



THE OCTOBER 2025 UNREST: A MAJOR SETBACK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Tanzania Human Rights Report 2025



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SALE**

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TANZANIA HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT 2025

PUBLISHER

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LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHRAGG	Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
H.E.	His/Her Excellency
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
LHRC	Legal and Human Rights Centre
MSA	Media Services Act
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA-VAWC	National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children
OCGS	Office of the Chief Government Statistician

OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCCB	Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
PWAs	Persons with Albinism
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TLS	Tanganyika Law Society
TCRA	Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority
TMC	Tech and Media Convergency
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
WEO	Ward Executive Officer
ZAFAYCO	The Zanzibar Fighting Against Youth Challenges Organization

ABOUT LHRC & ZAFAYCO



Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) is a Tanzanian human rights advocacy organization founded in 1995 as a nongovernmental, voluntary, nonpartisan, and not-for-profit sharing organization to empower and enlighten Tanzanians about their legal and human rights.

LHRC is an icon of human rights protection in Tanzania and a recognized legal authority in addressing diverse human rights issues from a perspective of law and policy. LHRC continues to hold a high public profile in advocacy for human rights in national and international arenas. LHRC has many qualified lawyers as staff, with diverse expertise.

LHRC's operations are extensive, spanning over all 169 districts of Tanzania's mainland, with specific interventions in Zanzibar. LHRC has a presence in remote parts of the country, through its well-designed programs, promoting awareness, and providing support to enable citizens to re-imagine their communities and capacitate them in settling some disputes amicably, and assist them to resolve cases through judicial proceedings if reconciliation fails.

OUR VISION:

LHRC envisions "A just and equitable society" an aspiration anchored with increasing need for accountability, transparency, rule of law, and good governance from the state (parliament, judiciary, and the executive) and non-state actors in the Tanzanian society.

OUR MISSION:

To promote and protect human rights fosters a society where rights are recognized, respected, and upheld. We do this through public empowerment, evidence-based advocacy and human rights monitoring and response.

OUR VALUES:

LHRC is committed to the advancement of its key principles that are, Integrity, Equality and Diversity, Transparency, Accountability, and Professionalism



The Zanzibar Fighting Against Youth Challenges Organization (ZAFAYCO)

is a non - governmental, nonprofit -making membership organization established in 2011 and got its registration the same year on 23rd December, with Registration No. 1047 under the societies Act No.6 of 1995, known as “Zanzibar Fighting Against Youth Challenges Organization”. In the new online registration system ZAFAYCO has been registered under Business Entities Registration Act No. 12 of 2012 with the registration No. Z0000012796. ZAFAYCO now has 40 organization active members (19 females and 21 males) and 4 Board of Trustees members (1 male and 4 females). ZAFAYCO is hierarchically arranged from the Board of Trustees, Annual General Meeting, Executive Committee, Executive Director, Head of Programs, Head of Finance and Administration, MEAL, Program Managers and Coordinator with sub committees. Currently there are 15 staff, 11 are permanent and 4 are part-timers.

Vision: To see Zanzibar youth are very active and flexible in order that they can handle current economic, political, and social challenges.

Mission: ZAFAYCO is dedicated towards promoting young people through awareness raising, capacity building and networking programs which are youth centred, environmentally friendly and development oriented.

Main Objective: The Organization’s main focus is the development of youth and women, by helping all that need help regardless of age, tribe, etc. The most pressing needs of the groups are identified through meetings with community members and possible solutions are worked out in partnership with them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



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Additionally, LHRC expresses appreciation to all individuals and communities who shared information and experiences through the organisation's programmes, as well as to government institutions, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders whose reports and public information contributed to the evidence base of this publication. Their continued engagement remains vital in strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights in Tanzania.

Furthermore, LHRC is appreciative of the ongoing assistance provided by her main partners, the Embassy of Sweden, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the Embassy of Ireland, the Ford Foundation, and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. We greatly value their assistance to LHRC in advancing human rights awareness and observance in Tanzania!

Dr. Anna Henga

LHRC Executive Director

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS



October 2025 unrest and **internet shutdowns** during the election period, leading to unprecedented human rights violations



Formation of Presidential **Commission of Inquiry** to probe the events of October and November 2025



Deregistration and **closure of the Glory of Christ** Tanzania Church (Kanisa la Ufufuo na Uzima)



Important decision of the **African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights** concerning the protection of persons with albinism (PWAs), highlighting State obligations to address violence, discrimination and harmful practices targeting persons with albinism and to ensure effective remedies for victims.



Landmark **constitutional decision on public interest** litigation in *Olungurumwa V. Attorney General*, which reaffirmed the role of courts in safeguarding constitutional rights and clarified the standing of individuals and organizations to institute proceedings in the public interest.



Adoption of the **National Criminal Justice Policy**, constituting an important step toward reforming the criminal justice system by promoting efficiency, strengthening institutional accountability and addressing challenges affecting access to justice and the rights of accused persons.



Persistent **violence against women and children**, including gender-based violence, intimate partner violence and sexual violence against children.



CHADEMA, one of the major opposition political parties, **refusing to sign the Code of Conduct** and boycotting the General Elections, citing the government's failure to implement the proposed electoral reforms



Increased reports of **abductions and disappearances**, including of political actors, raising concerns regarding the right to liberty and personal security.



Digital restrictions during the election period, including disruptions to internet connectivity and limitations affecting certain online platforms, which raised concerns regarding freedom of expression and access to information.



Government initiatives aimed at **socio-economic empowerment**, including continued implementation of council loan programmes for women, youth and persons with disabilities and other social development initiatives.



Launch of the Journalists' Accreditation Board (JAB), a regulatory body tasked with overseeing the registration, accreditation, and professional conduct of journalists.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report assesses the state of human rights in Tanzania during the period of January to December 2025. It examines major developments affecting the protection and enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and identifies emerging trends shaping the human rights landscape in the country. The report also highlights key structural challenges and institutional gaps that continue to affect the effective implementation of human rights protections guaranteed under national, regional, and international legal frameworks.

The analysis presented in this report is primarily informed by data generated internally through human rights monitoring and legal aid programmes. These programmes document incidents reported by citizens, cases handled through LHRC legal aid services, and broader governance and human rights trends observed through the organisation's monitoring activities across the country. Additional information was obtained from credible secondary sources including government publications, court decisions, statements by national oversight institutions, reports by civil society organisations, and reliable media reports. The triangulation of these sources enabled a comprehensive assessment of the human rights situation in 2025.

The year 2025 was characterized by significant political developments, most notably the General Elections held in October. The electoral cycle influenced the broader human rights environment, particularly in relation to civil and political rights. Several developments, including election-related unrest, allegations of enforced disappearances, restrictions affecting civic space and digital communication, and persistent violence against special or marginalized groups, had important implications for the protection of fundamental rights. Although some policy initiatives and public commitments by government authorities indicated efforts to address governance and social protection challenges, the overall trajectory of human rights protection during the year remained concerning.

Key Findings

The findings of this report indicate that the overall human rights situation in Tanzania significantly deteriorated in 2025 compared with previous years. The deterioration was primarily associated with increased violations of civil and political rights, particularly the right to life, the right to liberty and

personal security, the right to equality before the law, and freedoms relating to expression, assembly and political participation.

One of the most significant developments in 2025 was the unrest that occurred during and after the October 2025 General Elections. The election period was characterised by heightened political tensions, protests and security operations in several parts of the country. Reports from various sources indicate that hundreds of individuals were killed during the unrest, with many deaths reported across at least eight regions, including Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Arusha, Mbeya, Mara, Songwe, Shinyanga, and Geita. Reports of deaths, injuries and arrests during election-related demonstrations raised serious concerns regarding the protection of the right to life, the right to liberty, right to peace, and the right to peaceful assembly.

The year 2025 also witnessed increased public concern regarding allegations of abductions and enforced disappearances. LHRC documented at least 80 cases of abductions and disappearances in 2025, involving political actors, journalists, and ordinary citizens. These cases heightened public anxiety regarding personal security and prompted calls from civil society organisations and affected families for transparent investigations and accountability.

Digital rights and internet governance also emerged as key issues during the year. Disruptions to internet connectivity and restrictions affecting certain online platforms during the election period limited the ability of citizens, journalists and civil society organisations to access information and communicate freely. These developments raised concerns regarding the protection of freedom of expression and access to information in the digital space.

