



Madagascar-BBC: Journalists angry

One hundred journalists demonstrated Friday in the National Assembly against the draft amendment to the law on cybercrime.

The new code of communication into consideration punishes 2 to 5 years' imprisonment any person guilty of defamation of agents and state officials on the Internet.

In a first version of this text, it was planned to remove these penalties but senators finally reintroduced and adopted article 20, subject of controversy.

It penalizes insults and defamation deemed heavy prison sentences by trade unionists who find the text «*draconian*».

In this law on cybercrime, trade unionists also address the fines. Fines that go up to 100 million ariary over 30 000 US dollars.

Bill returned to the table of Deputies is strongly opposed by the press unions.

In 2014, the law on cybercrime had caused the imprisonment of two journalists found guilty of

defamation of government officials.

Unions who showed at the time against some injustice had heard that the text had been adopted in the National Assembly.

« *We do not do this fight only for journalists since any user of social networks, everyone can fall foul of Article 20 »*», supported Lalatiana Rakotondrazafy, Secretary General of the Union of Journalists of Madagascar.

BBC Afrique

Madagascar-Voice of America: Journalists denounce draconian defamation law

One hundred Malagasy journalists demonstrated Friday outside the headquarters of the National Assembly in the capital Antananarivo to demand the repeal of a law on defamation they consider draconian.

Malagasy law now punishes two to five years' imprisonment any defamation via internet agents and state officials.

In its original version, the new bill suppressed both, but senators finally decided to reintroduce, to the chagrin of journalists.

« *We demand the continuation (...) the repeal of Article 20 of the law on cybercrime »*», said the journalist Lalatiana Rakotondrazafy during the event.

«*All citizens are threatened by this law* », said for her part Lova Rabary, editor of the daily L'Express de Madagascar, told AFP.

«*Just publish (online) something that does not please the authorities for us to be dragged to court for defamation* » , she explains.

The bill must now be considered by the deputies before being voted.

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