

Madagascar : Court pushes back presidential election by one week

October 13, 2023

ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar: A court in Madagascar on Thursday ordered a one-week postponement of the island's election, scheduled to be held on November 9, a move that the incumbent President **Andry Rajoelina** has opposed.

The High Constitutional Court said: it had ordered the first round of the election be moved to Nov. 16 from Nov. 9. It maintained the second round election on Dec. 20.

Observers say that the postponement is to allow authorities to prepare after two candidates, of 13 candidates cleared to run in the election - **Andry Raobelina** and former President **Marc Ravalomanana**, were injured during protests when security forces fired tear gas grenades.

Soava Andriamarotafika , spokesperson for the Independent National Electoral Commission, said the postponement gave them more time to prepare for the vote.

"This one-week postponement lightens our workload and the pace a little for the first round. We should be able to breathe a little. But it is true that for the second round, we must pick up the pace a little," he said.

The Indian Ocean island is aiming for its third peaceful election after the 4th Republic was declared in 2010 under a new constitution. *(Please see the BACKGROUNDER at the end of this Report.)*



Presidential Candidate:
Andry Raobelina



Presidential Candidate:
Marc Ravalomanana

The two opposition candidates, **Andry Raobelina** and former President **Marc Ravalomanana**, were both injured during protests this month. Raobelina said he suffered an eye injury caused by a tear gas grenade last week. Ravalomanana sustained a leg injury in a protest last weekend which was also caused by a tear gas grenade, his party said.



Rajoelina, 49, resigned in early September after being confirmed as a candidate in the forthcoming poll, in line with Madagascar's constitution that requires a sitting head of state who wants to contest a presidential election to first step down. Rajoelina had won his first term in an election in 2018, when he beat Ravalomanana in a runoff.

Ravalomanana and other candidates have said that Rajoelina should be disqualified from the election because they claim he is not a Madagascar citizen, but Rajoelina insists that he's a citizen.

Risk management company Crisis24 says further protests and clashes are likely ahead of the election in the island nation of 28 million people.

The 11 candidates running against Rajoelina have been holding daily marches in the capital, which police have routinely dispersed using teargas. Marchers have been demanding changes to the officials running the election commission and for the formation of a special court to hear election disputes.

They also want Rajoelina to be disqualified from running on the grounds that he is not a Madagascan citizen, an accusation he has in the past dismissed.

----By Abel in Burundi

----BACKGROUND HISTORY OF THE 4TH REPUBLIC----

Opposition leader and then-**Mayor** of **Antananarivo** (the capital of **Madagascar**), **Andry Rajoelina**, led a movement in early 2009 against President **Marc Ravalomanana**'s authoritarianism and corruption. The President was pushed from power in an unconstitutional process widely condemned as a **coup d'état**.

In March 2009, **Andy Rajoelina** was declared by the Supreme Court as the **President** of the **High Transitional Authority**, an interim governing body responsible for moving the country toward presidential elections.

In 2010, a new constitution was adopted by referendum, establishing a **Fourth Republic**, which sustained the democratic, multi-party structure established in the previous constitution.

Hery Rajaonarimampianina was declared the winner of the 2013 presidential election, as the 1st duly elected President under the constitution of the 4th Republic.

In 2018 the first round of the presidential election was held on **7 November** and the second round was held on **10 December**. Three former presidents (**Andry Rajoelina** (2009-2014) was the President of the High Transitional Authority. In 2018, he was a candidate of the **Tanora malaGasy Vonona** (TGV) party. **Marc Ravalomanana** (2002-2009), President under the 3rd Republic was the candidate from **Tiako I Madagasikara** (TIM) party. **Didier Ratsiraka**: He served as President of Madagascar from 1975 to 1993 and again from 1997 to 2002. In 2018, he ran as a candidate for the **ARO-RIAKA** party.) and the most recent president (**Hery Rajaonarimampianina**) were the main candidates of the elections. **Hery Rajaonarimampianina** was the candidate of the *Hery Vaovao ho an'ny Madagasikara* (HVM) party.

In January 2019 the High Constitutional Court declared **Andry Rajoelina** as the winner of the elections and the new President. In June 2019 parliamentary elections the party of president Andry Rajoelina won absolute majority of the seats of the National Assembly. It received 84 seats and the supporters of former president Ravalomanana got only 16 seats of 151 seats of the National Assembly. 51 seats of deputies were independent or represented small parties. President Rajoelina could rule as a strongman.