At the same time, persistent violence against special groups remained a major human rights concern. Gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence and sexual violence against children, continued to be widely reported. Children constituted the largest proportion of victims, particularly in cases of sexual violence, while women remained disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence and economic abuse. LHRC documented 268 cases of violence against women, including 25 cases of intimate partner violence. Two thirds of incidents of violence against children that LHRC documented were sexual violence. Harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage persisted in certain communities despite existing legal prohibitions. Persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism, also continued to face discrimination, stigma and violence linked to harmful cultural beliefs.

Access to quality health services remained a persistent challenge. Despite increased government investment in the health sector, disparities in access to healthcare services, shortages of skilled health personnel, and limited infrastructure continued to affect service delivery. These challenges were further compounded during the election period, where insecurity and disruptions affected access to emergency and routine healthcare services.

The report further highlights ongoing challenges within the criminal justice system, including arbitrary arrests and detention, denial of bail, prolonged detention, delays in the administration of justice, and barriers to accessing legal remedies. These challenges continue to undermine the protection of the rights of accused persons and the broader principle of equality before the law.

Civic space continued to shrink during 2025. LHRC documented at least 8 incidents involving arrest, harassment, or intimidation of journalists, alongside increased enforcement actions against media actors. The operationalization of the Journalists' Accreditation Board (JAB), coupled with mandatory accreditation requirements, introduced additional restrictions on who can practice journalism, raising concerns regarding freedom of expression.

Land and property-related disputes also remained prevalent, contributing to conflicts, violence, and insecurity in both rural and urban areas. In some instances, these disputes escalated into violent confrontations, further undermining the protection of property rights and access to justice.

Despite these challenges, some positive developments were recorded. These include the adoption of the National Criminal Justice Policy, the landmark constitutional decision in *Olengurumwa V Attorney General*, and continued implementation of socio-economic empowerment programmes targeting women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Tanzania also received three international ICT awards, reflecting progress in digital infrastructure and service delivery.

ZANZIBAR

The human rights situation in Zanzibar in 2025 reflected a mix of relative stability and persistent structural challenges. While large-scale violations such as widespread unlawful killings, destruction of property, and arbitrary arrests were not reported, several underlying human rights concerns remained significant.

One of the notable incidents was the killing of Sheikh Jabir Haidar Jabir in May 2025, which raised concerns regarding the protection of the right to life and accountability of security actors. The case, alongside one reported disappearance linked to the same incident, highlighted gaps in transparency, forensic investigation, and institutional accountability.

Gender-based violence and violence against children (GBV & VAC) remained a major concern. A total of 1,228 cases were reported in 2025, with children accounting for over 85% of victims, and sexual violence, particularly rape (53.7%), being the most prevalent form. However, only 7.7% of cases resulted in convictions, reflecting serious gaps in investigation, prosecution, and access to justice.

Access to justice continued to be constrained by delays, case backlogs, limited legal aid, and infrastructural challenges. Many cases remained unresolved, including 170 land disputes recorded between July 2024 and March 2025, with a significant number still pending, highlighting gaps in dispute resolution systems.

The right to health also faced persistent challenges. Health sector financing remained below the 15% Abuja Declaration target, alongside shortages of health professionals and infrastructure constraints. Notably, only very few cardiology specialists were available, and nearly a third of pregnant women were reported to experience mental health challenges, indicating gaps in both specialized and mental health services. Mental health also continued to be a key human rights concern for youth.

Civic space and media freedom continued to be affected by outdated and restrictive legal frameworks, contributing to self-censorship and limiting freedom of expression. Similarly, political participation during the 2025 elections reflected both inclusiveness and persistent concerns regarding transparency, voter exclusion, and electoral trust, as evidenced by 25 post-election petitions challenging results.

Overall, while Zanzibar did not experience the scale of violations observed in Mainland Tanzania, structural weaknesses in justice, health services, land governance, and protection of vulnerable groups continue to limit the full realization of human rights. Strengthening institutional capacity, accountability, and service delivery remains critical to improving the human rights situation.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings presented in this report, coordinated and strategic actions are required from relevant state institutions and oversight bodies to strengthen the protection of human rights and restore public confidence in governance institutions.

The Government should ensure independent, transparent and time-bound investigations into all credible allegations of unlawful killings, excessive use of force, enforced disappearances and other serious human rights violations reported during the election period. The findings of such investigations should be made public and, where violations are confirmed, responsible individuals should be prosecuted in accordance with the law while ensuring effective remedies and compensation for victims and their families and releasing political detainees.

Targeted measures should be introduced to prevent and respond to violence against women and children, including strengthening survivor support services, improving investigation and prosecution of gender-based violence cases, and expanding community awareness programmes addressing harmful practices. These measures should include expanding access to legal aid, psychosocial support services and safe shelters for survivors, as well as strengthening the capacity of police, prosecutors and judicial officers to effectively handle gender-based violence cases.

Law enforcement institutions should strengthen accountability mechanisms governing arrest procedures, detention practices and crowd management operations to ensure compliance with national and international human rights standards. This should include strengthening internal disciplinary mechanisms, establishing accessible complaint procedures for victims of abuse, and providing regular human rights training for police and other security personnel, particularly on the lawful use of force and the management of public assemblies. An independent civilian police oversight body is also desirable to investigate incidents or allegations of extrajudicial killings. A police oversight body can help the police and other law enforcement organs restore or enhance public trust, which is a prerequisite for effective policing, and prevent police misconduct and a culture of impunity.

Legal and policy reforms should be undertaken to ensure that laws governing media regulation, digital communication and public assemblies are implemented in a manner consistent with constitutional protections for freedom of expression, access to information and peaceful assembly. In particular, the Government should

review and, where necessary, amend laws and regulatory frameworks that restrict media freedom, civic engagement and digital communication, and ensure that internet access remains open and accessible during elections and other critical democratic processes.

Protection mechanisms for persons with disabilities should also be strengthened, including efforts aimed at combating stigma and preventing violence against persons with albinism and other vulnerable groups. This should include strengthening the implementation of disability rights laws, improving access to justice and protection services, and expanding public awareness programmes to address harmful beliefs and discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Finally, institutionalized dialogue and collaboration between government institutions, oversight bodies, civil society organisations and development partners should be strengthened to address the human rights challenges identified in this report and promote a more inclusive, accountable and rights-respecting governance environment in Tanzania. Establishing regular consultation platforms and joint monitoring mechanisms would further support evidence-based policy reforms and strengthen public trust in governance processes.

ZANZIBAR

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGZ) should prioritize strengthening accountability and the protection of fundamental rights by ensuring prompt, independent investigations into unlawful killings and improving oversight and forensic mechanisms. It should implement comprehensive criminal justice reforms to reduce delays, enhance coordination among institutions, and expand access to legal aid, while also strengthening prevention and response systems for gender-based violence and violence against children, including addressing harmful social norms such as *Muhali*.

At the same time, the RGZ should increase investment in the health sector to improve infrastructure, workforce capacity, and access to maternal and mental health services, and strengthen enforcement of laws protecting persons with disabilities through inclusive infrastructure and services. Further, it should improve land governance by enhancing transparency in land allocation and strengthening dispute resolution mechanisms.

Finally, the Government should make electoral and democratic reforms to enhance transparency, inclusiveness, and public trust, and review outdated media laws to align with constitutional and international standards on freedom of expression and access to information.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. ABOUT THE REPORT

This is a special report that focuses on the major human rights issues that characterised the year 2025 in Tanzania. The report analyses key trends relating to the protection and enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in 2025. It highlights major incidents of regressions, human rights violations, examines structural gaps in human rights protection, and identifies emerging challenges affecting the human rights environment in the country.

The report also documents positive developments where relevant and provides evidence-based analysis intended to inform public debate, strengthen accountability, and guide advocacy and policy reforms. In doing so, the report serves as an important resource for government institutions, civil society organisations, researchers, development partners and the public in understanding the human rights situation in Tanzania.

1.2. REPORT OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this report is to assess and document the state of human rights in Tanzania in 2025. Specifically, the report aims to:

- Identify and analyse major human rights violations and protection gaps observed in 2025.
- Provide evidence-based information to support advocacy for improved protection of human rights.
- Remind duty bearers and rights holders of their obligations and responsibilities under national, regional and international human rights frameworks.
- Promote greater awareness and understanding of human rights issues affecting different groups in the society.
- Provide reliable data and information to guide government institutions, civil society organisations and development partners in designing appropriate interventions.
- Highlight and appreciate positive trends, progress, and notable developments in the promotion and protection of human rights in 2025.

