDP, whilst independent organisations have little access to stable funding. In some cases, CSOs are mobilised to carry out activities on the ground on behalf of the state or donors, without this leading to a strengthening of their own organisational capacity, thereby creating a functional dependency rather than a balanced partnership. Consequently, this unbalanced financial system reduces the autonomy of civil society actors and weakens their independent role as a counterbalance to power.

4. Open and responsive state

Madagascar does not yet have a law on access to public information. This legal vacuum, which civil society has been [criticising](#) for over twenty years, is one of the main obstacles to transparency and accountability in public action. As [CSOs](#) have [emphasised](#), the absence of a clear legal framework blurs the line between confidential documents and information of public interest, opening the door to arbitrary practices and forms of intimidation.

The draft law on access to public information (LAICP), adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2025 following a series of [regional consultations](#), reached a decisive milestone in 2026. On 8 May 2026, the National Assembly's Communications Committee officially involved Transparency International Initiative Madagascar and civil society organisations in the joint review of the bill – a [historic first](#) for the country. A plenary session was scheduled for 18 May to examine the bill. However, according to Madagascar-Tribune, the session was ultimately postponed, highlighting the [sensitive](#) nature of this draft law, which delaying tactics have held up for two decades. Civil society remains mobilised in support of its adoption, but vigilance is required regarding the possibility of a [text stripped](#) of the provisions most restrictive for the administration.

In response to criticism regarding the stifling of civic space over the past thirteen years or so, the Refoundation regime has demonstrated a willingness to engage by institutionalising inclusive forums for dialogue with civil society. This initiative took shape on 22 January 2026 at the State Palace in Iavoloha with the establishment of the steering committee for the

National Consultation on Refoundation, chaired directly by the Head of State, Colonel Michaël Randrianirina, followed by the installation of a suggestion box open to the public within the Ministry of State for Reconstruction to ensure the transparency of the process.

14 April marked the official launch of the [National Youth Consultation for Rebuilding](#), in collaboration with the [Ministry](#) of Youth and Sport. This process is structured to gather contributions from grassroots organisations, movements such as Gen Z, and CSOs at municipal and district levels.

The United Nations [Resident Coordinator](#) praised this initiative in his speech on the day of the official launch. Several [CSOs](#) welcomed the launch of a national consultation process whilst expressing concerns regarding the clarity of the framework, the coordination of initiatives and guarantees of the inclusivity and independence of the process. The strongest criticism came from the Gen Z movement, which denounced a climate of intimidation against activists and expressed reservations about the conditions under which the process was being conducted.

More generally, the government is moving towards greater openness and inclusion, particularly with regard to young people and women, as symbolised by the [Mahasaky](#) summit and the signing of a 'Pact for the Next Generation'. Citizen participation initiatives specifically aimed at young people are becoming more visible.

This responsiveness on the part of the government has also taken the form of sector-specific workshops on collaborative legislative and environmental policy-making. The Ministry of the Environment (MEDD) brought together more than 180 representatives of civil society, experts and government departments at the national workshop held in March 2026 to draft the [Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\) 3.0](#). This workshop laid the foundations for a collaborative, inclusive and coherent process to update NDC 3.0, in line with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement. At the same time, the specific contributions of each stakeholder were consolidated into strategic priorities by sector, such as the emphasis placed on agricultural practices consistent with the government's commitments and contextualised by the [Ministry](#) of Agriculture and Livestock.

5. Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society

In Madagascar, civil society is often perceived by the government as the mouthpiece of the opposition, which hinders fruitful collaboration. However, changes are gradually taking place.

Overall, civil society plays a crucial role on the political stage, through public discourse and political debates. This central role has become even more pronounced as CSOs and citizens' groups have become the [main forums for debate](#) following the [temporary closure](#) of traditional political channels. Public discourse in Madagascar is characterised by a striking duality: on the one hand, civic actors denounce a [shift](#) towards security-focused policies and the

systematic use of accusations of destabilisation; on the other hand, the state apparatus incorporates the [participation](#) of CSOs into its official rhetoric to legitimise its reforms.

