

Former aide to Madagascar's president found guilty in UK Gemfields bribery case

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A former aide to Madagascan president, Andry Rajoelina, has been found guilty of bribery in a UK court after attempting to solicit bribes from UK ruby and emeralds miner Gemfields.

Romy Andrianarisoa, 47, faced a single charge of bribery under the UK's Bribery Act over allegations that she approached UK mining company Gemfields and offered to help them obtain mining rights in Madagascar in return for 250,000 Swiss francs (around \$280,000) in kickbacks, plus a cut of a future mining deal.

Jurors today returned a guilty verdict on her after less than two hours of deliberation. She was accused of working with Philippe Tabuteau, a French national, to ask the company for bribes. Andrianarisoa worked as chief of staff for Rajoelina.

It can now be reported that Tabuteau had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing. This information was kept from the jury at trial.

Andrianarisoa was arrested last year with Tabuteau at the Sofitel hotel in London's St. James district, after the National Crime Agency set up a sting operation to record a meeting with the pair and an undercover agent posing as a consultant for Gemfields.

Prosecutors for the National Crime Agency said that the former aide had wanted to line her pockets via payments made through a Swiss company. Andrianarisoa had claimed that any potential deal struck with Gemfields would have benefited the people of Madagascar.

The pair will be sentenced at a later date.

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Areas of Interest: Financial Crime

Industries: Mining & Extraction

Geographies: Europe, Northern Europe, United Kingdom