

The rosewood chronicles

Author: Hery Randriamalala

This text outlines the daily events concerning the traffic of illegally-sourced rosewood from protected areas of Madagascar. Some paragraphs were written by direct observers, which accounts for the diversity of style in the text. Names of observers and of witnesses have been changed for their safety sake. The latest developments are at the end of the text.

26 January 2009

Activation of the “Black Monday” Plan at national level.

1/ 2 pm, Sambava: five hundred rioters from villages surrounding Sambava gathered in front of the store MAGRO. They stormed the shop, looted it, set fire to it and destroyed it along with the radio station MBS; two other shops and a vanilla factory connected with President Ravalomanana. Four of the perpetrators died in the blaze.

2/ 4 pm, Sambava: three empty 4x4s arrived from Antalaha, sent by wealthy residents of this town. Their aim: to collect the people who ransacked MAGRO and transport them to Antalaha to attack the local branch of TIKO.

3/ 6 pm, Antalaha: the population, supervised by the perpetrators, attacked and looted TIKO store. While the police and army officers remained in their barracks and police stations, those backing the attack sent their employees to steal the cache of timber seized by the Water and Forests Department of Antalaha, whose premises were deserted.

Within minutes, hundreds of “bolabola” (logs of rosewood) disappeared, transported in trucks to private lots belonging to traffickers. Looters spent all night ransacking the offices of the Water and Forest Dept for the District of Antalaha. All files and equipment were destroyed or stolen, thus unabling any preliminary investigation and hearing due to lack of evidence. The seized logs were sorted, with the looters taking mostly rosewood. Two 4x4 cars belonging to Madagascar National Parks were destroyed.

The attack was a complete success.

28 January 2009

Extension of the ministerial decree No. 003/2009, allowing exceptions for registered timber traders (Laisoa, Bematana, Soa, Ramilialison, Bezokiny, Body, Chan Hoy Lane, Patricia, Ndahiny, Malohely, Thunam, Ranjanoro) to export rosewood and ebony in logs or lumbers (reason: financial gain for these operators following the global recession). The deadline for the extension was set for 30 April 2009. This order confirms the royalty rate for exportation of 4% of the price at the port of Vohemar. It includes a collection fee of 100 Ariary/kg.

03 February 2009

The Ultima (Delmas) ships 240 tons of precious timber from Vohemar.

07 February 2009

Antananarivo: President Ravalomanana’s troops opened fire into crowds of demonstrators, causing dozens of deaths and hundreds injured. Confusion reigned across the island. The state authority was concentrated in the capital. Residents of the towns of the NE coast grabbed the opportunity to storm into the Parks of Marojejy and Masoala in search of rosewood.

08 February 2009

In Marojejy National Park (NP), the timber traffickers prepared to move hundreds of logs/ 'bolabola' for loading onto trucks. Residents from surrounding villages objected, as it affected 50% of the revenue generated by the park, which was distributed by Madagascar National Parks, the organization responsible for its management. Timber traders dispersed the crowd by warning shots from automatic weapons. Their leaders travelled to Andapa, and threatened the Parks Director to burn his house if he tried to stand in their way. The MNP Director decided to close the park to the public and sent a warning out to Antananarivo.

14 February 2009

The Ultima (Delmas) shipped 2966 tons of precious timber from Vohemar.

17 February 2009

The Providence (UAFL) shipped 618 tons of precious timber from Vohemar.

18 February 2009

A Safmarine ship transported 520 tons of precious timber from Toamasina.

25 February 2009

The Ultima (Delmas) shipped 1034 tons of precious timber from Vohemar.

06 March 2009

The Providence (UAFL) transported 374 tons of precious wood from Vohemar.

08 March 2009

The Ultima (Delmas) shipped 327 tons of precious wood from Vohemar.

17 March 2009

President Ravalomanana was ousted in a coup and left the country. Andry Rajoelina assumed Presidency of the High Authority of Transition (HAT).¹

18 March 2009

The Kiara (Delmas) transported 1060 tons of precious timber from Vohemar.

20 March 2009

The Ultima (Delmas) shipped 85 tons of precious timber from Vohemar.

21 March 2009

A Safmarine ship shipped 520 tons of precious timber from Toamasina.

27 March 2009

The Ultima (Delmas) shipped 734 tons of precious timber from Vohemar.

30 March 2009

Some prominent international NGOs: WWF, WCS, CI, etc. obtained an appointment with the minister of the environment to alert people about the plight of in the protected areas in the

¹ See additional information:

http://www.journal-le-democrate.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=36%3Anorbert-lala-ratsirahonana-le-probleme-de-madagascar-&catid=1%3Aactualites
<http://reflexiums.wordpress.com/2011/January/22/madagascar-chronologie-du-coup-detat-de-mars-2009-par-le-colonel-andrianasoavina-charles/>

Northeast. The Minister made a public statement reiterating the ban on logging within protected areas. Masoala National Park is affected in turn by illegal logging².

04 April 2009

1/ A trader stated, in reference to his cohorts logging in Marojejy: "In their reports for export request to the Ministry, there are many false statements concerning the [timber] stocks. Once this authorization secured, the exporters rush to reach the quantity authorized and then deliver the timber to the port as soon as possible. Therefore, panic set in and the collectors sought solely to reach their quotas. Some collectors cheated by inserting sand or pebbles inside hollow logs to increase the shipping weight. By night other collectors plunder stocks belonging to different traders. Every night the bars of the villages were run by collectors and transporters, who splashed out their earnings until the mornings - more so on weekends. Peoples' behaviour changed as aggression and ruthlessness set in. They boasted of their newfound wealth, without considering consequences, risks and regulations. The police patrolling Manantenina received 5000 Ariary, according to conversations I overheard in taxi brousses. There were even customers of Belaoko Lokoho who stopped a bus to ask if it can carry timber. The driver refused. In the bus, passengers discussed the logging within the Park. They noticed that the wood collectors emerged from the park to ascertain the reaction of the new President (TGV), fearing that he may implement a new law for the protection of the Park. But during his visit to Sambava on April 4, the President did not mention the problem of [logging in] the park. So the loggers returned to the park with far more confidence."

2/ Two candidates competed for position of Head of the SAVA region: Marcellin and Abdillah. Marcellin, who in February told SAVA citizens on the [local] radio station to "log as much as they want within the forest because now we are in democracy", therefore gave a signal to the loggers to continue. He recruited the people who organized the riots in late January in the SAVA (the "Black Monday" plan). However Rajoelina selected Abdillah as Head of SAVA region. The Timber Cartel of Antalaha paid 60 million Ariary for that move.

05 April 2009

Loggers re-enter the forest, more determined than ever.

10 April 2009

Numbers of people logging in Marojejy continued to increase. Given that the traffic was approaching an end, the rush for whatever accessible timber remained, intensified. Whatever the size of the trees, everything had to go. The paved road from the trail to Mandena was streaked with red, referred to by many as the 'tears of blood left by the mutilated rosewood trees logged without any scruples'. There were masses of stocks in Antalaha (belonging to and involving Thunam and his brothers and sisters, Jeannot Ranjanoro, Bematana, Bezokiny – hotel Palissandre, Paula Maurice – Ocean Momo, Jacky Manambola, amongst others)... The chief collector in Mandena was Lys. In Andrakata, Clovis collected for Jeannot Ranjanoro.

13 April 2009

A primatologist stated: "I do not know if you know 'the butcher' of Anoviara, Simon, former mayor of Anoviara? His wife is now mayor. He has been hunting for thirty years in the surrounding forests. He makes it his business: ten trained dogs, and uses shotguns (cartridges were found). He kills everything that these dogs sniff out, [it is] a massacre. You can estimate

² See additional information:

<http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2009-03-27-masoala-note-pr-sentation-bois-de-rose-et-infraction/>
<http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2009-04-08-lettre-dir-masoala/>
<http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2009-04-09-masoala-rapport-exp-1-re-partie/>
<http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2009-04-09-masoala-rapport-expl-annexe/>

between 3000 and 5000 animals killed by him. He sells the meat to the Chinese community of SAVA, Toamasina and even Antananarivo... He ventures deep into the Makira [Natural Park] rainforest to hunt ... There, in the same territory are *Varecia rubra*, also *Varecia variegata*, hybrids of these populations, Simponas (*Propithecus candidus*), Babakoto (*Indri indri*), the White-fronted lemur (*Eulemur albifrons*), also Crowned lemur, Avahi, Lepilemur, the aye-aye; the *Hapalemur griseus* and another species of lemur that may be *Prolemur simus*. Because of the 'butcher', animals are terrorized by, and flee man by his smell. "

18 April 2009

The Ministry of Environment, Water and Forest closed the port of Vohemar to exportation of rosewood.