1.3. SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

This report focuses on major human rights developments that occurred in Mainland Tanzania from January to December 2025. The analysis draws on both primary and secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive overview of the human rights situation in the country.

Unlike previous reports that included field-based surveys, this report did not include fieldwork. The primary data used in the report were generated internally through the LHRC's and ZAFAYCO's ongoing human rights monitoring and legal aid programmes implemented across different regions of the country (Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar). These programmes continuously document reported human rights incidents, complaints received from the public, and cases handled by LHRC legal aid lawyers. Human rights monitoring data collected by LHRC's and ZAFAYCO's respective networks of monitors and programme officers constituted an important source of information, particularly in documenting incidents related to violations of the right to life, arbitrary arrests and detention, violence against women and children, discrimination against vulnerable groups, and challenges in the criminal justice system. Legal aid data also provided critical insights into issues relating to access to justice, land and property disputes, criminal justice challenges, and other human rights concerns affecting communities.

Secondary data were obtained from a variety of credible sources, including government publications, parliamentary debates, ministerial reports, court decisions, reports from law enforcement agencies, and statements issued by national oversight institutions. Additional information was gathered from reports produced by civil society organisations, international human rights bodies, academic publications, and credible media reports. This approach enabled triangulation of information and strengthened the reliability of the findings presented in this report, examining patterns of violations, identify underlying causes, and assess the broader human rights environment in Tanzania.

1.4. HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

The United Republic of Tanzania is bound by a wide range of human rights obligations arising from its Constitution, national laws, and international and regional human rights instruments. At the national level, the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 and the Constitution of Zanzibar of 1984 guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to life, equality before the law, freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of religion, and protection from arbitrary arrest and detention. These

constitutional provisions place obligations on state institutions to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

At the regional level, Tanzania is a State Party to several important African human rights instruments, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter) of 1981 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) of 1990.

At the international level, Tanzania has ratified key human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989.

These instruments collectively require the State to ensure effective protection of human rights through appropriate legislation, policy measures, institutional safeguards and access to effective remedies for victims of violations.

1.5. OVERVIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN 2025

Verdict on the Overall Human Rights Situation

Based on the assessment of human rights issues against international human rights standards, the overall human rights situation in Tanzania significantly deteriorated in 2025 compared with previous years. The deterioration was largely attributed to increased violations of civil and political rights, particularly the right to life, the right to liberty and personal security, the right to equality before the law, freedom from violence, and restrictions affecting civic space and democratic participation.

The year 2025 was marked by heightened political tensions, incidents of election-related violence, restrictions on civic freedoms, **reports** of enforced disappearances, and digital restrictions that affected access to information and freedom of expression. These developments contributed to growing concerns about the shrinking civic space and the protection of fundamental rights.

Most Reported and Documented Human Rights Issues

The most reported and documented human rights issues in 2025 included violations of the right to life, violence against women and children, arbitrary arrests and detention, criminal justice challenges affecting accused persons, restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, internet shutdown and throttling, election-related violence, enforced disappearances, and limitations affecting political participation.

Other significant concerns included gender-based violence, attacks against persons with albinism, violations of property and land rights, and increasing mental health challenges associated with social and economic pressures.

Factors contributing to the persistence of these issues included gaps in the enforcement of existing laws, weaknesses in institutional accountability mechanisms, harmful cultural practices, socio-economic inequalities, and a continued culture of impunity in certain cases of serious human rights violations.

5 Most violated human rights in 2025

The ranking of the most violated rights was based on a combination of documented incidents, severity, and impact on human rights. Right to life continued to be the most violated human rights, followed by right to liberty and personal security, right to equality before the law, freedom from violence, and freedom of religion.



Right to Life

- Violations of the right to life were associated with incidents such as mob violence, election-related killings, killings linked to witchcraft accusations, and other violent attacks affecting vulnerable groups.



Right to Liberty and Personal Security

- Reported violations included arbitrary arrests, unlawful detention, abductions and disappearances, denial of bail, and delays in the administration of justice.



Right to Equality before the Law

- Barriers to access to justice, corruption within parts of the justice system, and lengthy pre-trial detention contributed to violations of the right to equality before the law.



Freedom from Violence

- Violence against women and children (VAWC) remained widespread in 2025.



Freedom of Religion and the Right to Worship

- Concerns were raised regarding restrictions affecting certain religious institutions, particularly the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church, and broader tensions involving the exercise of religious freedoms. These incidents limited citizen's participation in religious rituals or ceremonies like attending church.

Other Key Human Rights Issues

Other human rights concerns reported during the year included mental health challenges, discrimination against persons with disabilities, human trafficking, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, violence against elderly persons, harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, and continued disputes relating to land and property rights. The year also witnessed increased public debate on digital rights, access to information, and the impact of internet restrictions on democratic participation and civic engagement

Victims of Human Rights Violations

Based on the human rights monitoring data documented by LHRC and official crime statistics, children continued to constitute the largest proportion of victims of reported human rights violations. Women also remained significantly affected, particularly in relation to gender-based violence and economic and social rights violations. Men were mostly affected in cases involving criminal justice processes, arbitrary arrests and detention, and election-related violence. Elderly persons were particularly vulnerable to attacks associated with witchcraft accusations and property disputes, while persons with disabilities continued to experience discrimination, violence, and social exclusion. These patterns highlight the disproportionate impact of human rights violations on vulnerable groups and highlight the need for targeted protection measures and stronger institutional responses.

CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXT

2.1. LEGAL

The legal framework governing human rights in Tanzania is anchored in the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, which guarantees a wide range of fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to life, equality before the law, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of association, and protection against arbitrary arrest and detention, among others.¹ The Constitution also establishes institutional mechanisms for the protection of these rights, including the Judiciary and oversight bodies such as the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG).²

In Zanzibar, the Constitution of Zanzibar, 1984 similarly provides for the protection of fundamental rights and establishes governance and accountability structures within the semi-autonomous framework of the Union.³ However, the dual legal system between Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar continues to present coordination and harmonization challenges in the implementation of human rights standards.

In 2025, concerns persisted regarding the gap between constitutional guarantees and their effective implementation in practice. Several laws regulating civic space, particularly those governing media, digital communication, political activities, and public assemblies, remained subject to scrutiny. Notably, the Media Services Act (2016), the Cybercrimes Act (2015), and the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations (2020) with its 2025 amendments, continued to raise concerns regarding their compatibility with constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and access to information.⁴ Similar concerns apply in Zanzibar, where laws such as the Zanzibar Broadcasting Commission Act and other regulatory frameworks governing media and communication have implications for press freedom and access to information.⁵

1 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977 (as amended), Articles 12–24.

2 Ibid; Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance Act, Cap. 391.

3 Constitution of Zanzibar, 1984 (as amended).

4 Media Services Act (2016), the Cybercrimes Act (2015), and the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations (2020) with the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content). (Amendment) Regulations, 2025. <https://www.tcra.go.tz/download/sw-1738833320-Online%20Content%20Amendment%20Regulations,%202025%20GN%20No%2057%20of%2028%20January%202025.pdf>.

5 Zanzibar Broadcasting Commission Act and related media regulatory frameworks.

Tanzania remains bound by a range of regional and international human rights obligations. The State is party to key instruments including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These instruments require the State to adopt legislative, administrative, and judicial measures to ensure the effective protection of human rights.

The 2025 legal context therefore suggests the continued need to harmonize national laws, including those applicable in Zanzibar, with international human rights standards and ensure consistent enforcement across jurisdictions.

2.2. POLITICAL

The political environment in Tanzania in 2025 was largely shaped by the General Elections, which represented a critical period for the protection of civil and political rights. Electoral processes are key tests for the realization of fundamental freedoms of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and political participation.

The 2025 electoral cycle was characterized by increased political mobilization, heightened public engagement, and expanded participation of political actors, civil society organizations, and the media. However, electoral periods were accompanied by heightened restrictions on civic space and increased tensions between state authorities and political actors.

