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# Madagascar : Plague in Madagascar

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## Plague in Madagascar

### Location

Madagascar is an island country off the southeast coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean.

### Population and Language

While Madagascar is located very close to Africa, most of its population is more related to Indonesia than Africa. Madagascar's total population is 24,430,000 people as of 2016. Over 90% of the total population is Malagasy and they primarily speak Malagasy, which is written in Latin (Southall, 2017).

### Religion and Government

Madagascar doesn't have a national religion, but around two-fifths of the population practices

traditional beliefs, which pertain to ancestor worship (Southall, 2017). Madagascar has a republic government with Prime Minister Solonandrasana Olivier Mahafaly in charge. The republic government has two legislative branches, National Assembly and Senate (Southall, 2017). The population votes for their president by popular vote and then the president appoints the prime minister (Southall, 2017).

### Public Crisis

Currently, Madagascar is in a major political crisis that originated from an unconstitutional change of government in 2009 (The World Bank, 2016). This crisis has halted the economic growth and has severely affected Madagascar's economic and social outcomes (The World Bank, 2016).

### The Plague

In 1898, plague became an endemic in Madagascar's central

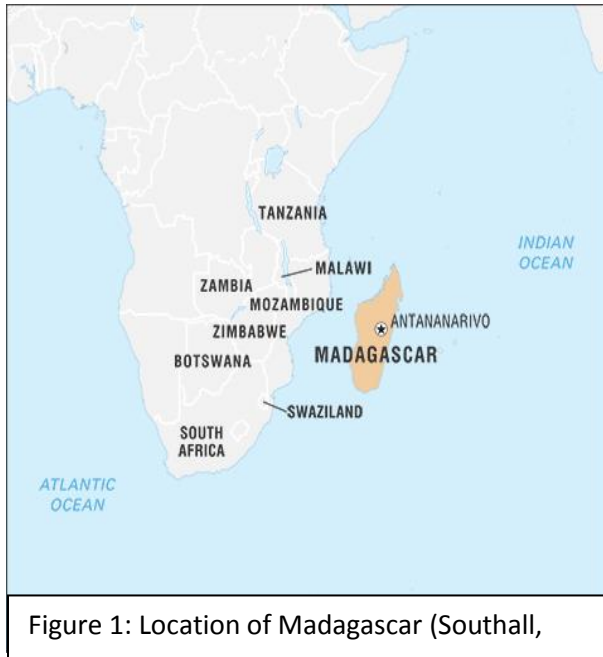


Figure 1: Location of Madagascar (Southall, 2017)

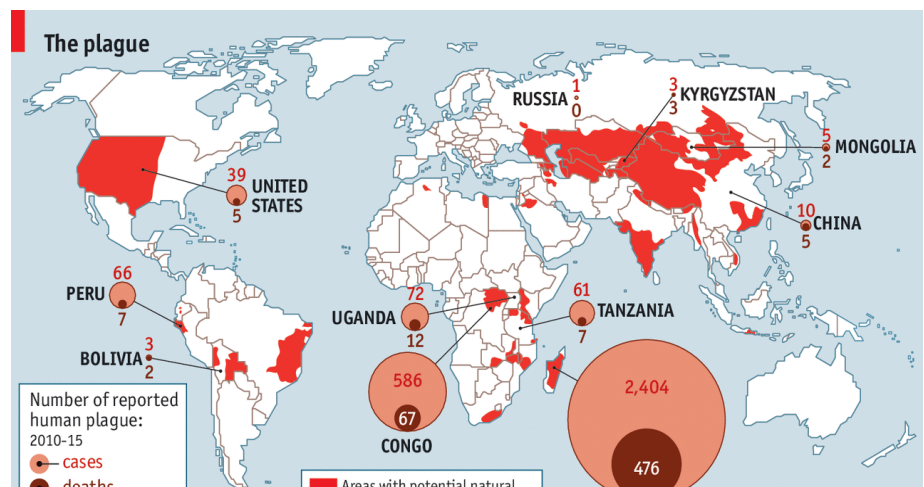


Figure 2: Reported Cases of the plague (The Data Team, 2017)

highlands (Ramasindrazana, 2017). The plague is a flea borne disease that has killed many people throughout history. Madagascar has had the highest number of reported human's infected with the plague (Ramasindrazana, 2017). According to Figure 2, Madagascar has more than double the reported cases, 2,404, than the rest of the world combined, 864. The plague is transmitted to humans through a bite from an infected flea (Kreppel, 2016). Plague is rare around the world, but 90% of all incidences are reported in Africa, with 482 reported cases in the year 2014 (Kreppel, 2016). Madagascar is so susceptible to the plague because of their poor healthcare system and widespread traditional burial methods that require interaction with the corpses (Ramasindrazana, 2017).

### **How to fix the issue**

Because of these problems in their healthcare system and traditional beliefs, no efforts have ever been fully successful. Madagascar has attempted to address the problem, but the plague spreads quicker in poor areas due to the dirty conditions and lack medical treatment for those who get the disease (The Data Team, 2017). For the plague to be a non-factor in Madagascar it will take consistent help from other countries until Madagascar can get out of their political crisis. Since the plague is mostly a disease of poverty, Madagascar will need to improve their financial standing to start eliminating the large amount of people living in poverty. If they can get out of their political crisis and become a growing nation again, Madagascar can use their new income to begin eliminating the poverty which will help the plague issue. In the meantime, while they work their way out of the crisis, if another country could give a loan to Madagascar, they could begin upgrading the poor areas of the country. Madagascar also needs to get enough money to start treating anyone that comes down with the plague. Currently they don't have good enough treatments and are unable to stop the spread of the disease which leads to more people being infected.

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