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Madagascar

Draft laws play hide-and-seek in Madagascar

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In Madagascar, parliamentary bills are kept secret until they are passed. Neither citizens nor MPs can debate texts that are sometimes crucial to the life of the country. In the face of this authoritarian closure, civil society organizations are denouncing an anti-democratic drift orchestrated by Rajoelina's government.

The opacity surrounding draft legislation, organized by the government, is part of a disastrous agenda for democracy on the Island. It seems almost Ubuesque, yet in Madagascar, bills are hidden from citizens. They are only informed once the laws have been passed. This practice applies not only to laws that could be described as minor, but to all bills, some of which have major consequences for the life of the country.

Express adoption

But if citizens are treated this way, it's not much better for MPs. Sometimes they have to vote on legislation that they only find out about the same day. For example, the law on the PAC (Anti-Corruption Pole) was passed in 24 hours. It removes financial and economic offences such as illegal acquisition of interests or embezzlement from the jurisdiction of judges, and prevents the confiscation of ill-gotten gains before conviction, thus making it possible to shelter undue fortunes in the event of an unfavourable judgement. It is easy to see that this practice imposed by Andry Rajoelina's government is not simply a matter of administrative inefficiency - which is also very real - but of political will. When citizens made public the draft electoral law produced by the Senate, they were charged with a criminal offence.

In contrast to the main political parties in the hands of millionaires, who are developing a clientelist policy to seize power and siphon off the resources of the State, civil society organizations, which are particularly strong and active, are demanding a minimum of transparency.

Democracy flouted

They point to the dangers of this opacity: the absence of debate in society, the weakening of checks and balances, and laws that are often ill-conceived, ineffective and difficult to enforce. For years, these organisations have been calling for legislation on the right to information, to formalise what is in the public domain and what is reserved for the state. Each time, different governments have made promises that they have never kept.

In a joint press release, the various organizations put forward their proposals: publication of the draft law, a mandatory consultation period, and a dedicated online platform for each law, at least the most important ones. Such measures would encourage broad debate. The government is seeking exactly the opposite. The absence of debate in the country and in the elected chambers effectively transforms laws into government ordinances or decrees, effectively merging the executive and legislative powers. As for the judiciary, it is under constant pressure from the authorities, to such an extent that in 2024, the spokesperson for the United Nations Office for Human Rights reminded us of the need for an independent judiciary.

Rajoelina is tending to install a dictatorship by stripping institutions of their prerogatives, following a trend that is

spreading throughout the world.

26 June 2025

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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