Opposition parties and election observers raised concerns regarding campaign conditions, political participation, and the handling of election-related disputes. In some areas, election-related tensions coincided with security operations aimed at maintaining public order. While such measures were framed within the context of security and stability, concerns were raised regarding the proportionality of enforcement actions and their impact on human rights, including reports of arrests, restrictions on assemblies, and alleged excessive use of force.⁶

In Zanzibar, electoral processes have historically been sensitive and, in 2025, continued to attract attention regarding political freedoms, electoral integrity, and the management of political tensions. Reports indicated concerns related to restrictions on political gatherings, limitations on opposition activities, and broader concerns regarding political inclusiveness and participation.⁷

⁶ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring Data (2025); election-related incident reports.

⁷ Observations from Zanzibar electoral processes and stakeholder reports (2025).

Political engagement increasingly shifted to digital platforms, with social media playing a central role in shaping political narratives, mobilization, and citizen engagement. Consequently, state regulation of online content and digital communication became a significant aspect of the political environment, raising questions about the balance between regulation, security, and fundamental freedoms.

2.3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC

The socio-economic context in Tanzania continued to influence the realization of human rights across both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. Despite sustained economic growth, significant challenges persisted, including poverty, unemployment, and disparities in access to essential services.

In 2025, the Government undertook key policy initiatives, including reforms and development of sectoral policies such as land, water, and education. These reforms are important for advancing socio-economic rights; however, their effectiveness depends on implementation, resource allocation, and inclusiveness. In Zanzibar, socio-economic dynamics are further shaped by structural factors such as high youth unemployment, dependence on tourism, and limited economic diversification.⁸ These factors contribute to economic vulnerability, particularly among young people and women. Land disputes also remained a significant issue, particularly in rural areas of both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, where conflicts over land ownership, inheritance, and resource use continued to result in social tensions and, in some cases, violence.⁹

Economic inequalities and power imbalances also contributed to broader social challenges, including gender-based violence (GBV) and family conflicts. Women and girls, particularly in rural areas of Zanzibar and Mainland Tanzania, remain disproportionately affected by poverty, limited economic opportunities, and social norms that hinder equality.¹⁰

Access to quality social services, including healthcare, education, and social protection, remained uneven. While efforts to improve service delivery continued, gaps in infrastructure, human resources, and financing persisted. In Zanzibar, disparities in access to specialized healthcare services and education infrastructure remain notable.¹¹

8 Tanzania Investment and Consultant Group Ltd. (2025). Zanzibar economic growth performance 2025. Retrieved March 18, 2026, from <https://ticgl.com/zanzibar-economic-growth-performance-2025/>; Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA). (2024). Tanzania & Zanzibar labour market profile 2024/2025. Retrieved March 18, 2026, from <https://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Tanzania-LMP-2024-final1.pdf>.

9 LHRC Human Rights Monitoring & Legal Aid Data (2025).

10 Zanzibar Gender Policy (2016); national GBV frameworks.

11 ZAFAYCO Human Rights Monitoring Data (2025).

Mental health also emerged as an increasingly significant concern, influenced by economic stress, social pressures, and political developments. The intersection of socio-economic vulnerability and limited access to mental health services continues to pose challenges to the realization of the right to health.

2.4. TECHNOLOGICAL

Technological advancement and digital transformation continued to shape the human rights landscape in Tanzania in 2025. Increased internet access, mobile connectivity, and the widespread use of digital platforms significantly transformed communication, information access, and civic participation

At the international level, Tanzania received recognition for its progress in digital transformation, including the receipt of three ICT awards linked to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).¹² These awards reflected advancements in digital public services, broadband infrastructure, and regulatory frameworks aimed at expanding connectivity. However, these advancements were accompanied by persistent challenges. The digital divide remains significant, particularly affecting women and girls in rural areas, including in Zanzibar, where access to digital infrastructure and digital literacy remains limited.



Picture 2.1: Former Minister for Information, Communication and Information Technology, Hon. Jerry Silaa (MP) at Geneva during the award ceremony where Tanzania Won Three ICT Awards

¹² Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology, Infrastructure Development Update 2025.; TANZANIA YASHINDA TUZO TATU ZA KIMATAIFA ZA TEHAMA
<https://www.mawasiliano.go.tz/news/tanzania-yashinda-tuzo-tatu-za-kimataifa-za-tehama>

The 2025 electoral period further highlighted the intersection between technology and human rights. Reports of internet disruptions and restrictions on digital communication during politically sensitive periods raised concerns regarding their impact on freedom of expression, access to information, and political participation.¹³ In Zanzibar, where political tensions have historically been high, such disruptions had implications for transparency and access to real-time information.

Additionally, the regulatory environment governing digital spaces, particularly laws related to cybercrime and online content, continued to shape digital rights. Concerns were also raised regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) narratives to discredit digital evidence of alleged human rights violations, which has implications for accountability and trust in digital information.

Despite these challenges, digital platforms remained critical tools for civic engagement, enabling citizens, journalists, and human rights defenders to document events, share information, and advocate for accountability. They also enhanced real-time public awareness and facilitated rapid mobilization around emerging human rights concerns, particularly during periods of political tension and restricted physical civic space.

Overall, the human rights context in Tanzania in 2025 reflects a complex interaction between legal frameworks, political developments, socio-economic realities, and technological transformation. While progress has been made in strengthening institutional frameworks and expanding opportunities for participation, significant challenges remain in ensuring that these developments translate into the effective enjoyment of human rights for all. Importantly, the dual governance structure between Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar continues to require deliberate efforts to ensure coherence, inclusivity, and consistency in the protection of human rights across both jurisdictions.

¹³ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring Data (2025).

CHAPTER THREE: MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

3.1. UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Unlawful killings were widely reported in 2025, as the country witnessed unprecedented killings linked to the general elections and anti-government protests in October. Other unlawful killings documented by LHRC included witchcraft-motivated killings, intimate partner homicide (IPH), and mob killings. These killings represent a serious violation of the right to life, which is the most fundamental human right, guaranteed under the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977¹⁴ and various international and regional human rights instruments signed and ratified by Tanzania.¹⁵

3.1.1. October killings

3.1.1.1. Events around the October Elections and Unrest

On 29th October 2025, the day of general elections in Tanzania, the government imposed nationwide internet restrictions amid planned protests, hindering access to digital platforms.¹⁶ When the internet was gradually restored six days later, numerous reports of killings of protestors and other individuals began to surface across digital platforms. Photos and videos depicting deadly incidents circulated widely on social media, bringing to light the allegations of excessive use of force and raising serious concerns regarding the protection of the right to life and accountability of security forces,¹⁷ while Police were sending mass messages to warn people from sharing images and videos.¹⁸ Eyewitness accounts, including of some LHRC staff members in Dar es Salaam, also confirmed that officers and other armed men in plain clothes shot at people, mainly those who were not protesting and far from the demonstration

¹⁴ Article 14 of the Constitution of Tanzania, 1977.

¹⁵ Including Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UHDR), 1948; Article 6(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter), 1981.

¹⁶ UN (2025). Tanzania: UN experts condemn post-election lethal crackdown and digital blackout 04 December 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/12/tanzania-un-experts-condemn-post-election-lethal-crackdown-and-digital>.

¹⁷ 'Tanzania Partially Restores Internet, Warns Citizens Against Sharing Protest Images' Dawan Africa,

4 November, 2025, available at: <https://www.dawan.africa/news/tanzania-partially-restores-internet-warns-citizens-against-sharing-protest-images>.

¹⁸ 'The police are sending out mass messages to the public' KTN News, available at: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DQmxlojkRT/>.

sites and others in residential areas. Some witnesses accused police officers of firing indiscriminately into crowds of protesters.