19 April 2009

A special plane was chartered for a round trip Antalaha-Antananarivo, with a delegation of timber exporters on board. They were welcomed by members of the High Authority of Transition.

20 April 2009

Trucks returned to their schedules of transporting timber-laden containers to the port of Vohemar, where they remained in port awaiting a government decision which did not materialize.

21 April 2009

Loggers moving from Antalaha southwards joined with their counterparts from Maroantsetra traveling northwards, in the heart of Masoala.

15 May 2009

200 containers of rosewood were blocked for a month on the banks of Vohemar. The Government was aware that numbers reported by the exporters are false. Wholesalers believe that this decision is only a tactic to raise the scale of "commissions". The shipping companies no longer sent their vessels to Vohemar³.

13 July 2009

The Minister of Environment sent a letter to the Regional Direction of Waters and Forest and Tourism, asking him to search for transactions pre trial, in connection with the 72 million Ariary fine per container, filed at the port of Vohemar. If the documentation was not forthcoming, he insisted on prosecuting traders, seizing and selling the timber.

18 July 2009

A guide on his way back from a hike in the Masoala with a tourist and a student, reported the presence of a large number of people in frenetically logging inside the park. Some were transporting trunks, others piling logs. They observed that the forest was almost stripped bare, and that animals flee from people. A farmer confessed to 26 lemurs poached in two weeks⁴.

20 July 2009

Members of the HAT promised the timber traders that they would pay for half the fine of 72 million Ariary per container, and that nobody should rush to pay it. But one operator had already paid the entire amount.

³ See additional information: <http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2009-07-22-rapport-de-mission-sava/>

⁴ See additional information: <http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2009-07-16-compte-rendu-bois-de-rose-masoala/>

30 July 2009

The minister of Environment decided (Decision No. 338 September MEF/MI) to allow the export of 25 containers of rosewood for each of the 13 operators connected with the Decree 003-2009, subject to payment of a fine of 72 million Ariary per container.

15 August 2009

1/ The situation was almost calm in the Marojejy. Rosewood loggers left the park: too many policemen, growing hostility among the residents bordering the Park, no more easily accessible rosewood.

2/ Things went awry in the Masoala, around Maroantsetra and in Mananara: loggers became more numerous than ever, the logging moving southwards⁵.

3/ The rosewood Cartel is incensed by the fine of 72 million Ariary per container. Only one exporter had paid to date. They stated that “they will not help anyone during the next election.” And that “If the government is against them, no problem, they will wait for the next one.”

19 August 2009

The piles of a wooden bridge near Ambatojoby (30 km north of Sambava) were stolen: they were made of rosewood. Now the bridge is rickety and dangerous for vehicles and the only access to the village is essentially cut.

20 August 2009

According to a traveller who bypassed the Masoala along the coast, there were many people on the road in both directions. People did not talk, they kept their actions secret: where were the police? Numerous logs were stacked on beaches or in river mouths, awaiting transport boats. New villages mushroomed almost overnight, populated by loggers, collectors, retail dealers, prostitutes and eateries. Prices were high because of the abundance of money, the influx of customers and lack of supplies. A beer bottle was 8000 Ariary, palm alcohol 1500. Many people died accidentally (log carriers in rough terrain) or due to crime (fighting, drunken brawls and theft). No police were visible in the area.

21 August 2009

1/ The National Radio of Maroantsetra announced in the morning that an officer of the National Park of Mananara had both legs broken by the rosewood barons’ messengers from Antalaha. He was trying to stop loggers entering the park. But several hundred entered the park, with official documents bearing all kind of signatures. “The villagers and local officials will be decapitated if they continue to interfere with loggers”, was the warning sent out by the Mafia of Antalaha.

2/ In the Masoala, the woodcutters were armed and hunted lemurs and birds extensively.

3/ According to a traveller coming back from the heart of Makira (3 days walk), the logging had reached record levels.

30 August 2009

1/ With certainty rosewood was shipped from Toamasina. Traders of other goods from SAVA had their consignments blocked in Toamasina since June due to lack of available boats: all ships calling at from Antalaha to Toamasina were there to load rosewood. But it seemed that rosewood was no longer sent from Antalaha. It was instead transported directly to from the Masoala to Toamasina, where it was exported “quietly and normally.”⁶

⁵ See additional information: <http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2009-08-01-bois-de-rose-mananara/>

⁶ See additional information: <http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2009-09-01-masoala-compte-rendu-bois-de-rose/>

2/ Traders received funding from their Chinese buyers. They were actually paying their debts to their workers in the Masoala and in Mananara, but not to those of Marojejy, to whom they said “your money is stuck in the port of Vohemar.”

3/ Exporters of vanilla were extremely embarrassed and badly hit by a decision of the Minister of Trade, implementing a decree setting the floor price of vanilla exports, to US\$ 27 a kilo. Exports below this threshold were banned. Result: almost no vanilla sold in 2009. Even at US\$ 20/ kg, nobody would buy it. Vanilla exporters were incensed by the incompetence of the government and sent an open letter in the press. Another consequence was that farmers had no income that year, thus being forced to reluctantly seek employment as rosewood cutters.

01 September 2009

1/ A newcomer surfaced among the traders: Rachid Patel, from the Indian community in Antalaha, with a warehouse and yard full of rosewood logs. He was the first Indian spotted in the timber mafia, hitherto the domain of the Chinese. His son-in-law from Antananarivo, had lots of money to invest.

2/ Five traders were allowed to transfer their wood from Antalaha to Toamasina. Bezokiny (hotel Palissandre) was one of them.

3/ Ranjanoro went berserk: his transport permit was denied. He threatened everyone, “the first who is transferring timber to Toamasina, will have his boat burnt!” And he added: “If this government does not allow rosewood trade, we will await the next government.”

4/ In Maroantsetra, the minister of Tourism has responded to the open letter of tour operators. She would stop the trafficking of rosewood. Indeed, the day before, 18 logs were seized by the police and agents of Madagascar National Parks. Consequently these tour operators have received death threats from rosewood traders. They were also concerned about official authorities: the mayor wrote to the HAT to request that the minister of Environment remains in office.

05 September 2009

Maroantsetra: when the city lives at the time of rosewood trafficking. Nightclubs opened several nights a week, money flowing everywhere. Minor sellers sought rosewood in the heart of the rainforest. Collectors all had bikes. Trucks operated day and night. No more ship made stops for regular cargo at the port – instead, all transported rosewood, creating shortages of basic goods. The wives of senior officials were seen in the villages surrounding the Masoala, buying rosewood. A rosewood based economy is established with:

- loggers: over 50% of villagers around the Park were missing, including women. This meant all healthy adults were in the forest.
- sailors: rotated between the beaches of Masoala and Maroantsetra and then between this town, Antalaha and Toamasina
- the dockers of Maroantsetra.
- the collectors and the buyers.
- the wholesalers, small or large.
- the officials, more or less involved.

The precious timber trade was so widespread that it almost appeared legal.

14 September 2009

Mr Risy had been hunting red ruffed lemur (*Varecia rubra*) for 2 months in the western part of the Masoala National Park. He used a 12-gauge shotgun with a silencer. Of the 30 individuals recorded in the Lohatrozona sector since 2008, only 15 remain today.

17 September 2009

A Delmas vessel's arrival was announced for September 22 in Vohemar. Its purpose: to load all the rosewood containers awaiting transportation for the previous 6 months.

18 September 2009

1/ Masoala: the situation worsened in Ambodiforaha, a small village near Tampolo Lodge: 100 rosewood loggers got drunk every night in the village and then left at dawn to go to log rosewood⁷.

2/ The private stock of Mr Abdillah, head of the SAVA region, was estimated at "more than 100 tons." This was split into caches and hidden in the properties of his family.

3/ In the capital city, 40 Chinese buyers lobbied for several days to reopen the port of Vohemar. They had a considerable amount of money involved with this case. Failing to convince the Prime Minister, they left the country extremely angry.

20 September 2009

Illegal logging continued in Andrahanjo, Marojejy Park.

21 September 2009

The MEF extends the Inter-Ministerial Order No. 38244/2009 which allowed for 'exceptional and registered' export of 25 containers of rosewood, ebony and 'palissandre' (lower valued rosewood without the red or maroon colouring) for each of the 13 licensed operators in January, on receipt of payment of the required 72 million Ariary per container. The authorization was set to expire by November 30, 2009. The collecting fee increased to 500 Ariary/kg; the exportation fee to 5% of the FOB price.

