



CRAAD-OI
Centre de Recherches et d'Appui pour les
Alternatives de Développement - Océan Indien

RSCDA-IO
Research and Support Center for
Development Alternatives - Indian Ocean



Base Toliara mining project : we demand the immediate release of the members of the Benetse, Ampototse and Tsiafanoka communities detained since May 2nd 2019

In spite of the numerous appeals from the undersigned civil society organisations, in support of the legitimate opposition from the local populations of the Toliara region affected by the Base Toliara mining project, the Malagasy authorities remain deaf to their distress in contempt of the principle of their free, prior and informed consent as well as the land rights afforded to them by law.

On May 2nd 2019, the State security forces have arrested 30 members of the Benetse, Ampototse and Tsiafanoka communities, accused of damaging the Base Toliara facilities in Ranobe while those facilities are located in the private domain of the State. These persons have been taken to Toliara by the State security forces.

At present, 21 of them have been released, whereas the other 09 community members are always detained and taken to another location.

Because of their appeal of 20th April 2019 to the President of the Republic and State authorities to make a decision that can demonstrate to the affected communities that their demands have been heard, and that their fundamental rights are respected, the civil society organisations CRAAD-OI/RSCDA-IO and TANY Collective must acknowledge with deep regret that the response to this appeal has essentially been the repression and violation of the rights of these communities on their lands and natural resources.

We deplore these worrying events on which an in-depth investigation must be carried out in order to avoid any manipulation, and even a disinformation campaign against the defenders of the local population's rights and interests. Regarding the statements made by certain individuals in the various television reports on the subject, it is important to underline that the only person who claims responsibility for the acts of vandalism against the Base Toliara project has not been arrested, even though he has been spotted in action.

In this respect, we remind the competent authorities that the current legislation stipulates that occupants have property rights on the lands that they have cultivated for several decades in the case of the communities affected by the Base Toliara project, even if they do not hold formal documents relating to land ownership.

We condemn the reprisals against the efforts made by the members of these communities to protect their rights, and we are joining the thousands of people living in Benetse, Ampototse and Tsiafanoka who came to Toliara to support them in pressing with determination for

- **the immediate release of the 09 persons detained in an undisclosed location;**
- **respect for their rights to fair and impartial justice, and for the rights of the defence ;**
- **an end to all repression of peaceful demonstrations by their supporters ;**
- **and satisfaction of their demands.**

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