



JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Madagascar: Environmental defender found guilty on trumped-up charges

In response to the two-year suspended sentence against environmental defender and human rights activist Raleva delivered by the Mananjary Court on 26 October 2017 for ‘use of a false title’, a group of human rights and civil society organisations comprising of Amnesty International, CCFD – Terre Solidaire, CIVICUS, CRAAD-OI, Collectif TANY, and Front Line Defenders said, in a joint statement:

“The two year suspended sentence handed to Raleva continues the trend whereby the judicial system is used by the authorities to silence human rights activists and prevent them from doing their work.

He is being punished for exposing an allegedly non-compliant mining company in Madagascar. The suspended sentence must be immediately overturned, and Raleva cleared of any criminal record in relation to his peaceful human rights activism.”

Background

Raleva was arrested in the Vohilava village on 27 September 2017. He was arrested for asking to see the mining and environmental permits of a Chinese gold mining company operating in Mananjary, as part of his role within two local human rights organisations. On 26 October 2017, he was released from jail after 25 days of pre-trial detention, but was found guilty of the charge of using the false title of ‘Head of District’.