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Lenin Ndebele

US, Japan and EU ready to work with Madagascan President Rajoelina if he guarantees electoral reforms

США, Японія та ЄС готові працювати з президентом Мадагаскару Раджуеліною, якщо він гарантує виборчі реформи

Сполучені Штати, Європейський Союз та Японія пообіцяли співпрацювати з президентом Мадагаскару Анрі Раджуеліною після його спірного переобрання за умови, що він візьме на себе зобов'язання провести виборчі реформи. 49-річний А. Раджуеліна отримав 58,96 % голосів і був оголошений переможцем, що дало йому можливість переобратися на третій термін після того, як Вищий конституційний суд країни відхилив численні скарги, подані опозицією, яка стверджує, що вибори були з порушеннями та фальсифікаціями. Спочатку було 13 кандидатів у президенти, але перед виборами 10 відмовилися від участі, що спричинило низьку явку виборців.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/us-japan-and-eu-ready-to-work-with-madagascan-president-rajoelina-if-he-guarantees-electoral-reforms-20231206>

After electoral disputes, Madagascar's High Constitutional Court declared Andry Rajoelina president.

The US, Japan and EU have called on Rajoelina to work towards political and electoral reforms. There are fears of riots ahead of Rajoelina's inauguration, expected sometime in December. The United States, European Union, and Japan have promised to work cooperatively with Madagascan President Andry Rajoelina after his disputed re-election, provided he commits to electoral reforms.

The 49-year-old Rajoelina received 58.96% of the votes cast on 16 November and was on Friday declared the winner, giving him a third term, after the country's High Constitutional Court dismissed numerous challenges lodged by the opposition claiming electoral irregularities and rigging.

Initially, there were 13 presidential candidates, but going into the election, 10 pulled out, resulting in a low voter turnout.

Siteny Randrianasoloniaiko, the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Madagascar (PSD), finished second with only 14.39% of the votes.

The 10 opposition candidates who boycotted the election, joined by Randrianasoloniaiko, have stated that they will not accept the results and will continue their protests.

Opposition rallies are still expected around the country in the coming weeks, particularly in Antananarivo.

The likelihood of conflicts with security personnel has increased, warned Crisis24, an integrated risk management and crisis response think tank.

Madagascar has a history of election crises, the most notable being in 2009. The polls ended in a coup that installed Rajoelina as president and led to violence between demonstrators and security forces.

In a statement, the US reaffirmed its commitment to Rajoelina's administration but urged it to improve electoral systems and address all disputes related to the polls.

The statement attributed to US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller reads:

We strongly urge the National Independent Elections Commission to take action to address these deficiencies and call on Malagasy authorities to thoroughly investigate all irregularities and allegations of fraud, implement needed reforms highlighted by international and domestic observers, and address the needs and wishes of the citizens of Madagascar

Japan's foreign press secretary Kobayashi Maki said his country hoped that under the leadership of Rajoelina, Madagascar "will make further progress in its efforts for further development as a democratic nation."

He added that this could only be achieved by "including confidence-building measures for dialogue among all stakeholders."

Top Madagascar court confirms Rajoelina's re-election as president

The EU, in a statement, said the president should "take steps to restore confidence conducive to dialogue."

Madagascar has one of the highest poverty rates in the world, reaching 75% in 2022. Ahead of the elections, there were fears that social difficulties and the economy, battered by climate change and politics, would get worse if the outcome didn't reflect the will of the people.