

## New Madagascar leader declares war on illegal logging

February 5 2014

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Sparse tree cover stands on the once heavily forested slopes at Manantenina in extreme south-east Madagascar on December 11, 2008

Madagascar's new leader vowed Wednesday to toughen his government's crackdown on the illegal trafficking of precious woods from the Indian Ocean island.

Hery Rajaonarimampianina said he would personally "wage this battle

against the trafficking of rosewood."

"The political will exists to fight this evil; it is essential to assert the rule of law," he said in a statement.

The protege of former strongman Andry Rajoelina was sworn in as president on January 25 following elections to restore democracy.

An illegal timber trade in rare wood has long existed in Madagascar, but expanded rapidly after Rajoelina seized power in 2009.

Stringent new rules were introduced in 2011 in a bid to curb the [illegal logging](#) and export of luxury rosewood and ebony.

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Citation: New Madagascar leader declares war on illegal logging (2014, February 5) retrieved 12 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-02-madagascar-leader-declares-war-illegal.html>

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