

SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNCIL OF NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS



Lot 54367, New CBD
Mogobe Plaza Gaborone,
Botswana

Tel: (+267) 3912982
Fax: (+267) 3912954
admin@saf-cngo.org
www.saf-cngo.org

Private Bag 204
Gaborone
Botswana

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STATEMENT ON THE RECENT UNREST IN MADAGASCAR

The Southern African Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (SAf-CNGO), the apex body for civil society coordination in the SADC region, expresses profound alarm and deepest condolences over the escalating violence, widespread property damage, and tragic loss of life in Madagascar amid ongoing protests in Antananarivo and other areas. As at the time of this statement, at least 22 people are reported to have lost their lives and over 100 others injured since late September 2025, in what marks the most significant unrest in the country in years. These events, including violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces involving tear gas and live ammunition, underscore the urgent human cost of unresolved grievances and threaten the hard-won stability of our shared region.

SAf-CNGO unequivocally condemns all forms of violence, from the looting and property destruction to the disproportionate use of force by state security apparatus. No legitimate cause justifies the taking of lives or the erosion of public safety. We mourn the victims, including civilians, youth, and security personnel caught in the crossfire, and stand in solidarity with their families. We urge that the reported imposition of a nationwide curfew until 13 October 2025, while it may be necessary for immediate de-escalation, must not impede access to essential services, healthcare, or humanitarian aid for vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, and those in informal settlements. The expressed root causes of this unrest, among them, deepening economic hardships, including inflation and unemployment exacerbated by global shocks, alongside demands for greater democratic accountability and inclusive governance, reflect an urgent need for unity of efforts in addressing the challenges of the Malagasy people, and supporting their aspirations for justice and prosperity. These unfortunate incidents reflect broader regional challenges to civic space and equitable development, as highlighted in our 2025 Civil Society Forum Declaration adopted just weeks ago in Antananarivo. We therefor urge all parties to prioritize dialogue over division. We further urge protesters to channel their voices through peaceful, constitutional means.

Amidst mounting uncertainties pertaining to the stability of political leadership in the country, and recognizing Madagascar as the current chair of SADC, SAf-CNGO reaffirms its unwavering support for the people of Madagascar, and their contributions to peace, security, and socio-economic resilience across Southern Africa. We call on the Government of Madagascar, relevant SADC structures, and the African Union to facilitate immediate, inclusive mediation involving civil society, opposition leaders, and international partners. We call on the security forces to exercise maximum restraint, respecting human rights in line with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Humanitarian access must be unhindered, with urgent focus on psychosocial, and socio-economic support for affected communities. SAf-CNGO stands ready to mobilize regional civil society networks to contribute to all efforts towards a peaceful resolution, drawing on our expertise in people-centred advocacy. Together, we can emerge from this crisis with renewed commitment to the SADC We Want; inclusive, democratic, and prosperous. The welfare of every Malagasy citizen remains paramount! We therefore call on all to honour the fallen by building bridges, not barriers. **End of Statement**

For further information, contact: SAf-CNGO Secretariat Email: admin@saf-cngo.org