23 September 2009

1/ Maroantsetra / Makira: a few days previously, Chinese buyers were observed at the Bank of Africa. Rosewood logs were in evidence everywhere in town and on the sides of the tracks. Diameter: over 40 cm, length: more than 3.5 m. Trucks and boats unloaded and uploaded timber in broad daylight. Fifty tons arrived a few days prior in Toamasina. A ship of 150 tons arrived in Maroantsetra and all caches were cleared. The prices were as follows:

- 200 Ariary/kg in the forest,
- 1200 Ariary/kg in Maroantsetra,
- 2400 Ariary/kg in Toamasina,
- 12,000 Ariary/kg from Toamasina.

All local business people are involved in the precious timber traffic, and quite brazenly so. They stated they would sell timber in Toamasina and return with all kind of goods for sale on site, with the permission of officials. The park managers went into hiding: one Masoala ranger went to Antananarivo, one from Mananara to Toamasina. In the Masoala, logging happened in the full view of the few tourists staying in the lodges. Some tour operators turned: their fast boats didn't carry tourists anymore, but rosewood instead. The government negotiated fiercely with the timber traders. It requested 60 million Ariary per container, the traders offered 24 million.

2/ Survey on the financing of the rosewood traffic: a few weeks before, traders lacked cash following the blocking of 170 containers at the port of Vohemar. However, they continued to be very active in the Masoala and Makira. How did they fund this activity? Three sources were identified:

- a- the new Chinese of Madagascar. Before 2009, the Prime Minister (PM) of Ravalomanana had a lucrative trade: he sold national passports to Chinese migrants (5,000,000 Ariary each passport). At that time the Chinese arrived en masse in the capital city (about 20,000

⁷ See photos at : <http://www.fbgw.fr/fichier-pdf/fichier/62521/>

people located around Behoririka). These migrants do not speak a word of Malagasy, they came from remote areas of China, and six months later, they were Malagasy citizens! After a few weeks, they were able to buy land in the city (legal for nationals) and to open businesses. This active community imports goods from China, selling them in Antananarivo, but the money does not return to China. Instead, it is deposited into a “black bank”: it is lent to Chinese business people (buyers of rosewood in this case) who need cash in Madagascar. In return, these same business people in China payed the Behoririka traders. And so, they have in Madagascar access of money to prepay rosewood shipments.

- b- the PM Monja Roindefo, was involved in the rosewood trade. He also embezzled the funds allocated for the drilling of fresh water in the arid South (about 3 million dollars from the African Development Bank) to buy rosewood in the Northeast. This was connected with the project leader, Mr Didier Betsiaroana, whose brother Jean Galbert is a notorious trader of rosewood (already held in 2008).
- c- the current selling of the rosewood stock via Toamasina (see No. 1), which allows for cash turnover.

28 September 2009

Antalaha: there was unrest in the city and around the port. Mrs. Chan Hoy Lane Kara, a trader, received approval to move her timber from Antalaha to Antsiranana. She was loading her trucks, but before departure, the convoy was attacked by other traders and dockworkers, who maintained that the same treatment should apply to everybody. The trucks were unloaded. Coco Rassamy appeared in Antalaha: a real villain, with an extensive criminal record, he claims to have 800 tons of rosewood for export.

29 September 2009

1/ The few diehards who defend the forest in Maroantsetra started fearing for their lives. Death threats were commonplace. They were clearly briefed that traders will kill anybody obstructing them.

2/ Vohemar: A Delmas vessel was expected. In the port, there were 3 containers of vanilla, 3 of coffee and 170 of rosewood. After receiving a fax concerning the timber, the representative of Delmas sped to Antalaha to meet the timber traders. He requested evidence that the timber was legally sourced.

30 September 2009

1/ Coco Rassamy it transpires, works for Eric Foeng, an exporter of vanilla from Ampanefena, now trading in rosewood. He owns a large warehouse south of Antalaha, full of logs (at least 800 tons). The interesting point is that it is financed by Chinese from the capital city.

2/ In Vohemar, the rosewood barons failed to reach an agreement with the Treasury. Since they have no money to pay the 72 million Ariary fine per container, they offered to pay after the departure of the boat, once Chinese buyers have paid their bills. The Treasury rejected this illegal arrangement and everything appears blocked.

3/ In Toamasina, someone has already exported 300 containers (over 6000 tons) of rosewood. Sam Som Miock, is Malagasy of Chinese origin who became rich thanks to the lychee industry. He still had 15 containers of rosewood awaiting the next boat. He proposed a solution for the Treasury: he would purchase the containers loaded with rosewood from those who cannot pay the fines and taxes, pays for them, and he exports to their account.

4/ Delmas must collect 147 containers of rosewood the following Friday from Vohemar.

5/ Claude Bezokiny (hotel Palissandre Antalaha) was poised to export 25 containers with a Safmarine ship arriving Oct. 10 in Vohemar.

4 October 2009

The Lea (Delmas) loads up 2208 tons of precious timber in Vohemar.

06 October 2009

1/ By order of the Minister of Finance, The Lea (Delmas) was blocked at the port of Vohemar throughout the weekend as 66 containers of rosewood were loaded on board and exporters have not paid their taxes and “fines”. They were given the consent of the Receiver to pay only once the boat at sea, which is illegal, hence, the reaction of the Minister. But the traders responded: they killed three zebu and distributed a vast quantity of alcohol to the crowd, who then attacked the port and threatened to destroy everything. The captain of the port had cleared The Lea to sail at 2 pm for security reasons. But instead of sailing to Port-Louis as planned, the vessel is confined in territorial waters. In addition, the parent company of Delmas has serious financial problems. It immediately needs 380 million euros to pay for the 50 vessels ordered in South Korea.

2/ International NGOs issued and disseminated a statement condemning the way the Malagasy government was handling the rosewood crisis.

09 October 2009

The Lea affair, recalled in Toamasina by order of the Minister of Finance:

- 90 containers were unloaded (all cargo),
- 78 were in ‘in order’,
- 12 had absolutely no papers They all belong to Thunam.

The list of parties complicit was thus established as follows:

- the Delmas company and its local representative: no one can load 12 containers on a ship without the captain’s knowledge.
- the Captain of the port of Vohemar,
- the Collector of Customs in Vohemar,
- the Regional Director of Water and Forests (already suspended since the day before),
- most members of the Task Force (they attended the loading and turned a blind eye).

16 October 2009

1/ a 4x4 car veered off the road in Farahalana (20 km south of Sambava) as a result of which its four occupants were seriously injured. They were evacuated to Antalaha where an aircraft fetched them to fly them to Antananarivo for treatment. The four occupants were members of the Task Force, the purpose of which was to combat rosewood trafficking. Residents of Farahalana found 25 million Ariary in cash (bribery money) in the damaged vehicle and handed the sum to the gendarmes. The chartering of the aircraft (15 million Ariary) was paid by Mr Ranjanoro and Mr Laisoa, two major timber barons of Antalaha. They were called to Antananarivo to be congratulated by the Minister of the Interior as “benefactors of the Police”.

2/ William Guerra sold his “right” to export 25 containers to Sam Som Miock.

22 October 2009

1/ Delmas was about to curtail its involvement in the transportation of rosewood from Madagascar. The company had reached the end of its tether with constant problems and considered emptying its containers already filled with rosewood, on site.

2/ A member of the HAT decided to halt all exports of rosewood until the timber traders had paid all taxes. This would likely take some time...

3/ Vohemar customs officers were under pressure: they were under investigation for corruption when they claimed to have no responsibility for verification of rosewood documents. Correct: all

documentation is prepared and signed by the Regional Direction of Waters and Forests and Tourism.

4/ According to witnesses, there were no more rosewood logs in the Masoala. Soldiers were everywhere; they stopped the villagers (at least for 24 hours, until the villagers paid them something). That was sufficient to clear the park of loggers.

5/ The Mauritius (UAFL company) was delayed to October 30. It was to be followed by a ship belonging to Delmas.

6/ Some traders began fearing consequences of selling rosewood. One of them proposed ebony instead as it is "less sensitive" [an issue] »⁸.

7/ The decree of September 21 encouraged the opening of many rosewood export companies. There are many forms by which they used when calling on the authorities to check their stocks, and as these were drafted without authorization, they are illegal. Most of these applications were accepted, thereby legalizing the illegal. The 'rosewood phenomenon' began spreading in the capital city.

27 October 2009

1/ Logging continued apace in the Makira Natural Park, a particularly good source of rosewood.

2/ The Minister of Agriculture authorized the fishing of sea cucumbers from the beaches around the Masoala, despite the presence of several marine reserves off the coast.

3/ The Mauritius was shortly able to upload rosewood in Vohemar. Some containers were starting to be packed with rosewood.

