

**THE SECURITY SITUATION POST-CRISIS:
THE IMPACT OF THE NEW POLICIES TO IMPROVE SECURITYⁱ**

Introduction

Madagascar has been in the grip of a political crisis since the beginning of the year due to a dispute in the presidential elections. General strikes and roadblocks have hit hard on the economy of Madagascar and therefore on the welfare of its people. However, since the middle of the year, Marc Ravalomanana has widely been recognized as the new president of Madagascar. The new regime has established new priorities and one of the goals of the Ravalomanana government is to reduce the criminality that was rampant before and during the political crisis. More in particular, the government vowed to fight the 'dahalo' plague¹. This policy brief discusses the impact of the new policies to improve security and more specifically its impact on the incidences of theft.

As primary data on the situation post-crisis are scarce, the Ilo program, in collaboration with INSTAT and FOFIFA, organized a survey in November/ December 2002 in 150 communes². The major purpose of the survey was to evaluate the impact of the crisis. Therefore, most questions were formulated as recall questions on the period before (July/December 2001), during (January/June 2002) and after the crisis (July/December 2002).

The stratified sampling frame was set up in such a way to be representative of the situation at the national and provincial level. Fivondronana were divided in six strata depending on the distance to the capital of the province (close, medium, far) and on the availability of a tarred road. In each strata, one fivondronana was selected for every province. In each fivondronana (36 in total), four communes were selected randomly.

1. The situation after the political crisis

a. There is a highly improved sense of security post-crisis compared to the period during as well as before the crisis. The situation improved dramatically in the provinces of Mahajanga, Toliara and Fianarantsoa. The situation did not improve in Antsiranana. This province is now perceived to be the most insecure.

The importance of the rural insecurity problem in Madagascar during the crisis was illustrated by lots of anecdotic evidence in the newspapers as well as by a quantitative survey (Ilo program, 2002). The situation clearly worsened during the crisis, even compared to an already bad security situation before the crisis³. The provinces of Mahajanga, Toliara, and Fianarantsoa appeared to have the highest insecurity problems and especially the less populated and more remote communes seemed to suffer most (Fafchamps and Moser, 2002).

To evaluate the impact of the political crisis and the new policies to improve security, we asked a communal focus group, representative of the population of the communes, on their perception of security in the commune and the risk of theft of personal goods before (July/December 2001), during (January/June 2002) and after the crisis (July/December 2002). The results are shown in Table 1 and on Map 1 and 2. The situation improved dramatically. In comparison with the pre-crisis period, where 39% of the communes reported bad or very bad security conditions, now only 16% of the communes reported problems with security. A high 48% of the communes perceive security now to be good or very good.⁴

When one looks at the provinces in more detail, large differences are noticed. Table 1 shows that especially the province of Antsiranana still has problems with security. While the situation improved a bit post-crisis in comparison with the period of the crisis (-9%), the level of security stayed the same as last year: a high 54% of the communes perceive security to be bad or very bad. On the other hand, the province of Mahajanga still has problems with security (25%) but remarkably less than in 2001 (-38%). Except for Antananarivo (a small decrease of the sense of security of 4%, but then this province had least problems with security in the first place) and Antsiranana, all the other provinces have an improved

¹ Operation 'Vahoro' started mid-October 2002 and covered the SAVA region as well as the provinces of Fianarantsoa, Toliara and Mahajanga (Madagascar Tribune; 7/10/2002).

² Out of 1392 communes in total, i.e. more than 10% of the communes.

³ At the end of 2001 INSTAT/DSM organized a household survey, representative at the national level. In this survey, rural households were asked on their perception of security in the village and the risk of theft of their goods. A high 64% of the households reported that the security conditions and risk for theft were bad to very bad.

⁴ Focus groups were asked to choose between very bad, bad, medium, good, and very good when evaluating their security situation.

sense of security after the crisis in comparison with the same period before or during the crisis. The amelioration of the security in the provinces of Toliara (-59%) and Fianarantsoa (-30%) in particular is remarkable.

