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Madagascar

Madagascar - victim of a past and present colonial policy

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP604 - May 2025 -

Publication date: Tuesday 27 May 2025

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Affirming France's presence in the Indian Ocean was the aim of French president Emmanuel Macron's trip to Madagascar on 23-24 April, 2025. The Grande Île is unique in that it is one of the poorest countries in the world, and is governed by billionaires who do not hesitate to provoke serious crises in order to gain power. The French president was received by Madagascar's president. Andry Rajoelina, a former disc jockey who has made a career in events management.

The truth about the 1947 massacres

The trip was marked by the signing of a financial agreement for the construction of the Volobe hydroelectric dam. France's state-owned energy company, EDF, will join the consortium with a contribution of around 200 million euros. Another announcement was the setting up of a joint commission of Malagasy and French historians to shed light on the colonial massacres perpetrated by the French authorities in 1947 to crush the population's insurrection. It is considered the precursor of the fight against colonialism in Africa. Figures vary between 40,000 and 100,000 deaths. This history is largely obscured in France.

Historians point out that the whereabouts of the archives of the Sûreté Nationale, as the colonial repression services were known at the time, are still unknown. On the other hand, this history remains ever present in the memory of the Malagasy people. Macron has spoken of "eminently painful pages" and considers that the commission of historians should help create the conditions for forgiveness. But how credible are his statements when his current policies perpetuate colonialism?

Restitution of the Éparses islands

Indeed, Macron rejects the restitution of the Éparses islands, which are geographically and historically part of Madagascar. A few weeks before its independence in 1960, De Gaulle had attached this archipelago to the French Overseas Ministry in order to keep it within the bosom of the hexagon.

Since then, the Malagasy people have continued to demand the return of what is rightly considered an integral part of their national territory. The French authorities talk of co-management. The latest proposal is to revitalize a commission created in 2019 that has only met once.

During his visit to France, Macron dismissed this request as "futile debates". The reality is quite different, however, as France's possession of the Éparses Islands provides it with almost 640,000 km² of exclusive economic zone, i.e. almost 6% of its maritime territory, in an area that is particularly rich not only in fish resources, but also in minerals, gas and oil. What's more, it also gives France a presence in the Mozambique Channel, a strategic waterway through which 30% of all oil transits.

So it's thanks to these crumbs of the former colonial empire that France continues to be the second country in the world with the largest maritime domain. A far cry from "futile debates"!

15 May 2025

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

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