3.1.1.2. Casualties

The events surrounding the October 2025 period marked a particularly dark chapter for human rights protection in Tanzania. From 29th October to 3rd November, security forces were deployed to respond to public protests and political tensions. Multiple deaths were reported in different parts of the country, especially in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Songwe, Shinyanga (Kahama), Geita, Mara, and Mbeya Regions. Reports from various sources, both within Tanzania and beyond, indicated that hundreds of people were brutally killed by law enforcement officers, as some of the deaths were corroborated by eyewitness accounts and victims' families. The reports indicated that among of the victims were unarmed youth, women and children. Security forces were accused of firing live ammunition and teargas directly at protesters and other individuals who posed no imminent threat of death or serious injury.¹⁹

The Cable News Network (CNN), a U.S multinational media outlet, conducted a forensic analysis of dozens of videos and imagery shared from different locations in Tanzania²⁰ and found that police and armed men on patrol fatally shot unarmed protesters and other people on the streets and in their homes following door-to-door raids.²¹ A similar investigation was conducted by the Centre for Information Resilience (CIR), a UK-based independent organisation that carries out digital investigations, which collected and analysed 185 images and videos from the unrest that broke out during the October 29th election in the country.²² According to CIR, the analysis verified repeated use of live ammunition by security forces and plain-clothed armed men, resulting in casualties.²³ The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) also reported in November 2025 that its investigators had analyzed selected videos using satellite imagery and geolocation techniques to confirm the authenticity of specific locations shown in the footage.²⁴ The verification reportedly focused

19 'Tanzania: Security Forces Used Unlawful Lethal Force in Election Protest Crackdown And 'Took Away' Dead Bodies' Amnesty International, 19 December 2025, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/12/tanzania-security-forces-used-unlawful-lethal-force-in-election-protest-crackdown-and-took-away-dead-bodies/>; 'Execution-Style Killings' In Tanzania Election Crackdown: Report' AFP - Agence France Presse, 12 January 2026, at <https://www.barrons.com/news/execution-style-killings-in-tanzania-election-crackdown-report-c021d761>.

20 Including at the Sekou-Toure Regional Referral Hospital in Mwanza; at the Mwananyamala Hospital in Dar es Salaam; and Kunduchi, Segerea and Tabata areas, also in Dar es Salaam.

21 Gianluca Mezzofiore, Larry Madowo, & Florence Davey-Attlee "Oh my God, this is our Tanzania': CNN investigation shows police fatally shooting protesters, signs of mass graves' CCN, 25 November 2025, at <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/11/21/africa/tanzania-police-shooting-protesters-deadly-election-intl-invs>; Sheriff Bojang Jnr 'Morgues overflow, hidden graves in Dar es Salaam: Tanzania accused of mass killings' the africa report, 21 November 2025, at <https://www.theafricareport.com/399625/morgues-overflow-hidden-graves-in-dar-es-salaam-tanzania-accused-of-mass-killings/>.

22 'Execution-Style Killings' In Tanzania Election Crackdown: Report' AFP - Agence France Presse, 12 January 2026, at <https://www.barrons.com/news/execution-style-killings-in-tanzania-election-crackdown-report-c021d761>.

23 Ibid.

24 'BBC yathibitisha UKWELI wa VIDEO za Mauaji yaliyotokea Tanzania mwezi Oktoba 2025' Jamii Forums, 14 November 2025.

on matching landmarks, environmental features, and spatial indicators visible in the videos with satellite data.

A Pregnant Woman Fatally Shot in Arusha

One of the videos verified by CNN showed a woman holding a wooden stick as she attempted to flee from the gunfire, moments before she was fatally shot from behind. The same footage was reportedly independently verified by Amnesty International,²⁵ an international human rights organization.²⁶ The incident was further corroborated by a former LHRC legal aid client who reported that she was only a few meters away. She stated that the victim could not run faster because she was pregnant. Sources close to her family also reportedly confirmed to CNN that the woman was three months pregnant and left behind a husband and two children.



Picture 3.1: A woman in Arusha fleeing moments before she was shot to death

Bodies Piled Up in Morgues at Hospitals

Videos showing bodies piled in and outside morgues at hospitals, especially in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Arusha, were also widely circulated on social media when the internet connectivity was restored. One of the videos showed bodies covering the floor inside the Mwananyamala Hospital in Dar es Salaam,

²⁵ 'Tanzania: Security Forces Used Unlawful Lethal Force in Election Protest Crackdown and 'Took Away' Dead Bodies' Amnesty International, 19 December 2025, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/12/tanzania-security-forces-used-unlawful-lethal-force-in-election-protest-crackdown-and-took-away-dead-bodies/>.

²⁶ Between 3 and 28 November, Amnesty International verified 26 videos and six photos posted on social media between, interviewed 35 people, including survivors of gunshot and teargas canister injuries, eyewitnesses, lawyers assisting arrested protesters and healthcare professionals who treated injured victims, as well as relatives of those killed.

with dozens of bodies (at least 70 bodies) seen piled up on top of each other.²⁷ In Mwanza, geolocated photos and videos outside the Sekou-Toure Regional Referral Hospital showed at least 10 bodies piled up on a stretcher outside the hospital because the morgue was full. Some victims' families further reported that, after viewing circulating morgue videos, they were able to identify relatives who were missing since October 29th, thereby confirming their deaths.²⁸

In response to the spread of the footage, the Tanzania Police Force reportedly warned the public against sharing photos or videos deemed to “cause panic,” and indicated that legal measures could be taken against individuals disseminating such material. The management of Mount Meru Regional Referral Hospital publicly denied that the footage originated from its facility, with hospital authorities describing the video as fabricated and warning that the dissemination of such material could cause public panic.²⁹ The hospital management reportedly cautioned against the spread of unverified videos depicting bodies with visible injuries, emphasizing that such content could mislead the public. At the time of reporting, no independent forensic or institutional investigation had publicly confirmed the authenticity or origin of the circulating footage.

These official denials stood in contrast to allegations from civil society groups and other sources claiming widespread fatalities and morgue overcrowding following the October 2025 unrest. The conflicting accounts highlighted the urgent need for transparent, independent verification to establish the facts surrounding reported deaths and the handling of bodies in medical facilities.

Hundreds Believed to Have Been Killed

Multiple international media outlets, United Nations experts, regional civil society coalitions, and domestic opposition actors reported large-scale killings and serious human rights violations following protests that erupted after Tanzania's 29th October 2025 general elections. Hundreds of people are believed to have been killed and many others injured following the October 2025 protests and unrest in Tanzania, according to the UN³⁰ and other sources.

U.N.-appointed independent experts estimated that at least 700 people may have been extrajudicially killed during the post-election unrest³¹.

27 'Tanzania: Security Forces Used Unlawful Lethal Force in Election Protest Crackdown and 'Took Away' Dead Bodies' Amnesty International, 19 December 2025, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/12/tanzania-security-forces-used-unlawful-lethal-force-in-election-protest-crackdown-and-took-away-dead-bodies/>.

28 LHRC Human Rights Monitoring 2025.

29 'Hospitali ya Mouth Meru yakanusha kuhusu video ya mochwari. Wasema ni ya kutengenezwa..' Jamii Forums, 17 November 2025.

30 'Tanzania: Reports of Hundreds Killed and Detained Following Deadly Election Violence' UN News, 11 November 2025, at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166334>.

31 Aaron Ross & Vincent Mumo Nzilani "INTENDED KILLINGS': TANZANIA'S ELECTION VIOLENCE ENSNARED UNSUSPECTING VICTIMS,' Reuters, 9 January 2026, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/intended-killings-tanzanias-election-violence-ensnared-unsuspecting-victims-2026-01-09/>.

The experts noted that other sources pointed to significantly higher figures, potentially reaching into the thousands. In a separate statement reported on 11th November 2025, the U.N. Human Rights Office stated that it believed hundreds of people had been killed and that it had received allegations suggesting security forces were concealing bodies.



**100s
Hundreds**

Believed to have been killed during the October 2025 Unr

A coalition of more than 40 African organizations alleged on 8th November 2025 that approximately 3,000 people had been killed by security forces since 29th October 2025.³² In a joint statement issued

under the “Jumuiya Ni Yetu” movement, the organizations claimed that thousands more remained missing. They further alleged that authorities were digging mass graves, particularly in Mabwepande, and that hospitals were guarded by security personnel who confiscated phones, deleted footage, and restricted family access to bodies.³³

One of the opposition parties, Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), reported that it had documented up to 1,000 deaths across eight of Tanzania’s 31 regions.³⁴ CHADEMA accused police and unidentified security personnel of disposing of bodies at undisclosed locations, raising concerns regarding possible mass graves and enforced disappearances.³⁵

In addition to these estimates, other unverified reports circulating in the aftermath of the elections suggested casualty figures could be significantly higher, with some claims reaching as many as 10,000 deaths, which were refuted plainly by the Prime Minister, Hon. Mwigulu Nchemba.³⁶

Taken together, these allegations indicate serious violations of the right to life, extrajudicial executions, and the obligation to investigate enforced disappearances under international human rights law. The scale of the reported killings, the alleged concealment of bodies, and restrictions on information access highlighted the urgent need for an independent and credible investigation consistent with international standards.