4/ A total of 52 bank accounts of rosewood traders were closed since Saturday, including that of Bezokiny Claude.

5/ Seven traders including Thunam were put on trial at the Court of Toamasina.

28 October 2009

1 / Prior to 2002, Mr Rakoto Jean-Paul was a friend of Didier Ratsiraka, and made his fortune trading with the Customs in Toamasina. He left Madagascar with Ratsiraka, sensing the impending changes with Marc Ravalomanana. He is now back home, a wealthy man: he bought the entire quantity of already logged rosewood around Mananara.

2/ News from The Mauritius: the boat was delayed to 1 or 2 November. Loading of containers was accelerating at Vohemar: 20 containers for Ndahiny Gregoire, 10 for Bematana Martin, 10 for Guerra William, 3 for Chan Lane Kara and 12 for Body Thierry.

30 October 2009

The Mauritius (UAFL) moved 761 tons of precious wood from Vohemar.

04 November 2009

Coco Rassamy obtained authorization to transport 5000 logs from Cap-Est to Antalaha. Reminder: 5000 logs are

- 1000 tons
- 200 containers
- 40 million dollars, delivered at Hong-Kong
- 2500 canoe trips
- 100 trips by 'teuf-teuf' (small diesel-operated boats)
- 200 truck trips.

⁸ See additional information: <http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/08/08/2010-12-16-field-report-ebony-concession-th-nagel-timbertrade/>

03 November 2009

Sam Som Miock exported 17 containers of rosewood from Toamasina. He declared them as being 20 feet long, whereas they were 40 feet in length, with the approval from the local Customs representative.

11 November 2009

Judgement of the trial of Thunam in Toamasina: a 100 million Ariary was paid to whom it may concern and Thuman walked free.

15 November 2009

One observer close to the timber-trading syndicate commented:

“The Chinese mafia is now noticeably active in the rosewood business. New contracts for the export of wood are still made between exporters and buyers. A contract of 10,000 tons had just been concluded by Bematana Martin. However, the deadline for the export of logs under the special authorization was set for the end of November. We heard the Chinese buyer saying arrogantly that the export will always continue in one way or another, because with their money, they think they can go through all the doors, even those at the highest level. It was said that one of the Chinese buyers will monopolize the export market along with someone in a high position. And that all other Chinese would go through him to get the timber out. Death threats have been delivered should anyone exceed the quota they have set. But the problem is that all traders say they own the lots. Exporters are money hungry: they accept all advances offered by the buyers. Yet there is not enough wood in stock. So should the illegal logging proceed again, in secret, even in protected areas? One of the heads of the Mafia is in our country. It seems that if the Chinese community is threatened or if the Chinese have a problem between them, he is the one who will sort the problem in his own way. But the worst is the corruption within the Task Force. We also heard from villagers that the military allowed consignments of timber to go through the roadblocks if 200,000 Ariary was paid for each batch. The military commented that “it is a case like any other and that everyone should share.”

20 November 2009

About 120 members of the Task Force are involved in the rosewood trade. At hotel Palissandre (now called Hazo Vola, owner Claude Bezokiny), they socialise with the Masoala Park guards and with the loggers in the forest. The same happened at hotel Ocean Momo in Antalaha ... Jeannot Ranjanoro seemed the most active on this issue: all trucks encountered were transporting timber for him. It is in Ampanihy between Ratsianarana and Fampotakely (Masoala) that trafficking of timber is at its highest: 2000 to 3000 people work there. The FIS (Special Intervention Force) is present in Antalaha, but it focuses mainly on cultivating an African militia image: weapons over the shoulder, sunglasses, and whiskey in his hand.

21 November 2009

On the outskirts of Mananara: 3 military trucks unloaded rosewood in front of the house of Mr Herman Tsyvahiny for 15 hours.

23 November 2009

Many truck movements between Antalaha and Vohemar were being reported. A massive export of rosewood appeared to be imminent.

27 November 2009

Lucie is Malagasy and in her forties. She leads a simple lifestyle, like millions of other women in this country. She has a daughter; lives alone and does everything by herself. Usually, she buys 20 bags of rice when the price is at the lowest and sells them when the price rises. Otherwise, she

sells used clothing. Last month, she traveled to Cap-Est, like many others, trying to see what she could sell. And she found the rosewood logs... She bought 10 logs (a ton, which mean small logs of second or third 'grade') for 0.5 million Ariary. She found partners for transport: the rental of canoes to carry the logs to the mouth of the river and a Peugeot 404 to drive the timber to Antalaha. Transportation cost them a total of 300,000 Ariary, the cost of which they shared. From Cap-Est to Antalaha, they had to make it through three checkpoints set up by police / gendarmes / Task Force, and getting through these cost 30,000 Ariary each. Finally, for less than a million Ariary, Lucie made it to Antalaha with 10 logs. She sold them all for 1.6 million to Patricia Soa, pocketing a handsome profit. With this money, she returned to the forest for a second trip. It was more difficult because she had to walk a longer distance with the loggers to the heart of the forest in search of rosewood. "In this type of forest, we do not see the sun. It takes 4 days for the wet clothes to dry." She made the same way back, at the same price. But in Antalaha, Patricia was absent. Then she sold her wood to Michel, who did not pay her ("I will pay you when the wood reaches Vohemar"). She learned too late, that Michael has a very bad reputation. And she lost each Ariary won, hanging onto the hope that she would be paid "one day". In the forest, it was amazing: parties everywhere, beer and girls more expensive than in Antananarivo (beer cost 5000 Ariary instead of 1400 in the city, a working girl charged 50,000 to 100,000 Ariary instead of 10,000 to 20,000 in town) Lucie even met a girl who confessed making some 500,000 Ariary for a week long "rental"! The working girls came from Sambava, Antalaha, Maroantsetra and Toamasina. And the noise – loud music everywhere, around the clock, and during the day one could hear the noise of motocross as each collector had bought his own. Sometimes people are taken to task and fined by combined Madagascar National Parks and gendarmerie patrols. If someone killed a lemur or a bird, or cut a tree, they pay 50,000 Ariary to the agents (who say "our bosses fill their pockets, why do not we do the same?"). A lot of accidents happen in the forest. The cutters are exhausted because rosewood is so heavy. So they seek the shortest path to the river, leading them to the top of steep slopes overlooking river banks. Then they throw the logs from the top of the cliff, sometimes killing or wounding people below.

When she was in Antalaha, Lucie found "God." 'God' here refers to Thunam, as people really like him because he pays well. Sometimes he may pay two years late, but he always pays. Last month, "God" was in prison. No problem: he asked his employees to bring five bags of rice for the convicts, so that everyone has enough to eat in prison. They of course shared the rice with the guards and afterwards they organized a basketball game. Everyone was happy – 'thank you God!' But now Thunam has been released and the basketball team dissolved...

Lucie added that there were many like her in the forest, and that it was just like the golden age of vanilla.

27 November 2009

- 1/ A docker died in Vohemar, crushed by a falling rosewood log during loading.
- 2/ The Professional Association of Banks advised its members not to domicile rosewood exporters. Some banks planned to close accounts of these clients.
- 3/ Private flights were reported on a private aircraft at the airport of Sambava. The traders bring crates of cash to the Regional Directorate of Forestry of the SAVA, to pay the astronomical fines (72 million Ariary per container). This is the result of the closure of some accounts by banks, and the desire of traders to hide their financial dealings.

30 November 2009

In a note without reference, the PM Eugene Mangalaza decided that the exploitation, transport and trade of precious wood would be prohibited.

04 December 2009

The Consistence (Delmas) shipped 3500 tons of precious wood from Vohemar, despite the deadline of 30 November for exports (decree of September 21, 2009) and the recall by the PM. The delay was due to time wasted counting the cash paid to the Customs and Water and Forest Regional Office.

10 December 2009

1/ Witnesses reported strong transportation activity of rosewood on the outskirts of Antalaha. These movements were presided over by members of the FIS. The head of this operation, Coco Rassamy would act on behalf of the interim president Andry Rajoelina (according to him).
2/ Mrs Mangalaza, wife of the PM, filed an application for approval of rosewood exporting.
3/ The prosecutor of the Court of Antalaha was in Maroantsetra. He sought a collector he knew to whom he has lent about 1000 euros, to invest into the rosewood. The collector had disappeared with his money.

30 December 2009

Delmas, under the pressure of the President of the HAT, stopped transportation of rosewood from Vohemar.

31 December 2009

Based on a note No. 218-PM/SP.09, Camille Vital, new Prime Minister, confirmed the order 38244, but without setting a deadline. Export of the timber could therefore resume. The rosewood Cartel organized a large celebration party in Antalaha.