Table 1: Percentage of communes with bad or very bad security conditions (focus group perceptions)

	July-Dec 2001	Jan-June 2002	July-Dec 2002
Madagascar	39	38	16
Antananarivo	4	13	8
Fianarantsoa	38	38	8
Toamasina	14	25	0
Mahajanga	63	38	25
Toliara	63	54	4
Antsiranana	54	63	54

Source: Post-crisis survey 2002, Ilo program/INSTAT/FOFIFA

b. The incidences of theft are down compared to the period before and during the crisis. Compared to the same period before the crisis, the average number of zebu theft and crop theft decreased by about 60% and 10% respectively.

Table 2 shows the situation before, during, and after the crisis concerning the two types of insecurity that were reported in the crisis survey. Overall, a decrease in the incidences of theft is noticed. Zebu theft, considered one of the major causes of insecurity in rural areas, decreased enormously in comparison with the same period in 2001 (-56%)⁵: before the crisis, an average of 1.78 cases per week per commune was reported; during the second half of 2002, this number decreased to 0.78.

An analysis by province shows that the biggest decrease in zebu theft is seen in the province of Fianarantsoa where incidences of theft decreased by approximately 89%. The two provinces most touched by the incidences of zebu theft in 2001 were the province of Toliara and Mahajanga. This reflects partly the higher number of cattle in these regions. Approximately 32% and 30% of the national herd in 1995 was present in Mahajanga and Toliara, respectively (Service Statistique, Direction d'Élevage, 1998). Although the cases of zebu theft decreased significantly in Mahajanga (-66%) after the crisis, the province is still seriously touched by the plague. On the other hand, the province of Toliara shows no amelioration as the incidences of zebu theft increased slightly with 3%. However, this seems due to some incidences of a large theft as the median number declined over time⁶.

Overall incidences of crop theft also decreased compared to the period before and during the crisis. The cases of crop theft decreased by 9%: 0.35 cases per week on average before the crisis compared to 0.32 cases afterwards. The most significant declines are seen in Mahajanga (-69%) and Toamasina (-26%).

⁵ Given the high seasonality in theft, focus groups were asked to compare to the same period in 2001.

⁶ The median declined from 0.69 zebus stolen on average per week per commune before the crisis to 0 after the crisis.

The province of Fianarantsoa shows a small increase in crop theft (+14%), but the number of cases is in general not very high (Table 2). The high number of crop theft in Antsiranana is remarkable. Moreover, there is no improvement over time. Given that vanilla, a high value product, is a major crop in this province, crop theft is a very lucrative business. This can partly explain the still remaining high sense of insecurity in Antsiranana, as mentioned above.

While the ratio of solved cases of theft over the number of incidences of theft declined during the crisis, this ratio is now back to pre-crisis level. The number of cases of zebu theft solved has declined in all the provinces. The number decreased by 54%, from 0.26 cases solved before the crisis to 0.12 cases solved afterwards (Table 2). However, the number of thefts has declined accordingly indicating that efficiency of theft resolution stayed the same.

Table 2: Incidences of theft per week per commune (as reported in focus group interviews)

Average	July-Dec 2001	Jan-June 2002	July-Dec 2002	% change July-Dec 2001/02
Number of zebus stolen				
Madagascar	1.78	2.12	0.78	-56
Antananarivo	0.58	0.61	0.13	-78
Fianarantsoa	2.19	2.43	0.23	-89
Toamasina	0.37	0.41	0.12	-68
Mahajanga	2.73	1.98	0.92	-66
Toliara	2.92	5.17	3.02	+3
Antsiranana	2.37	2.63	0.61	-74
Number of stolen zebus retrieved				
Madagascar	0.26	0.18	0.12	-54
Antananarivo	0.17	0.02	0.07	-59
Fianarantsoa	0.28	0.35	0.15	-46
Toamasina	0.13	0.12	0.01	-92
Mahajanga	0.78	0.32	0.38	-51
Toliara	0.20	0.25	0.16	-20
Antsiranana	0.09	0.07	0.02	-78
Cases of crop theft				
Madagascar	0.35	0.39	0.32	-9
Antananarivo	0.15	0.13	0.13	-13
Fianarantsoa	0.07	0.11	0.08	+14
Toamasina	0.19	0.28	0.14	-26
Mahajanga	0.32	0.34	0.10	-69
Toliara	0.01	0.02	0.01	+0
Antsiranana	1.65	1.72	1.67	+1

Source: Post-crisis survey 2002, Ilo program/INSTAT/FOFIFA

2. Explanations for the improved security

Cause 1: Interventions

An increase in the number of security interventions has led to a higher (sense of) security. These punctual interventions are perceived successful by 65% of the population.