32 Andrew Wasike ‘Rights Groups Allege 3,000 Killed In Tanzania’s Post-Poll Crackdown Since Oct 29’ AA, 8 November 2025, at <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/rights-groups-allege-3-000-killed-in-tanzanias-post-poll-crackdown-since-oct-29/3738471#>.

33 Edith Kimani ‘Police violence reports emerge after Tanzania election row’ DW, 13 November 2025, At <https://www.dw.com/en/police-violence-reports-emerge-after-tanzania-election-row/video-74729944>.

34 ‘Tanzania: Killings, Crackdown Follow Disputed Elections’ Human Rights Watch, 4 November 2025, at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/04/tanzania-killings-crackdown-follow-disputed-elections>.

35 ‘Tanzania: Reports of hundreds killed and detained following deadly election violence’ UN News, 11 November 2025, at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2025/11/112757/tanzania-reports-hundreds-killed-and-detained-following-deadly>.

36 ‘Tanzania PM rejects claims of 10,000 deaths during post-election protests’ The Citizen, 19 December 2025, at https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/tanzania-pm-rejects-claims-of-10-000-deaths-during-post-election-protests-5302644#google_vignette.

Allegations of mass graves

The CNN investigation report also indicated signs of mass graves at the Kondo Cemetery in Kunduchi, Dar es Salaam, noting allegations of bodies of protestors killed by security forces buried in mass graves in an attempt to conceal the true death toll.



Picture 3.2: Satellite imagery shows disturbed soil in Kondo cemetery north of Dar es Salaam

Source: CNN

Like CNN, the Centre for Information Resilience (CIR) also reported finding evidence of newly disturbed ground between November 2nd and 5th at Kondo cemetery, suggesting a possible mass grave, and another possible mass grave at Tengeru agricultural college in Arusha.³⁷

Incidents Documented by LHRC

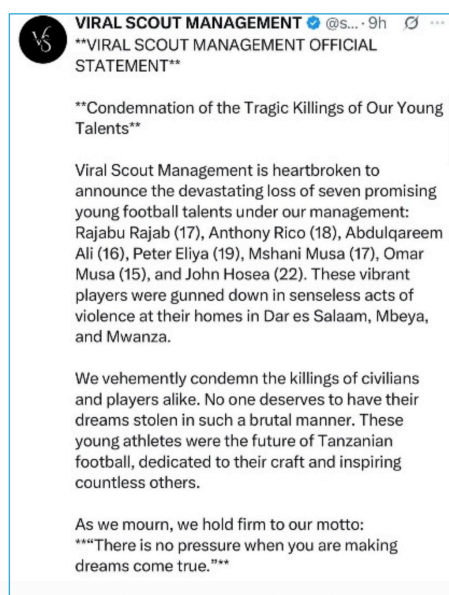
LHRC documented many deaths linked to the October unrest, most of them were recorded in Dar es Salaam and Arusha. In Dar es Salaam, one of the LHRC staff members survived a shooting incident in the Mbezi Beach area, during which another civilian was fatally shot and killed without warning while running toward his home. Some of these incidents are briefly described below.

³⁷ 'Execution-Style Killings' In Tanzania Election Crackdown: Report' AFP - Agence France Presse, 12 January 2026, at <https://www.barrons.com/news/execution-style-killings-in-tanzania-election-crackdown-report-c021d761>

Young Football Players Tragically Killed

Among those reportedly killed during the October 2025 unrest in Tanzania were several young football players affiliated with a local sports management consultancy. On its official X (formerly Twitter) account, Viral Scout Management issued a public statement announcing the deaths of seven young players under its management: Rajabu Rajab (17), Anthony Rico (18), Abdulqareem Ali (16), Peter Eliya (19), Mshani Musa (17), Omar Musa (15), and John Hosea (22). According to the statement, the players were “gunned down” at their homes in Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, and Mwanza during the period of post-election violence.

The management firm condemned the killings as “senseless acts of violence” and described the victims as promising talents and part of the future of Tanzanian football. In a subsequent post, the company reported that the bodies of six of the players could not be located, raising additional concerns regarding possible enforced disappearances or improper handling of remains.



Picture 3.3: A statement issued by Viral Scout Management regarding the killing of their football talents

Child Fatally Shot in the Chest by Security Officers in Mbeya

Testimonies from affected families point to the use of lethal force by security personnel in circumstances that call into question the principles of

necessity and proportionality in law enforcement. Of particular concern is the reported killing of a child in Mbeya Municipality. According to the family, the child was fatally shot in the chest by security officers while on his way to a nearby shop. There was no indication that the child was participating in the protests or posed any threat that would justify the use of lethal force³⁸.

The child's death represents a grave violation of the right to life and indicates the heightened vulnerability of children in situations of civil unrest. Under international human rights law, including the principles reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, States have an obligation to ensure the protection and care of children, particularly in contexts involving security operations.

The family, still grieving, has since conducted burial rites, but continues to endure profound emotional and psychological harm. Their account reflects the enduring impact of election-related violence on civilians, especially where accountability mechanisms remain unclear or absent.

Killing of an Advocate and Member of the Tanganyika Law Society

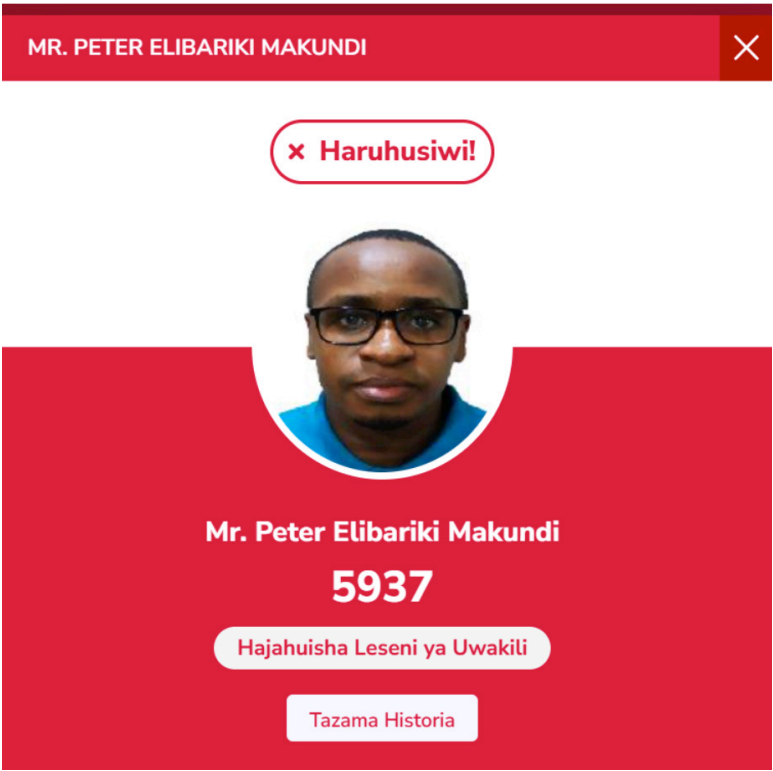
In Dar es Salaam, a lawyer and member of the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), Adv. Peter Elibariki Makundi (Roll No. 5937 of Ubungo Chapter), was shot and killed on 29th October 2025, the election day³⁹.

According to public statements and media reports, Makundi was shot by police in the Shekilango area while attending his daily activities.⁴⁰

38 'Maandamano Tanzania: 'Mwanangu alipigwa risasi akafariki akielekea dukani' BBC News Swahili, 5 November 2025, at <https://www.bbc.com/swahili/articles/c781vp1813no>.

39 'Tanganyika Law Society Sues Tanzanian Government Over Post-Election Curfew' The Chanzo, 24 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/24/tanganyika-law-society-sues-tanzanian-government-over-post-election-curfew/>.

40 'TANZIA Mwanachama wa TLS Wakili Peter Elibariki afariki kwa kupigwa risasi na Polisi Oktoba 29, 2025' Jamii Forums, 4 November 2025, at <https://www.jamiiforums.com/threads/mwanachama-wa-tls-wakili-peter-elibariki-afariki-kwa-kupigwa-risasi-na-polisi-oktoba-29-2025.2397225/>.



Picture 3.4: Adv. Peter Makundi, who was fatally shot on 29th October 2025

He was laid to rest on 5th November 2025 in Morogoro Region, with members of the legal fraternity, including advocates, judges, and fellow TLS members, attending the burial. Public tributes described him as a practicing advocate and active member of the bar.