01 January 2010

More than 1000 loggers headed back to the forest of Masoala, wielding axes.

06 January 2010

1/ In Maroantsetra, activity resumed. Trucks loaded pieces of wood transformed into lumbers from a large warehouse in the city. The wood stored there is estimated to be at least 200 m³. The leading traders explained to the collectors that they assured them of protection if they sell them their rosewood. If they refuse, threats were dished out. The former minister of the environment, a resident of Maroantsetra who had signed many authorizations to transport wood from Maroantsetra to Toamasina, was to run for the post of deputy. His campaign started.
2/ Claude Bezokiny announced: "Everything is unlocked; I have TGV's agreement to export 115 containers."
3/ Approximately 400 containers were prepared quickly in Vohemar.
4/ The new representative of Delmas was not aware of this change in policy so he called his company's office in Marseille. The first answer was "no, we do not carry rosewood anymore, our last boat loaded only vanilla." But minutes later, the answer changed to a go-ahead, following pressure from Patrick Leloup on Delmas.
4/ The situation in Mananara was stagnant as there were not enough buyers. All the big rosewood trees had been felled in Makira Natural Park.

07 January 2010

1/ The two presidential advisers involved in the rosewood were identified: Mr Patrick Leloup, a Franco-Malagasy, and Sanjay, an Indian commuting between Reunion and Mauritius. The latter is known for his involvement in various trading and trafficking of goods (especially steel) during Ratsiraka's time. He left Madagascar with Ratsiraka to avoid being sentenced by Ravalomanana. He is now back.
2/ Traders moved a large quantity of rosewood from Antalaha to Vohemar.

19 January 2010

Eleven pictures were taken in Masoala National Park, near Antalaviana, during one hour of walking in the forest. They showed rosewood of the best quality. Ten thousand of these logs were commissioned by someone in Antananarivo. Formal requests had been accepted by the authorities.

23 January 2010

The night before, 12 trucks were parked near the cemetery at the east entrance of Daraina, because of the rain barrier set up by the company which is responsible for road maintenance of the section from Daraina to Vohemar. At around 1 am, they decided to break through the rain barrier and headed to Ambilobe. The forestry administration of the SAVA and the renowned Task Force were chasing after the convoy which, according to the Head of the Forest office of Vohemar, “unlawfully” transported rosewood. Possibly suspension of the loading of precious wood in the port of Vohemar pushed some traders to find alternative ports from which evacuate their goods. Given the current state of the RN-5a track, the trucks were probably stuck somewhere between Maromokotra and Ambilobe.

26 January 2010

1/ Some Chinese visiting from China were been seen in Maroantsetra, most likely rosewood buyers.

2/ The twelve trucks loaded with rosewood were intercepted in Maromokotra. They went from Vohemar to Antsiranana. The head of the convoy purported to act on behalf of the President. The traders included the son of the late Djaozandry Gaston, a naturalized Malagasy of Chinese origin living in Ampanefena. The trucks were sent to the outskirts of Sambava, to a military camp. These are the following vehicles:

- Mercedes truck 14 22, 46 33 DD, yellow color
- Mercedes truck 16 22, 33 17 DD, blue color
- Mercedes truck 19 28 , 40 49 DD, with trailer 12 45 TP
- Truck 82 80 DD, with trailer 22 30 DE
- Truck 86 79 DD, red color, with trailer 03 82 TV, yellow color
- Truck 44 70 DD, orange color
- Truck 18 34 DD, red color
- Truck 82 81 DD, red color
- Truck 76 10 DD, blue color
- Truck 30 09 DD, red color
- 4x4 car, black color, 16 90 AC
- 4x4 car, white color, 52 77 DE

27 January 2010

A speedboat, among the most sophisticated in the area, departed from Maroantsetra to Mananara. On board were potential rosewood buyers (Malagasy nationals and Chinese). They returned in the late afternoon.

01 February 2010

In Ambohimanarina, in the outskirts of Marojejy, numerous small restaurants had opened. That is where many rosewood collectors sat table, drinking with the military of the ‘Task Force’. The entry point of the park was re-designated to Anjiabe from where people said it was easier to access the rosewood logs. Marojejy was an easy target for the loggers. The access by Mandena

was almost impossible because the villagers await and resist loggers trying to enter the Park. The Madagascar National Parks staff were regularly threatened⁹.

10 February 2010

There was enough rosewood in Vohemar to fill 250 containers. 31 were already loaded, but no ship arrival had been announced. PM Albert Camille Vital was to visit Vohemar the next day, to find a solution to allow for the export of this wood. Traders were willing to help: as Delmas did not want to come to Madagascar to upload wood, they sought a man of influence able to change the shipping company's mind.

15 February 2010

According to a person who had just driven from Toamasina to Maroantsetra, there were no logs along the track, while they were there a month ago, in Anandranvola. Dozens of seized logs are stored in front of the gendarmerie in Mananara as they have no valid papers. Some of these logs have references, but photographing them was prohibited.

27 February 2010

1/ The traders moved towards Vohemar with many dockworkers to upload the timber into containers.

2/ A Delmas ship unloaded many empty containers the previous week. She was to collect the filled containers in early March.

3/ This export of rosewood was again, supervised by the two advisors of Rajoelina: Patrick Leloup and Sanjay. The general idea proposed was bartering "Rosewood against Rice." This could mean taxes may be waived. Exporters would not have a say because their timber was seized by Leloup and Sanjay. A third man, a French businessman living in Madagascar, was instrumental in convincing Delmas to make this trip. The rosewood mafia would have offered him 10 million Ariary/container exported.

05 March 2010

1/ By appearances a lot of money had arrived in Vohemar: there were models with Chinese rosewood buyers in all hotels.

2/ Mr Christian Claude Bezokiny was arrested by order of the Minister of Justice. But he escaped on the way to the prison. The Minister was so angry that he wanted to imprison the police escort, but they vowed to find him.

3/ Mr Angelin Befototo was also arrested, but made an agreement with the Prosecutor. He is free again.

07 – 09 March 2010

The "Rosewood" mission in the SAVA consisted of a delegation of the Country Manager of the World Bank, Adolfo Brizzi, the Head of Delegation of the European Union, Leonidas Tezapsidis, the ambassadors of the United States and Norway, Niels Marquardt and Dag Nissen, and the director of the French Development Agency (AFD), Olivier Pezet, accompanied by the Director General of Madagascar National Parks, Guy Suzon Ramangason.

10 March 2010

Mamy Ravatomanga shipped 192 to 195 containers of rosewood from Toamasina. With all his cheque payments stopped, he is able to deal only with cash in Madagascar. The size of his "safety box" reached the size of a small house.

⁹ See additional information: <http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August 08/2010-02-01-maroejy-rapport-sur-bois-de-rose/>

12 March 2010

1/ The ship Kiara (Delmas) left Vohemar with 5356 tons of timber, destined for China.

2/ Jocelyn Andrianatoro is the director of a handling company at the port of Vohemar. He made a fortune out of the rosewood traffic, evidenced by his acquisition of a few new cars including a Mercedes. He is from Vohemar. Currently, the Dubosc's company stores are utilized as rosewood warehouses. The majority of trucks from Sambava, Antalaha, and Vohemar are chartered by traffickers to transport logs from the warehouses to the port. Groups of young men were taken to Sambava and Antalaha for the sole purpose of loading / unloading timber trucks. Mr Marc Robert, former head of conservation of Marojejy at the time of WWF is part of the managers of the Forest Service which "supervises" the activities in Vohemar.

24 March 2010

PM Albert Camille Vital signed a decree (No. 2010-141) prohibiting any further felling, transportation and export of rosewood.

02 April 2010

Rosewood and black money: all exporters of rosewood gathered a few days previously, in the capital city to be paid for the Kiara cargo. The Kiara (Delmas) transported 274 rosewood containers from Vohemar on 12 March, bound for China (reminder: Delmas is the only shipping company to export rosewood from Madagascar; the other shipping companies, UAFI and Safmarine, voluntarily stopped doing so when the illegal origin of the wood was explained to them, as it is mostly logged in national parks). What is interesting, is that the Chinese buyers paid for the timber in cash and in Ariary... Do the math together: a container of rosewood accounts for about 20 tons of wood. The rosewood is sold for export at a minimum US\$ 6 per kilo, while the exporters usually declare it at US\$ 3 per kilo at the customs, to limit the repatriation of foreign currency to the country, which sorely lacks these funds to buy commodities such as fuel, for example...