Table 3 shows the average number of punctual interventions against criminality in the communes (Operation Dahalo, etc.). Overall, an increase in punctual and specific interventions is noticed, from 1.27 interventions in general, during the last semester of 2001 to 1.93 interventions post-crisis, i.e. an increase by more than 50% (Table 3). The interventions could have been higher because of two reasons: the frequency of the existing interventions or

the number of communes visited increased. It seems that most of the change is driven by a higher number of communes visited as the number of communes where interventions were reported increased by more than 40%. The increase in (the sense of) security seems therefore driven not by an increase in the intensity of visits but by more spatial outreach. An analysis by province shows that the biggest increase in the percentage of communes controlled appeared in the province of Toliara and Mahajanga, where more than 50% of the communes were controlled for the first time after the crisis.

Table 3: Punctual interventions against criminality (as reported in focus group interviews)

Average	July-Dec 2001	Jan-June 2002	July-Dec 2002	% change July-Dec
Number of interventions				
Madagascar	1.27	1.44	1.93	+52
Antananarivo	0.90	0.50	1.40	+56
Fianarantsoa	0.75	0.85	1.75	+133
Toamasina	0.31	0.77	1.54	+397
Mahajanga	2.21	2.07	1.93	-13
Toliara	0.83	1.17	1.75	+111
Antsiranana	2.83	3.50	3.25	+15
Frequency of existing interventions				
Madagascar	3.22	3.19	2.13	-34
Percent of communes controlled				
Madagascar	39	41	81	+42

Source: Post-crisis survey 2002, Ilo program/INSTAT/FOFIFA

The interventions are mainly organized by the local gendarmerie, but there are also interventions on the communal and provincial level and on the level of the fokontany. More than half of the rural population (65%) perceives the actions taken against insecurity as successful (Table 4). 91% of them perceive the interventions as average to very good. Only 4% of the population is not satisfied.

Table 4: Quality and efficiency of interventions (focus group perceptions)

Percentage	July-Dec 2002
Very bad	0
Bad	4
Average	26
Pretty good	28
Very good	37
No opinion	5
Total	100

Source: Post-crisis survey 2002, Ilo program/INSTAT/FOFIFA

Cause 2: Law enforcement personnel

The presence of more permanent law enforcement personnel in the field has also led to a decrease in the incidence of cattle and crop theft.

The gendarmerie has done significant efforts over recent years to reduce the incidence of crime. For example, the number of gendarmes in the field has increased by 33% in 2001 compared to four years earlier (ROI, 2002). The gendarmerie claims that due

to their increased presence, cattle theft was reduced by 30% over four years⁷.

Table 5 shows that the number of permanent law enforcement personnel in the field has increased post-crisis in comparison with the same period before the crisis. In general, the number of gendarmes increased, from 3.9 on average per commune before the crisis to 4.6 after the crisis. The increase in the number of soldiers is also remarkable: from 0.9 on average per commune pre-crisis to 2.4 post-crisis. A possible explanation is that the soldiers, who were placed in the communes during the crisis, stayed there afterwards.

Table 5: Number of law enforcement personnel in the commune (focus group estimations)

Average	July-Dec 2001	Jan-June 2002	July-Dec 2002
Gendarmes	3.95	3.86	4.56
Mobiles quarters	27.67	27.59	27.46
Policemen	0.70	0.72	0.73
Local Policemen (Communal-Municipal)	1.03	1.03	1.00
Soldiers	0.94	2.12	2.42
Total	34.29	35.32	36.17

Source: Post-crisis survey 2002, Ilo program/INSTAT/FOFIFA

Hence, the policies to improve security post-crisis seemingly have led to a decrease in the number of thefts. Thieves perceive that they have a higher chance to be caught and consequently for some of them the risk becomes too high and they give up their business. On the other hand, for the ones who continue stealing, the chances to be caught post-crisis stayed apparently the same.