The reported killing of a legal professional during a period of political unrest raises serious concerns regarding the protection of civilians, including members of the legal profession, who are entitled to protection under both domestic constitutional guarantees and international human rights law. Lawyers play a critical role in upholding the rule of law, and any targeting of members of the legal profession undermines access to justice and democratic governance.

At the time of reporting, there was no publicly available information indicating that an independent and transparent investigation had been concluded or that perpetrators had been held accountable in connection with his death.



Picture 3.5: TLS members and colleagues pay their last respects during the burial of Advocate Peter Elibariki Makundi, who was reportedly shot and killed on 29th October 2025 in Dar es Salaam

Shooting of a Sheikh in Mabibo – Dar es Salaam

A local religious leader, identified as Sheikh Sharif Majini, was shot and killed at his home in Mabibo area, Dar es Salaam, on the Election Day, 29th October 2025. The sheikh was reportedly fatally wounded by gunfire during the unrest that followed the general election.⁴¹ The incident highlights concern about violence affecting both religious figures and political actors amid the broader protests and security force response.



Picture 3.6: The late Sheikh Sharif Majini during his lifetime

⁴¹ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, November 2025.

A Mother Killed in the Presence of her Son

Joycelene Mafuru was reportedly shot and killed in Dar es Salaam during the post-election unrest in October 2025. According to multiple eyewitness accounts and family testimony, she was shot in her vehicle in the presence of her son. The incident occurred amidst heightened security force activity and local civilians witnessed the shooting.



Picture 3.7: The late Joycelen Mafuru, who was tragically killed in the presence of her son in Dar es Salaam

Tragic Death of a Young Truck Driver, Christina Richard

Christina John Richard, a 22-year-old young female truck driver known in her community for her work, was shot and killed during the October 2025 unrest. Her mother recounted that she was targeted in an incident linked to the broader security force response to protests following the general election. She was described as a determined and hardworking woman who had built a career in the male-dominated trucking industry. Her mother recounted her daughter's ambitions, resilience, and commitment to supporting her family, highlighting the devastating personal and economic loss

”
She was our family's pillar...
Our dreams were cut short by
gunfire.
-The victim's mother

“

caused by her death⁴². Through her work, which involved driving cargo trucks from Dar es Salaam to neighbouring countries, she inspired many young women who visited her social media accounts.



Picture 3.8: Ms. Christina Richard, who was shot dead on October 30th amidst election-related unrest

Christina's death illustrates how the violence extended beyond demonstrators to affect ordinary civilians engaged in their daily activities. Her killing highlights concerns regarding the proportionality and necessity of force used during the unrest, as well as the State's obligation under international human rights law to protect the right to life and to conduct prompt, thorough, and transparent investigations into all alleged unlawful killings.

Killing of a Former Police Officer and Neighbours in Kinyerezi, Dar es Salaam

In one of the most harrowing reported incidents linked to the post-election unrest, eight neighbours were allegedly lined up and shot dead in the Kanga-Kariakoo area of Kinyerezi in the early hours of 3rd November 2025. According to a detailed local report, the victims included a retired police officer, two teachers, a bank officer, a driver, two shopkeepers, and a small-scale trader.⁴³ They were reportedly ordered to lie face-down outside their homes before being shot one after another.

⁴² 'Mother recounts dreams of her daughter killed in unrest' The Citizen Newspaper (online), 10 November 2025, at https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/mother-recounts-dreams-of-her-daughter-killed-in-unrest-5259528#google_vignette.

⁴³ 'Matukio Baada ya Uchaguzi 2025: Namna Majirani Nane Walivyowawa Kinyerezi Dar es Salaam' The Chanzo, 9 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/09/matukio-baada-ya-uchaguzi-2025-namna-majirani-nane-walivyowawa-kinyerezi-dar-es-salaam/>.

The incident began when neighbours heard a disturbance coming from a nearby wholesale shop⁴⁴. The retired police officer led others to secure the area and called the police for assistance. When armed officers arrived, they were all ordered to lie on the ground, some on one side of the road near the shop, others across the street by an electricity pole.

“
We're scared to even talk about it. We don't understand why they did this to us, we're afraid.
- A neighbour, Kinyerezi

Some survivors described scenes of indiscriminate gunfire and spoke of lasting trauma and fear among residents.⁴⁵ Only four bodies had been recovered at the time of the report, with families struggling to locate the rest. Burial services were held in the days that followed for some of the victims, including the retired officer, whose

funeral was attended by relatives before the body was transported to his home region for burial.



Picture 3.9 Mourners carrying a coffin containing the body of Joseph Mwakabana, a retired police officer

This incident was cited by local sources as evidence of targeted killings affecting ordinary civilians during the unrest that followed the 29th October general election. Official details about the perpetrators, motives, or state investigations into this event were not available at the time of reporting.

⁴⁴ 'How Eight Neighbours Were Executed in Kinyerezi, Dar es Salaam, One of Tanzania's 2025 Post-Election Incidents' The Chanzo, 9 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/09/how-eight-neighbours-were-executed-in-kinyerezi-dar-es-salaam-one-of-tanzanias-2025-post-election-incidents/>.
⁴⁵ Ibid; LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, November 2025.

Killings of Three Journalists During the October 2025 Unrest

Two journalists were reportedly shot and killed during the post-election unrest that followed the 29th October 2025 general election. In Mbeya, Kelvin Lameck Mwakangondya, a reporter who was working with Baraka FM, was shot dead on 29th October while covering demonstrations. According to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), he was killed by security forces while performing his professional duties.⁴⁶ The IFJ condemned the killing and called for an independent and impartial investigation. At the time of reporting, no arrests had been announced.

In Dar es Salaam, Master Tindwa Mtopa, a broadcaster associated with Clouds Media Group, was also reportedly shot during the unrest in his home and later succumbed to his injuries. Community reports indicate that he was laid to rest on 3rd November 2025. Both cases occurred amid a wider crackdown on protests and an internet blackout imposed between 29th October and 3rd November 2025.



Picture 3.10: Master Tindwa Mtopa (left) and Kelvin Lameck Mwakangondya (right), who were tragically killed during the October 2025 unrest

In another incident, another journalist, Maneo Selanyika, was reportedly killed on the evening of October 29th, the election day, near his home in the city of Dar es Salaam, according to the Dar City Press Club and Twaweza, a local civil society organization. According to the Dar es Salaam Press Club (DAR-PC), he was fatally caught in violence near his home while on his way to a shop.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ 'Tanzania: Journalist Killed While Covering Post-Election Demonstrations' International Federation of Journalists, 22 December 2025, at <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/tanzania-journalist-killed-while-covering-post-election-demonstrations>.

⁴⁷ Dar City Press Club Statement, 6 November 2025, at <https://www.facebook.com/DCPC.TZ/posts/pfbid0YMaCi2KiM9qmUS9ApEUjCu7BLqbqRku54bqV16VcfpN6qXeSNrVKbGnz98Bf7CHNl>.



Picture 3.11: Maneno Selanyika, a journalist who was fatally shot in Dar es Salaam during the October unrest

The reported killings of the three journalists raise grave concerns regarding the protection of media professionals during periods of political unrest. Under international human rights standards, journalists covering public demonstrations are considered civilians and must be protected. The absence of publicly disclosed, independent investigations into these deaths further raises concerns about accountability and press freedom.

Mass Shooting in Mjimwema, Mwanza

One of the deadliest reported incidents during the October 2025 post-election unrest occurred in the Mjimwema area in Mwanza City.⁴⁸ At least 13 people were reportedly killed on the evening of 31st October 2025 when police officers allegedly opened fire in the area without warning. Witnesses stated that officers arrived at approximately 8:30 p.m. and began shooting in different directions. Several men who had taken shelter inside a small café, where football matches were being shown, were reportedly ordered to lie on the ground before being brutally shot. Survivors described a brief but intense burst of gunfire, after

⁴⁸ Aaron Ross & Vincent Mumo Nzilani 'INTENDED KILLINGS': TANZANIA'S ELECTION VIOLENCE ENSNARED UNSUSPECTING VICTIMS,' Reuters, 9 January 2026, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/intended-killings-tanzanias-election-violence-ensnared-unsuspecting-victims-2026-01-09/>.

which more than a dozen individuals laid dead or critically wounded. A video footage was posted on social media, showing 13 bodies near the entrance of the café.⁴⁹

Residents indicated that there had been no active unrest in the immediate neighbourhood at the time of the shooting, although demonstrations were occurring elsewhere in Mwanza. The incident was described as one of the most severe episodes of violence linked to the 29th October elections. Allegations that victims included young men who had been watching football further raise concerns about the indiscriminate use of lethal force against civilians not directly participating in demonstrations.