This tension is particularly evident in the treatment meted out to Generation Z activists. Their arrest in April 2026 on charges of ‘criminal conspiracy, threats to national security and destabilisation of the state’ illustrates a growing discourse of stigmatisation towards civil society: attaching a negative stigma to activists and civil society actors, labelling them as enemies or a threat, without any genuinely valid grounds, in order to justify repressing them. Amnesty International has condemned the deliberate use of these ‘[deliberately](#) vague’ charges to silence civic actors. This reliance on security-related charges against representatives of civil society helps to perpetuate a climate of intimidation and to restrict the space for peaceful protest.

This role as a safeguard was thus strengthened during the first half of 2026, as coalitions of CSOs and human rights groups organised numerous [open forums](#) to alert the national public to the security crackdown, thereby keeping the debate on civic space at the centre of the political agenda. This public recognition is reflected in their [direct involvement](#) in national consultative bodies led by the Steering Committee for Reconstruction or in legislative review workshops at the National Assembly, thereby keeping civil society at the heart of the contemporary political culture of the Big Island.

Minority groups, disability, and gender are also criteria taken into account in inclusion efforts, particularly as the requirements of technical and financial partners point in this direction. This commitment to inclusion has taken concrete form through the Ministry of Youth and Sport’s launch of consultations with young people, providing a political platform for emerging movements in the districts, whilst capacity-building projects led by independent organisations such as the ‘[MANEHOA](#)’ (‘Speak out!’) initiative enable young activists and minorities to take ownership of digital security tools, thereby consolidating their place in public discourse.

6. Access to a secure digital environment

Access to a free and secure digital space remains essential to the functioning of Malagasy civil society. Governance of this space is strictly regulated by the executive, which has [announced](#) its intention to crack down firmly on offences relating to freedom of expression and defamation. Whilst the presidential [communiqué](#) of 8 January 2026 did not elicit a direct public reaction from CSOs, their fundamental [position](#) is clear and long-standing: Article 20 of [Law No. 2014-006](#) on cybercrime, the legal basis for these prosecutions, has been regarded since 2014 as a potential tool for suppressing freedom of expression.

This announced tightening of regulation in the digital civic sphere is prompting CSOs to urge their members to be more vigilant in legal matters. The main challenge for civil society actors is to manage the legal uncertainty surrounding the interpretation of digital offences, which is prompting human rights defenders to adopt, as a precautionary measure, best practices in data security and measures aimed at protecting the confidentiality of their correspondence.

However, new opportunities are emerging for the institutional embedding of data security in the service of civil society. The most significant development remains the operational launch of the new [Malagasy Commission for Information Technology and Civil Liberties](#) (CMIL) in March 2026. This development provides an official regulatory body to enforce the law on personal data protection, thereby limiting the risks of misuse of digital records and arbitrary surveillance by third parties. Furthermore, the Ministry of Digital Development, Posts and Telecommunications (MNDPT) has officially involved civil society organisations in the collective process [of drafting](#) the future National Cybersecurity Strategy, ensuring that cyber-resilience and the protection of online users' rights are developed in collaboration with the voluntary sector. The convergence of these initiatives provides a coherent framework for a safer digital environment for civil society actors, although its implementation remains contingent on effective political will.

Challenges and opportunities

Several areas for improvement are possible, although there is no certainty regarding the political will to implement them:

- Protection of civic space, in particular by guaranteeing freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, the right to demonstrate, and the participation of women and young people in civic life, whether political, social or economic. In May 2026, this implies the release of Generation Z activists and an end to night-time arrests in order to restore trust.
- Greater openness on the part of the government to enter into dialogue with civil society on issues relating to good governance, human rights, social justice, etc. To move beyond a dialogue that remains sporadic, contentious and without visible impact, the State must fulfil the promises of inclusivity made by its Steering Committee for Reconstruction by translating workshops into concrete policy decisions.
- The adoption and strict enforcement of protective legal frameworks to put an end to the prevailing legal uncertainty, in particular by finalising the draft whistleblower bill that has been initiated and by adopting the law on access to information currently under consideration in the National Assembly.

By emphasising greater collaboration between state actors, international partners and civil society organisations, as well as the simplification of administrative frameworks, civil society can play an even more decisive role in strengthening democracy. One way of improving its effectiveness is to build capacity in the areas of democracy and governance. This involves developing digital security programmes and secure systems for transmitting field data, modelled on the MANEHOA initiative, in order to protect local stakeholders from the risks associated with cybercrime.

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