3. Implications

Due to the success of the new security policies, improving security dropped as a priority for development in a significant number of communes. However, the justice system clearly needs more work. An astonishing high 54% of the communes believe that when a zebu thief is caught, he will "probably not" or "maybe" be sent to or stay in prison.

The importance of the rural insecurity problem is illustrated by interviews that were held with focus groups in each commune in Madagascar at the end of 2001 (Ilo program, 2002b). The focus group was given the choice between seven government interventions (health, education, security, transport, agriculture, environment, water) and had to rank them in importance. At the national level, 15% of the communes stated that insecurity was the first priority for government intervention. 13% of the communes reported security to be the second most important priority. In this post-crisis survey, this situation changed: only 9% of the communes mentioned

⁷ For example, the gendarmerie usually uses punctual interventions to pursue Dahalo attacks. On average, they last 20 days, require 85 agents and cost about 20 million FMg (ROI, 2002).

security as the first priority for government intervention and 5% stated higher security conditions as a second priority for development. This illustrates the positive security dynamics in the post-crisis era.

However, a lot of work is still needed. The justice system is still little trusted by the population of the rural communes. This is illustrated by the results of the perceived consequence on the capture of a cattle thief. For the country as a whole, 27% of the communes believe that it is unlikely that a cattle thief, if caught, would be sent to prison and stay there (see Table 6). Only 46% of the rural population has some trust in the justice system. When one looks at the data in more detail, strong provincial differences are noticed. In Antsiranana, only 12% of the population gave a positive answer to this question. A high 67% of the rural communes think a thief, if caught, would not get the sentence he deserves. This lack of trustworthy justice probably explains partly the remaining high sense of insecurity in this province as mentioned above. In the province of Antananarivo on the other hand, 88% of the population has trust in the justice system.

Table 6: Trust in the justice system (Nov/Dec 2002)

Percent	% of answers of focus groups to the question: 'Suppose a big cattle thief is caught in this commune, would he be sent to prison and stay there?'				Total
	Very likely	Likely	Maybe	Probably not	
Madagascar	22	24	27	27	100
Antananarivo	46	42	12	0	100
Fianarantsoa	17	37	17	29	100
Toamasina	37	19	11	33	100
Mahajanga	21	8	54	17	100
Toliara	8	25	50	17	100
Antsiranana	0	12	21	67	100

Source: Post-crisis survey 2002, Ilo program/INSTAT/FOFIFA

Conclusions

Insecurity has been a major plague in rural Madagascar since centuries (Brown, 1995). This has led to an environment in rural areas where economic development has been curtailed as investments, benefits of trade, and economic exchange are much lower than would be expected in an efficiently functioning economy.

However, the post-crisis era shows some positive developments. New policies to improve security led to an increase in: 1. the number of punctual and specific interventions against criminality in the communes (Operation Dahalo, etc.): it is estimated that the number of communes controlled increased by 42%; 2. the number of permanent law enforcement personnel in the field: an average increase from 34 to 36 agents per commune is noticed.

These policies to improve security have contributed to a dramatic decrease in the incidences of theft post-crisis: zebu and crop theft decreased by about 60% and 10% respectively compared to a year earlier. The new policies caused a higher (sense of) security and as

a consequence security is not longer the top priority of development for the majority of the rural communes. However, the lack of trust in the formal justice system has clearly to be improved.

While the responsible authorities have declared the recent security interventions a semi-failure⁸, the data of the post-crisis survey show that they were also a semi-success. It is very important that the government continues his efforts to tackle criminality, especially in rural Madagascar, as secure property rights are crucial to foster investments in land, labor and capital and are therefore an essential condition for rapid economic growth.

References

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⁸ Opération 'Vahoro': Demi-échec (Madagascar Tribune; 23/01/2003)