

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/madagascar-call-for-impartial-media-coverage-04-12-2013,45550.html>

Africa - Madagascar

Election coverage

Call for impartial media coverage of presidential run-off

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Reporters Without Borders calls on Madagascar's media to provide balanced and impartial coverage of the campaign for the second-round of the presidential election on 20 December and the elections for the national assembly's 151 members that are being held the same day.

"We urge journalists to draw the lessons from the first round and to respect the terms of the election coverage charter signed on 21 February, in which an undertaking was given to 'present all the leading points of view, even if they are not shared by the journalist or media'," Reporters Without Borders said.

"We also ask both the state and privately-owned broadcast media to ensure that candidates have free and equal access to air time and to cover the elections in a neutral and transparent manner."

During the campaign for the presidential first round, the state-owned TV and radio networks of *Télévision Malagasy (TVM)* and *Radio Nationale Malagasy (RNM)* did not provide the various candidates with equal time. They staged political debates but most candidates preferred to present their campaign programmes on their own on privately-owned stations.

The links between privately-owned media companies, political parties and leading business sectors were very visible during the first-round campaign. The coverage provided by newspapers clearly reflected their support for certain candidates and identification with particular business interests.

The second-round presidential election pits Robinson Jean-Louis, the first round's winner, against runner-up Hery Rajaonarimampianina, a former finance minister. The campaign began on 29 November and will end on 20 December, polling day.

It is being held simultaneous with the national assembly elections, which are particularly important as the first task of the newly-elected deputies will be to propose a prime minister.

In 2011, Reporters Without Borders, in partnership with the International Organisation of La Francophonie, had officially presented its [Handbook for Journalists during Elections in Madagascar](#).

Madagascar is ranked 88th out of 179 countries in [the 2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

Photo : Robinson Jean Louis and Hery Rajaonarimampianina : AFP/Stéphane de Sakutin/Rijasolo