The unreported money thus accounts for:

$US\$ 6 - US\$ 3 = US\$ 3 \times 20,000 \text{ kg} \times 274 \text{ containers} = US\$ 16.44 \text{ million}$, or about 33 billion Ariary. The money declared serves to indicate fraud perpetrated is 50%. One may wonder about the origin of such an amount of money: where did the Chinese buyers find so much cash, i.e. the buyers who come to Madagascar solely to buy rosewood? The SAMIFIN could, for example, check the bank accounts of Malagasy traders of Chinese origin who do not repatriate their foreign exchange from China. Such an amount is above all very cumbersome: it is 8.5 m³ in 10,000 Ariary notes! The challenge for rosewood exporters has thus been to return the money into the formal banking system. The greatest exporter among the mafia tried to swiftly open a bank account at the BMOI, to deposit his cash. Conservatively, the bank declined the account as soon as she detected rosewood lay behind the deposit. We do not know the answer that BFV-SG, BNI-CL or BOA gave, but according to the law against money laundering which requires the applicant to declare the source of its funds when they exceed a few million Ariary, it is likely that these banks also refused. Thus, our exporters returned back to Antalaha with their baskets (XXL in size) full of cash, moderately relieved of a few pounds of money by buying the latest Japanese 4x4 car from a well-known dealer in the capital city and close to the government.

In addition, the famous decree which established a moratorium on the logging and exporting of precious wood from Madagascar was still not signed nor issued by the Government. According to a knowledgeable source, its coming into force would be a bargain with the international donors: as long as aid does not arrive, the decree would not be signed. Meanwhile, another source reported that logging continued in the Park of Masoala. When there will be no more rosewood, this decree will have no further interest, as international aid to save the forests.

14 April 2010

The Minister of Water and Forests signed the application note of the rosewood-related decree.

16 April 2010

PM Camille Vital was in Maroantsetra, where he directed the transfer of all deposits of rosewood to Toamasina (in direct contradiction with the note signed 48 hours earlier by his Minister of Water and Forests, which prohibited any transportation of rosewood) .

30 April 2010

The Ministry of Finance and the Budget wrote to the Professional Association of Banks (Letter No. 32/MFB/SG) asking them to open the bank accounts of rosewood exporters, on the grounds that they are also the majority of vanilla exporters, and that account closure would penalize the upcoming vanilla season earnings. However, a source familiar with the file indicates that there is only one exporter of rosewood that is also exporter of vanilla. This man is the main exporter of rosewood, he has his account at the BFV-SG, which has not been closed ... We must therefore look elsewhere for the underlying reason for this post.

10 May 2010

Concerning the letter signed by the Minister of Finance to the Professional Association of Banks: a single exporter of rosewood had a problem with his bank, the BOA, recently. The Chinese buyer had indeed sent a large sum in dollars to the exporter, through the BOA. BOA refused to complete the transfer, arguing that it did not want to domicile this type of activity. The money was then returned to China (minus 0.5% of the total amount for every transfer...). Not understanding what was going on, the Chinese buyer sent the money again to the BOA who refused it a second time. The exporter therefore lost 2% of the total amount. He complained to the Minister of Finance, who then wrote this letter asking the banks to reopen the accounts of traders, so as to enable the next vanilla campaign. As there is only one exporter who is trading both the rosewood and the vanilla, it can be concluded that the Minister of Finance used the 'vanilla campaign' as an excuse. The real motivation has been to get the dollars, which the HAT is sorely lacking.

02 June 2010

Madagascar National Parks requested financial support of US\$ 616,000 from UNESCO to restore the humid forests of the Atsinanana World Heritage site.

04 June 2010

1/ A total of 79 containers of rosewood left Toamasina aboard the Terra Bona, a SEAL ship including 63 containers released by Justice after the Toamasina trial¹⁰.

2/ The Minister of Water and Forests, who had refused to authorize this export has been replaced by another Minister, who authorized it.

19 June 2010

An illegal shipment of 300 tons of rosewood was seized over the weekend by the Comorian authorities on the ship Soavina III from Nosy Antafana Park, in the district of Mananara-Nord.

01 July 2010

The Delmas company leaves the Indian Ocean, where its image was severely tarnished by the rosewood scandal. It was replaced by its parent company, CMA-CGM.

¹⁰ See additional information: <http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August/08/2010-05-20-lettre/>

28 July 2010

- 1/ The Ambassador of France, Mr Chataignier, placed some distance between himself and Rajoelina in his speech of July 14, especially because of the rosewood trafficking.
- 2/ Rajoelina had to justify his actions on television the previous Monday. He promised transparency and prosecution of criminals.
- 3/ Traders felt obliged to repair the damage done in the forests and offered to fund a reforestation program.

31 July 2010

- 1/ The Director of Masoala National Park was caught negotiating with one of the bigger rosewood traders of Antalaha. He was identified by relatives on the phone of a trader whose loudspeakers were turned on.
- 2/ UNESCO classified the eight national parks of the eastern region of Madagascar, which make up the Rainforests of the Atsinanana World Heritage Site, on the List of World Heritage in Danger, mostly because of illegal logging.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-07/31/c_13423753.htm
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/actualites/639>

01 August 2010

Continuation of illegal logging of rosewood in the Mananara-Nord Park: A network of observers has been monitoring movements of vehicles near the Mananara-Nord National park. Assessment after three months of careful monitoring of the National Park of Verezanantsoro (Mananara): about 388 logs of rosewood were collected in the Park, representing 130 rosewood trees, or 182 hectares of forest affected. The operators responsible for this looting are:

- Village of Antanambaobe: Memena, operating in the Park with a 16-gauge shotgun to hunt lemurs and coincidentally the owner of the timber deposit in Antanambaobe, north of the Hospital;
- Town of Mananara: Mme Jimmy, Ibe Yang Sang, Guy, Gérard, Etienne, Jean Via, Alain and his wife, Franck;
- Village of Antananarivo: Bemahaso, Rabezafy Paul, R. Alain, Sôko and even the Mayor;
- Village of Imorona: Arthur;
- Village of Seranambe: Germain;
- Village of Vohibe: Romule;
- Village of Vohitralanana: Esita.

The following 11 vehicles have carried rosewood : Toyota 3924 AD, Toyota 3929 AD, Toyota 2261 AD, Toyota 2155 AD, Toyota 0251 AF, Toyota 3992 AD, Toyota 3737 AD, Toyota 4815 AE, Toyota 3937 AD, Toyota 2261 AD, Nissan Patrol 5531 AC.

03 August 2010

- 1/ Mr Sanjay (one of the President's advisers) gave a personal cheque as warranty to the Minister of Finance for the export of 79 containers of rosewood loaded on the Bona Terra (79 containers x 72 million Ariary), which demonstrates that he is involved in trafficking of rosewood. After the ship left Madagascar, Sanjay got his cheque back and gave a sum in cash to the Minister (the amount of cash was well below the amount of the cheque). This clearly demonstrated corruption and that the precious timber trade involves a relative of the President.
- 2/ The situation in Mananara-Nord had become grave. The rosewood by now had almost been extirpated in the Park. People in the Task Force were actively involved in timber trafficking; places where confiscated logs have been deposited are violated, the mayors being the activators. Smugglers boasted that they are "special advisor to the Minister" and threatened the Judicial

Police Officers to transfer them in the middle of nowhere. The logging and transport of products continued.

13 August 2010

On 12 August, the Minister of Commerce arrived in Antalaha to “attend a football game” to be held Saturday or Sunday. He was to be joined on Saturday by Camille Vital, the PM. What raised eyebrows was his choice of accommodation: to save public resources, he could have gone to Sambava and stayed in the residence of the Head of the Region. Concerned about his comfort, he could have chosen a hotel in Antalaha. But instead, he found accommodation in a private home on loan for the occasion, fitted out by rosewood traders. The person in charge of this mission is Ms. Body, wife of Thierry Body, found guilty on 20 October 2008 by the Court of Antalaha (No. 3434) for illegal logging of rosewood but escaped further problems due ‘benefit of the doubt’, like most of his co-defendants... If the PM is not responsible for his relatives (Colonel Balbine is his cousin and a lot has been said about him as the head of the Task Force), he should have made a more careful choice for his local accommodation.

22 August 2010

This Sunday, a private jet arrived in Antananarivo from Jakarta. It came to collect Mr Mamy Ravatomanga and Mr Patrick Leloup, to take them to China. These two men are close to Rajoelina and are deeply involved in the rosewood trafficking. They were being flown to the timber purchasers based in China.

