

# URGENT ACTION

## DETAINED JOURNALIST NEEDS PROPER MEDICAL CARE

**Fernand Cello, a Malagasy investigative journalist, is facing seven charges including ‘defamation’, ‘endangering state security’, and ‘incitation to hatred’ after he was arrested on Friday, 5 May. The arrest comes after he exposed an illegal sapphire mining site. The company was eventually ordered by the ministry of mining to suspend its operations for contravening the mining code. He was suffering from angina at the time of his arrest for which he needs immediate medical attention that he has not adequately received in detention.**

**Fernand Cello, an investigative journalist for Radio Jupiter, was arrested on Friday, 5 May. He was leaving a private clinic in Antananarivo where he had spent several days receiving treatment for angina. He has had limited access to medical treatment since his arrest, having been taken to hospital once where he was hospitalised for two days.**

Fernand Cello is facing seven charges including ‘defamation’, ‘endangering state security’, and ‘inciting hatred’. It is believed that his arrest, subsequent detention in Ihosy and some of the charges against him may be in relation to his investigative work.

Fernand Cello, whose real name is Avimana Fernand, had been in hiding since December 2016, after having aired a piece in which he accused a mining company and alleged government allies of running an illegal sapphire mine in Ilakaka, South-West Madagascar. The company was eventually ordered by the ministry of mining to suspend its operations for contravening the mining code. A few days after Fernand Cello’s broadcasts, the radio station he works for, Radio Jupiter, was raided by military forces, who confiscated its transmitter. In August 2016, Radio Jupiter was targeted by unknown persons and a local power company turned off its power supply, after Fernand Cello accused them on air of carrying out unfair practices towards their clients.

### 1) TAKE ACTION

**Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:**

- Urging authorities to ensure that pending his release, Fernand Cello is granted immediate access to adequate medical care;
- Calling on them to drop all charges stemming from his legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

### Contact these two officials by 26 June, 2017:

Monsieur le Ministre de la Justice  
Charles Andriamiseza  
43 Rue Joel Rakotomolala  
Faravohitra – Antananarivo, Madagascar  
Email: [sminius@yahoo.fr](mailto:sminius@yahoo.fr)  
Salutation: **Son excellence**

Charge d’Affaires Velotiana Rakotoanosy Raobelina, Embassy of Madagascar  
2374 Massachusetts Ave NW Washington DC 20008  
Tel: 202 265 5525  
Fax: 202 265 3034  
Email: [Madagascar.embassy.dc@gmail.com](mailto:Madagascar.embassy.dc@gmail.com)  
Salutation: **Dear Counsellor**

### 2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 108.17*

Here’s why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## DETAINED JOURNALIST NEEDS PROPER MEDICAL CARE

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Madagascar, freedom of expression, particularly concerning the illegal trafficking of natural resources and the environment, remains risky for those who speak out. Clovis Razafimalala, an environmental activist, is currently in pre-trial detention, after having spoken about against the illegal trafficking of rosewood.

Name: Fernand Cello  
Gender m/f: m

UA: 108/17 Index: AFR 35/6232/2017 Issue Date: 15 May 2017