

Carter Center Election Observation Mission
LEGISLATIVE AND SECOND ROUND OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Preliminary Statement

**Carter Center Congratulates Madagascar on a Calm and Transparent Polling Process;
Encourages Renewed Commitment to National Reconciliation**

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On Dec. 20, Madagascar held legislative elections and the second round of presidential elections. Following a protracted political crisis, these elections offer an opportunity that we are hopeful will reinstate a democratically-elected government, enable Madagascar to rejoin the community of nations, and provide a foundation through which to address the prolonged humanitarian crisis that has continued to escalate within recent years. The culmination of the roadmap in Friday's elections offer an opportunity for the country to move forward and begin to address the suffering of the Malagasy people, 90 percent of whom survive on less than USD \$2 a day.

The Carter Center congratulates the Malagasy people for a peaceful vote, an important achievement on the road to ending the crisis and working toward the important goal of national reconciliation.

These elections are the first in Madagascar's history to be conducted by an independent electoral authority. Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and Carter Center observers reported that voting and counting processes were peaceful, orderly, and in general accordance with Madagascar's legal framework and obligations for democratic elections. Although voter turnout was moderate at only about 50 percent in polling stations observed, the Center commends the CENI-T for their commitment to ensuring that all eligible voters had an opportunity to cast their ballots freely. Carter Center and EISA

All political actors should insist on maintaining a peaceful environment while respecting the constitution and the laws of Madagascar. We urge all political parties and leaders to maintain the current environment of calm as the tabulation process continues, materials are returned, and the results are processed.

Candidates, leaders, and international actors should work together to advance genuine messages of national reconciliation and respect for the democratic process. Madagascar must leave behind its history of winner-take-all politics, isolation of losers, and extra-constitutional actions that undermine democratic processes.

The military should continue to play a neutral role in providing security, and avoid playing a role in the political process.

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Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions

The Carter Center did not observe the first round of voting for the presidential elections held on Oct. 25; the Center's election observation is focused on the second round of presidential elections and legislative elections that took place on Dec. 20. The Center's election observation mission in Madagascar is conducted in partnership with the Electoral Institute

of the candidates and suggests that they are simply proxies for a past rivalry that has been brewing for nearly five years - at a time when Madagascar needs to focus on its future.

Nonetheless, the recent elections are an essential step towards ending the current crisis in Madagascar. Originally scheduled for May 8, 2013, the first round of presidential elections were postponed to July 24 and again to Oct. 25, when the first round of the presidential elections finally took place. The second round took place on Dec. 20, coupled with the legislative elections.

The international community provided critical technical and financial support for the election, but

(ECOSOC), Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Political Rights of Women (CPRW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCC).

This framework contains many positive measures in support of electoral transparency. For example, Article 45 of the Election Act prohibits any official inauguration, such as of a building or event, during the election campaign period. This is a positive measure that

the Transition (CENI-T).

For the population that was successfully registered, the official process was not considered complete until correct data was entered and the voter possessed their voter card. However, the distribution of these cards by local electoral administration was partially delayed. While voter cards were not required to vote in Madagascar's 2013 elections,¹⁴ the document has traditionally been

Madagascar is committed to several important international obligations in relation to candidates, parties, and the campaign environment including ensuring that every citizen has the right to be elected¹⁹ and freedom of assembly.²⁰

Political pluralism and genuine choice for voters are critical to democracy. Madagascar is obligated due to its international commitments to ensure “a real political pluralism, an ideological variety and a multi-party system that are exercised through functioning of political parties...”²¹ In order to ensure this important ambition, Madagascar has also made a commitment

In spite of such positive aspects, The Carter Center is concerned about several aspects of the electoral process related to candidates, parties, and the campaign environment.

Despite these failings, the peacefulness and prevailing calm during the campaign period, along with the high level of candidate registration and competition are laudable.

MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Carter Center observers assessed that while media diversity is prevalent, the press is far too often tainted by biases

rights.³² In the instance of a dispute relating to elections, everyone has the right to a public hearing in front of an independent and impartial tribunal.³³ Madagascar's political

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simply hold a legislative election during that time, allowing people to vote for one half of

The Carter Center also calls on all candidates and their supporters to abstain from disrupting the ongoing tabulation and respect the process.

The Carter Center has observed 96 elections in 38 countries. The Center conducts election observation