

UK jury sent out in Gemfields Madagascan bribery case

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Romy Andrianarisoa, 47, faces 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.

She is accused of working with Philippe Tabuteau, a French national, to ask the company for bribes. Andrianarisoa worked as chief of staff for Rajoelina. She denies the charge. Tabuteau is not on 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. The company is not accused of any wrongdoing and approached the NCA when it became suspicious of Andrianarisoa and Tabuteau.

Today, judge Christopher Butcher sent the jury out to reach their verdicts in a trial that began on Feb. 7 at Southwark Crown Court. He said the jury shouldn't treat the evidence it heard from the undercover officer, known only as Charles, as different from any other evidence in the case.

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

The trial continues.

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Areas of Interest: Financial Crime

Industries: Mining & Extraction

Geographies: Europe, Northern Europe, United Kingdom