09 September 2010

A South African journalist, Neil Shaw, was arrested in Maroantsetra while completing a report on rosewood trafficking. He said: “I encountered some problems in Maroantsetra. My guide and I were arrested by police on our way home in Maroantsetra, on Sunday evening at about 9 pm. We were taken to the police and spent several hours with the police Captain, the Chief of the district, the local chief of Water and Forest, and a police officer. They confiscated the memory cards of my camera and took my passport. Then we were released and I returned to my hotel. The next morning I complained about this situation and told them that I had alerted my embassy and a lawyer. They then have exploded in rage against my guide, especially the local chief of Water and Forests. I had to agree to erase all images of rosewood from my camera. Then I signed a document saying that I deleted the pictures because I did not have a special permission from the Minister of the Environment to film precious wood.”

11 September 2010

Rosewood: a member of the family of PM Camille Vital established a monopoly in Maroantsetra. In recent weeks, the various operators working in the rosewood cartel, slowed activities somewhat, because of the publicity stunts orchestrated - and those suffered - by the transitional government: that applies to all but one operator, a resident of Maroantsetra, very close to the Prime Minister, Camille Vital, who is said to be his son-in-law... This operator sent, in mid-August, a hundred tons of rosewood to Toamasina and according to the information provided by the transporters, there was probably still another hundred tons awaiting transfer to Toamasina. Curiously, the warehouse in Maroantsetra belonging to this businessman has never been visited by the “Task Force”. During transportation of timber towards Toamasina, the carriers maintained that a mere mention of this operator’s name is sufficient to pass through the police roadblocks between Maroantsetra and his warehouse in Toamasina, somewhere at the refinery “deposit Analankininina”, where the logs are stored until they are exported.

A hundred tons were by then ready in Maroantsetra for transportation. Since the media’s harassment of the government, the government responded by pretending to stop the illegal

rosewood trafficking. For that reason the small crafts traveling from the Masoala unloaded the timber in Maroantsetra after 8 pm. They stop at about 3 am. By dawn, all would appear to be in order at the warehouse located just on the edge of Anjahanambo.

27 October 2010

Many security officers (police, gendarmerie) were transferred from Sambava following the arrival in this town of Angelin Befototo and the so-called Mr Zelin from Andapa. Mr Zelin wanted his rosewood trafficking to be hassle-free, without hindrance or controls on the roads. The police officers opposed this, but they had to relent. He is also the first TGV party leader in the region SAVA. This is the party founded by the President of the HAT. Until now, his timber trading remains a thriving concern.

05 November 2010

1/ The Kiara, CMA-CGM, left Vohemar towards Toamasina. From the vessel, 100 empty containers were offloaded and she was set to return to Vohemar in two days, to resume, once containers were loaded.

2/ The mafia were trying to fill some empty containers with rosewood. But they were very furtive: they tried to hire trucks to take empty containers from the port, to fill them with rosewood from private deposits around Vohemar. It is said they offered 120 million Ariary to the Receiver of Customs in Vohemar, who agreed to turn a blind eye to the operation. They also said they have the consent from the highest level of state to do so, as long as the timber trafficking was not too visible.

Conclusion: all levels of the government are involved in trafficking, but at the highest level, care is taken to maintain an immaculate facade.

08 November 2010

There was an attempted export of rosewood from Vohemar in the previous week. A man named "Veve" (actually Vernier Mathon, a Chinese-Malagasy from the SAVA), posing as an advisor of the President, tried to fill a few containers with rosewood to export them on the Kiara, chartered by the company CMA-CGM, the parent company of Delmas. But his actions were very visible. He proclaimed to everyone that he was acting with the consent of the HAT and that he had bought the complicity of the local Customs.

The newspaper La Vérité, in an article published on November 2, sounded a first warning of what was really going on. More details were provided by anonymous informants who confirmed the actions being prepared. But it was an official of the Forestry Administration who really prevented the traders succeeding. With his colleagues, he has tracked each empty container in the port area of Vohemar by its serial number and checked their contents. Thus, the traders failed to find a container to fill out of sight of officials. We must also recognize that CMA-CGM was very careful with this cargo and checked all the documents. It is very likely that the misadventure of the two representatives of Maersk in Toamasina (jailed the previous month for allowing rosewood to be uploaded of one of their ships) had encouraged the shipping companies to exercise great sensitivity.

13 November 2010

For a long time, a sealed container sat at the port of Mahajanga, and was supposedly filled with scrap metal by an unknown businessman. The owner of the container, the company CMA-CGM, wanted to get it back. It therefore requested the port authorities to open the container. Surprise: no scrap metal inside, but rosewood, which was immediately seized. So thanks to CMA-CGM, some stock was discovered and seized... But who is the owner of this wood?

16 November 2010

On-line publishing of a video linking Rajoelina to the rosewood trafficking:

http://news.mongabay.com/2010/1105-rajoelina_eia_video.html

http://fr.mongabay.com/news/2010/fr1105-rajoelina_eia_video.html

18 November 2010

An observer from Mananara Nord lists the rosewood deposits in the region, in UTM coordinates:

- Antanambaobe = rosewood deposit at 745131, 1089020
- Andranombazaha = rosewood deposit at 741893, 1066509
- Sahasoa = ongoing logging, ca. 50 tons ready since Oct. 2010 at 760520, 1079394
- Ambodimanga = rosewood deposit at 759149, 1076914
- Inara = rosewood deposit at 747382, 1081963
- Varary = rosewood deposit at 742232, 1077672
- Sandrakatsy = rosewood deposit at 739333, 1080638
- Antanananivo = rosewood deposit at 750681, 1086686.

16 December 2010

The Director of Water and Forests of Andapa, named Evarist, issued numerous permits to log and burn the forest. In addition, he granted the permit to log Antohakalava last year for 2 million Ariary. He is used to sending his henchmen into the most remote sites to collect money from bad debtors: anyone who has not paid his logging permits in time has to pay double. And everything falls into the pocket of Evarist...

20 December 2010

1/ The son of the owner of the Hotel Coco Beach in Maroantsetra, has been found to be involved in the rosewood trafficking. Mr Tadahy Ta Tseung (half Chinese and the 2nd largest rosewood traffickers in Maroantsetra, Arland Ramialison being No. 1) is the cousin of the owner of the Hotel Coco Beach. He stores rosewood in a building behind the hotel, building that once served as a casino and nightclub. Ta Tseung, son of the former mayor of Maroantsetra, is a member of Camille Vital's family.

2/ Arland Ramialison gained notoriety when one of his ships sank in 2008, off the south side of the Masoala peninsula. His ship was used for transporting various types of dubious cargo, including human bones. In 2008, the ship was on a journey between Toamasina and Antalaha or Vohemar, and passed off the Anjanaharibe sacred site (the most sacred site in all the Masoala), and it was wrecked¹¹ for no apparent reason, at only 100 m off the coast, in good weather conditions. Mobile phones of the crew and other means of communication all broke down too. The traditional explanation is that the sacred site Anjanaharibe has a tremendous power and punishes the evil or unclean. When local villagers boarded the ship to search it weeks after the sinking, they were shocked to discover the bones of dozens of people, along with the corpses of the crew. The boat was carrying other goods, and the bones were not the main cargo. But they discovered in a small room, only visible after the rest of the cargo had been washed away. This room contained the remains of about 40 people. The theft of bones from tombs in Madagascar is a growing problem and many believe that Arland Ramialison is - or has been - involved in this trade, in addition to trading rosewood. It is considered taboo to sail off Anjanaharibe while wearing a hat, or to point at it with a finger. But it's even worse to go around it with human remains. Arland has already received infamy: to try to improve his reputation, he prayed for the Tangalamena of the Anjanaharibe site to allow him to sacrifice two zebus to appease the spirits of the ancestors and the forests of Masoala, where his teams had illegally logged rosewood for many years. But the Tangalamena refused, believing that Arland was neither pure nor clean, having

¹¹ Voir la photo : <http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.116911808407718.18958.100002666991183#!/photo.php?fbid=117826924982873>

done too many bad things in the region. The wreck of the ship is located at coordinates S16° 00.383', E50° 09.079'.

3/ Many believe that illegal logging in the Masoala has not decreased in 2010, equaling the 2009 levels. Increasingly, smaller logs have been accepted, with lesser diameters and loggers have to go deeper in the forest to find them. Two informed observers believe that this rate can be sustained for another five years, after which there will be no rosewood left to fell. The most active logging areas of the Masoala are on the Eastern slope, particularly between the mouths of the Rivers Fampotakely and Ambohitralanana. It is now possible to drive directly with a 4x4 from Antalaha to these locations. A few GPS points where rosewood deposits are noticed: Ankoalahidy on the beach at S15° 37.346", E50° 23.565'. Maroantsetra, outdoor deposit along the River Antainambalana S15° 25.951', E49° 45.487'. Interviews clearly showing cases of corruption within Madagascar National Parks have been recorded.

