

URGENT ACTION

ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS DEFENDER AT RISK

Angélique Decampe, President of the community association Razan'ny Vohibola, is an environmental human rights defender, actively involved in protecting the Vohibola forest in Madagascar. On 5 July, three men who had been illegally cutting down forest trees came to her home and made death threats to her. She was targeted after she took photos of their illegal activities in connection to her conservation work. Angélique is at high risk and the authorities must investigate these death threats and take all necessary steps to protect environmental rights defenders like her.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Minister of Justice
Randriamanantenasoa Landy Mbolatiana
Ministere de la Justice
Lalana Rakolomalala Joel
Antananarivo, Madagascar
Email: spminjus@yahoo.fr

Dear Minister,

I am writing to request your urgent intervention in the case of environmental human rights defender **Angélique Decampe**, President of the community association Razan'ny Vohibola, and to address the ongoing threats and attacks she and her colleagues have faced in their efforts to protect the Vohibola forest in Madagascar's Toamasina region.

In June 2022, Razan'ny Vohibola – which means “the ancestors of Vohibola” in Malagasy, an association of environmental human rights defenders from surrounding villages – won a case against a poacher who was sentenced to six months in prison for his illegal actions in the forest. However, the individual has not yet been apprehended. On 5 July 2023, when Angélique was investigating the killing of a crocodile whose tail was found at a makeshift barbecue spot in the forest, she saw near the house of the poacher's brother, a tree cut down from the forest. She promptly took a photo as proof of illegal action. After that, the poacher's brother who had apparently cut down the tree and killed the crocodile, together with two other men, approached Angélique Decampe at her home and made death threats warning her that she will die and leave her daughter orphaned.

The lack of action from the authorities to protect the forest and those who work to defend it is perpetuating a cycle of violence and sends a message that these threats and attacks are condoned by the authorities. Previous attacks against members of Razan'ny Vohibola remain in total impunity, including the killing of Mickaël Stenor on 24 June 2022 and the arbitrary detention of two other members of the association as part of efforts to silence and intimidate them.

I urge you to ensure an independent, impartial and effective investigation into the death threats against Angélique Decampe and into the killing of Mickael Stenor and bring all those responsible to justice in fair trials. I further urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure Angélique Decampe and other Razan'ny Vohibola's members are adequately protected, in consultation with them and accordance to their wishes, to ensure they are able to carry out their peaceful activities in defense of the Vohibola forest safely and without fear of reprisals.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Angélique Decampe and her husband, Stéphane Decampe, are Franco-Malagasy who are human rights defenders who are also actively involved in the tourism sector in Madagascar. They own the Jungle Nofy hotel, situated near

the Pangalanes canal, and are deeply committed to the protection of the Vohibola forest. Angélique Decampe serves as the president of the community association Razan'ny Vohibola ([Razan'ny Vohibola | Toamasina | Facebook](#)), which collaborates with the Regional Service for the Environment and Sustainable Development (DREDD) from the Toamasina region in the management of the Vohibola forest. Spanning approximately 2,000 hectares, this forest is part of the state's private domain and boasts a rich variety of endemic flora and fauna, including noteworthy species like the world's smallest chameleon and frog.

Angélique and Stéphane Decampe, together with other members of Razan'ny Vohibola, frequently report instances of illegal logging and illegal coal mining taking place within the Vohibola forest, which consequently exposes them to frequent threats and attacks. Amnesty International has observed a disconcerting pattern where those accused are consistently released by the courts, leading Angélique Decampe and her association to believe that they enjoy protection from influential individuals. This climate of impunity not only puts Angélique Decampe, Stéphane Decampe, and other members of the Razan'ny Vohibola association at risk but also exacerbates the destruction of the Vohibola forest.

Civil society organisations in Madagascar have been calling the authorities to adopt a law on the protection of human rights defenders and whistle-blowers and have provided specific recommendations on the scope and content of such a law it to be in line with Madagascar's international human rights obligations. However, a proposed bill on the protection of human rights defenders presented by the Ministry of Justice does not recognize whistle-blowers nor does it contain any special provisions to ensure that protection measures are determined with a gender perspective, despite the specific risks and challenges faced by women human rights defenders coming not only from the government but also from their communities. The bill submitted to Parliament is still pending adoption and can therefore be revised to address both the lack of legal protection of whistle-blowers and the need to incorporate a gender perspective into the protection of women human rights defenders such as Angélique Decampe.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 15 September 2023

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Angélique Decampe (she/her)