07 January 2011

The president of an influential national NGO: "I do not know if you know but the HAT was to issue a decree completely legalizing the rosewood trade in February 2010. But we intervened at top level to sign the Decree 2010-141 prohibiting the exploitation and export of precious woods. GW and EIA produced a film incriminating the President of the HAT in the rosewood case, but he denied everything, by phone, while he admitted that he was hosting, through Monja Roindefo, "Chinese investors" in Ambohitsirohitra without having to make a deal with them. Ultimately one has to wonder what such workshops could be used for, when we know for example that the authorities twice (in January 2009 and September 2009) illegally authorized massive exports of rosewood from Madagascar (without real stock, without permit and sourced from protected areas), and that if thus far they have not made any statement with concrete actions to assert a strong political will, we must get the message out that they are complicit in the trade of illegally sourced precious timber. Also, I do not think that officials from the civil service will participate in such meetings. And even if they do, what can we produce with the underlings? The Alliance Voahary Gasy brought the rosewood matter to State Council for violating the law in November 2009 but there has been no positive response. It seems that this option will not result in any sanction, nor bring back the US\$ 250 million or the lost natural assets. We are concocting Plan B, i.e. accusing individuals who signed the illegal decrees (the last PM of Ravalomanana and three of his ministers, the first PM of Rajoelina and 3 of his ministers and also a Chief of Region who granted a logging license). We believe that it is the best way to deter further corruption and environmental degradation, and to encourage leaders to take drastic measures."

09 January 2011

1/ Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Andrianasoavina accused Ms. Voahirana, Andry Rajoelina's sister, to be involved in the rosewood trafficking.

2/ A tourist reported rosewood and ebony being extracted from the National Park of Montagne d'Ambre and the Special Reserve of Ankarana.

3/ According to another observer, rosewood is sent by boat from Toliara to Mahajanga from where it is shipped directly to China. Rosewood deposits are even visible on the beaches of Mahajanga.

15 January 2011

In Ambositra, rosewood extract is sold as a remedy against stomach pains. A bowl is sold for 500 Ariary. It is popular. Logging and export of rosewood never stopped in Ranomafana. Shipment of timber sourced there was by vessels from Manakara or Farafangana directly to China.

17 January 2011

1/ Makira: the number of loggers increased since the beginning of the year.

2/ Near Maroantsetra, villagers caught a poacher who had killed an indri. They took him to the police. The case was not taken forward and the poacher was released.

3/ Corals of the Bay of Antongil are now covered with sediment and may die. Local scientists say that this sediment comes from the formerly clear rivers of the Masoala as a result of deforestation and rain.

19 January 2011

An observer in Foulpointe reported that boats regularly arrive at night in front of Foulpointe. They throw rosewood logs in the sea near the shore and the logs are uploaded the next night. He saw this at least 3 times in recent months. The timber comes from Mananara where another observer sees trucks transporting rosewood daily.

10 February 2011

The son of the owner of Tampololodge's land, a man named Risy is also deeply involved in the local ecotourism area of Ambanizana at Sahalegno, western Masoala National Park. He is the instigator of the rosewood traffic in the area and probably the one who killed the red ruffed lemurs there.

20 April 2011

A tourist reported: "I wanted to tour for 4 days in Anjanaharibe-Sud. Impossible. There had been miners at work for at least four months there. Some of them are coming from as far as from Maroantsetra. They work inside and outside the reserve, cut trees and hunt lemurs and birds for food. Madagascar National Parks cannot guarantee our safety." Meanwhile the government has tried to include the Special Reserve of Anjanaharibe-Sud within the Rainforests of Atsinanana UNESCO site...

22 June 2011

Six containers of rosewood loaded in Toamasina were discovered in Mauritius and seized by the Customs. The cargo had been falsely declared as beans, zebu horn and marine products.

28 June 2011

Many Chinese left Ampanefena (between Sambava and Vohemar) where there are almost no gems to be extracted. They settled en mass around Andapa, from where they organize the pillaging of Anjanaharibe-Sud Reserve. According to an official of Madagascar National Parks on the spot: "miners are so numerous that it is impossible to stop them." They are looking for precious and semi-precious gems, bound for China and Thailand. The quartz is loaded in containers in Vohemar from where it leaves Madagascar and the other gems are leaving the country in the personal luggage of passengers flying out of the capital city.

29 June 2011

1/ A man, whose wife speaks Mandarin, reported the following: While they were at the restaurant Camarade in Sambava, she heard many Chinese shouting over their mobiles in the yard, to people in China. After overhearing the conversation, she told her husband: "These men are dangerous gangsters. Let's leave immediately."

2/ Sambava: local fishermen have sought help from a vazaha. Some Chinese wanted to buy a lot of sea turtles from them. The fishermen are catching many turtles in their nets and they wonder what to do. They asked the vazaha to allow them to rent some drums and a warehouse to store the merchandise. The vazaha refused, explaining that it was illegal, and warned the authorities.

30 June 2011

The Chinese involved in the gem trafficking in Andapa have been staying at hotel Tam Yock. The stones the most sought after are quartz with titanium inclusion (“volohair”), even tiny stones. They are used in jewelry and pagan practices. Normal quartz, found in Ampanefena has an industrial use. The price is exponential according to size. In Daraina, someone pulled out a ton of quartz. Now, everyone digs everywhere.

01 July 2011

1/ Five or six containers of rosewood were seized in the stronghold of Monja Roindifo in Toliara, after having been scanned by Customs. The timber smuggling continues.

2/ Customs strike in Antananarivo will be extended to the entire island next week. Reason: Customs officers do not want their two colleagues in Toamasina to be the only ones imprisoned in the case of the seized rosewood in Mauritius, because the entire hierarchy above them is as involved. When a new customs officer is assigned to Toamasina, he must accept to be part of this traffic, otherwise he would be transferred to the other end of the island. In fact, it is more than individual corruption - an entire system has been unveiled. This is new.

3/ There are many Chinese settled around Andapa, even deep in the bush. A lot of beer, many working girls, lots of movement through the Anjanaharibe-Sud Reserve. In Andapa, the prices for food rose by 30% in two months due to the influx. Everyone sells gems from the Reserve at every street corner.

Social consequence: large increase in alcohol abuse and burglary.

10 July 2011

The 6 containers seized on July 9 by the mixed brigade in Vohemar were in the name of Gilbert Randrianasolo, director of the company Mamilaza. They were supposed to contain industrial quartz, but they were loaded with rosewood. Witnesses said that the containers were loaded in a small village next to Ampanefena. Once in Vohemar, the 6 containers were sealed under the supervision of the ship's agent, the representative of the shipping company CMA-CGM. If it were not for the intervention by the brigade, CMA-CGM would have, once again, exported illegally sourced rosewood without any document, having sealed containers without monitoring them, as required by law¹².

18 July 2011

1/ There is a lot of quartz traffic near Rantabe, in Makira, and even in the Masoala National Park, near Ambanizana. The purest quartz is indistinguishable even if it is put in water. It is used in optics.

2/ A large stock of Dalbergia has been reported near Maroantsetra, between the Solima depot and Varangotra crossing, north of the track. “Max” whose real name is Maurice Gantner, a Frenchman expelled from Gabon few years ago, is the owner. He is Ta Tseung's brother in law and probably financing the operation.

19 July 2011

Rajoelina left Madagascar for France, taking Mamy Ravatomanga with him. This “young millionaire” is known for his involvement in the rosewood trafficking and customs frauds (importing of containers of “medical alcohol” ie tax-free, for his Ilafy Polyclinic, when it was actually rum for licensed premises of the Island). Yet this same man is suspected by the Prime Minister to be the owner of the 300 tons of wood seized in the Comoros. He should therefore be prohibited from leaving the country.

¹² See additional information: <http://www.fichier-pdf.fr/2011/August/08/les-dessous-de-l-affaire-de-vohemar-2/?ref=nl>

29 July 2011

The owners of the rosewood seized in Vohemar on July 9 were identified but not arrested by the authorities. They are Ms. Edith Mbotifeno and her husband, and Claude Kam Hyo from Antalaha. This is the second time that these people from Antalaha were arrested since the 2009 crisis. Ms. Mbotifeno had already been sentenced to six months in prison in 2008 for similar reasons. In December 2009, she exported 188 tons of wood for more than a million dollars to China.

02 August 2011

A truck carrying 450 logs of rosewood from Antalaha to Antsiranana was intercepted 30 km south of Antsiranana. The owner of the wood is Hassan Koubesh, a businessman from Sambava.