Gunshot Injuries and Barriers to Accessing Medical Care

In addition to the reported fatalities, there were numerous accounts of individuals sustaining gunshot wounds during the October 2025 unrest. Witness testimonies and reports from healthcare professionals indicated that live ammunition was used in several incidents. Many of the injured were young men, who reportedly suffered gunshot wounds to various parts of the body, including the head, chest, and abdomen.⁵⁰

Several victims were admitted to hospitals for emergency treatment. However, other injured individuals reportedly avoided seeking medical assistance due to fear of arrest, intimidation, or reprisals at health facilities. Accounts suggested that the presence of security personnel at some hospitals contributed to this fear, discouraging wounded persons from accessing urgent care. It was also reported that health workers were restricted from attending to injured people, which led to people dying from lack of timely and adequate medical attention.⁵¹

The reported use of live ammunition against civilians and the alleged barriers to medical treatment raise serious concerns regarding compliance with

international standards governing the use of force and the protection of the right to health. Under international human rights law, states are obligated not only to refrain from unlawful use of lethal force but also to ensure that injured persons receive prompt and unhindered medical assistance.

“ I was afraid to go to the hospital because I thought I would be arrested there.

- A young man with a gunshot wound, Dar es Salaam

49 LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, November 2025.

50 'How Eight Neighbours Were Executed in Kinyerezi, Dar es Salaam, One of Tanzania's 2025 Post-Election Incidents' The Chanzo, 9 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/09/how-eight-neighbours-were-executed-in-kinyerezi-dar-es-salaam-one-of-tanzanias-2025-post-election-incidents/>.

51 Ibid.

3.1.1.3. The Killings Amounted to Extrajudicial Killings

Evidence suggests that deaths were a result of extrajudicial killing, defined as the deliberate and unlawful killing of individuals by state agents, or with their consent or acquiescence, without due judicial process.⁵² The October killings bore all the hallmarks of such acts, including the use of excessive force against unarmed civilians, lack of immediate threat to life, and the absence of transparent investigations or accountability measures. This contravenes the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, which clearly stipulates that law enforcement officials may use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the performance of their duty.⁵³

The estimated number of extrajudicial killings (hundreds) far exceeds the number of such killings documented by LHRC in previous years, averaging 7 incidents each year from 2020 to 2024. The absence of an official figure on the number of people killed during the October unrest raises serious questions as to whether the death toll may have reached the hundreds or even thousands, as suggested by various sources.

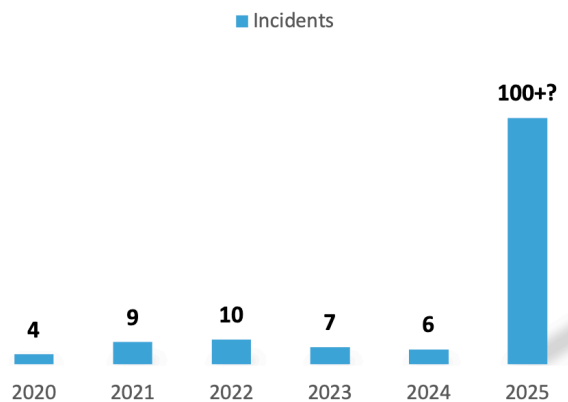


Figure 3.1: #Reported incidents of extrajudicial killings documented by LHRC (2020 – 2025)

The persistence of the problem of extrajudicial killings necessitates the existence of an external civilian oversight of police actions and operations. Law enforcement officers implicated in police brutality and extrajudicial killings should be held accountable for their actions. An independent civilian

⁵² EBSCO “Extrajudicial killing (state killing)” Available at: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/law/extrajudicial-killing-state-killing>.

⁵³ See Article 3 of the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, adopted by the UN General Assembly in resolution 34/169 of 17 December 1979 at New York, at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/LawEnforcementOfficials.aspx>.

police oversight body is also desirable to investigate incidents or allegations of extrajudicial killings. A police oversight body can help the police and other law enforcement organs restore or enhance public trust, which is a prerequisite for effective policing, and prevent police misconduct and a culture of impunity.

Other Incidents of Extrajudicial Killings

In 2025, LHRC documented at least six other reported incidents of alleged extrajudicial killings and unlawful use of force involving state or quasi-state actors across different regions of Tanzania.

Among the documented cases, John James was fatally shot by forest officers on 28th February 2025 in Kibiti, Pwani Region, while Emmanuel Lucas Mwenye (18) died on 31th March 2025 after being shot by police officers in Serengeti, Mara Region. In another incident, Haji Mnette died on 27th May 2025 following a collision involving a Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) vehicle in Kibiti, Pwani Region, while Frank Sanga (32) was reportedly shot by police officers on 19th July 2025 in Dodoma and later succumbed to his injuries. Other incidents include the alleged killing of Ezibon Fikiri (20) on 13th August 2025 by game reserve officers (Jeshi Usu) in Bukombe, Geita Region, and the death of *bodaboda* driver Edmund Temba on 15th November 2025 in Morogoro Region involving a TFS vehicle.

Collectively, these incidents, occurring between February and November 2025, highlight recurring patterns of lethal force by law enforcement and conservation authorities, raising serious concerns regarding legality, necessity, proportionality, and accountability.

3.1.1.4. Funerals Without Bodies

In the aftermath of the October 2025 post-election violence in Tanzania, multiple families reported that they were unable to recover the bodies of their loved ones for burial. Human rights organizations documented cases in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Arusha, Songwe, Kilimanjaro (Moshi), and Mbeya in which families searched hospitals and mortuaries without success. Relatives of at least eight victims reportedly stated that bodies were removed from mortuaries shortly after being taken there.⁵⁴ In one case, sources reported that after Stephano China, 19, was taken to Tunduma Referral Hospital mortuary, hospital officials later told relatives that police had collected all the bodies.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ 'Tanzania: Security Forces Used Unlawful Lethal Force in Election Protest Crackdown and 'Took Away' Dead Bodies' Amnesty International, 19 December 2025, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/12/tanzania-security-forces-used-unlawful-lethal-force-in-election-protest-crackdown-and-took-away-dead-bodies/>.
⁵⁵ Ibid.

A healthcare worker alleged that some individuals who were still breathing were transported directly to mortuary facilities.

“As per our tradition, since we didn't find his body, we decided to bury his clothes and picture.”
- Relative of a victim in Dar es Salaam

Similarly, the family of Daudi Ndone, 38, who was shot in Dar es Salaam's Manzese area, reportedly searched multiple mortuaries for over a week without locating his remains. In Mwanza, some victims' remains were reportedly never returned to families, despite identification by witnesses.⁵⁶ In its November 2025 statement, the U.N. Human Rights Office cited “disturbing

reports” that security forces removed bodies from streets and hospitals to undisclosed locations in an apparent attempt to conceal evidence.⁵⁷ However, authorities in Tanzania publicly denied this practice of concealing bodies.

The reported removal and non-disclosure of bodies raise serious concerns under international human rights law. The right to life includes the obligation to account for the fate and whereabouts of those killed and to return remains to families for dignified burial. The denial of access to a loved one's body may amount to inhuman treatment of relatives and, where bodies are deliberately concealed, could constitute elements of enforced disappearance. The appeals by families attest to the profound psychological, cultural, and legal harm caused when victims are denied burial rites consistent with tradition and dignity. Some families buried the clothes, pictures or even empty coffin.

In addition to Tanzanian victims, concerns were also raised regarding the body of John Okoth Ogutu, a Kenyan national reportedly killed during the unrest in Dar es Salaam. According to public statements by family members and civil society groups in Kenya, Okoth, described as a teacher, was shot during the violence, and his body was not immediately released to his relatives.⁵⁸ His family publicly appealed for the repatriation of his remains to Kenya for burial, emphasizing their cultural and religious obligation to conduct proper funeral rites. Advocacy groups, including Amnesty Kenya and Vocal Africa, called for a transparent investigation into his death and the prompt return of his body.⁵⁹ The case highlights the cross-border human rights implications of the October

56 Aaron Ross & Vincent Mumo Nzilani “INTENDED KILLINGS’: TANZANIA’S ELECTION VIOLENCE ENSNARED UNSUSPECTING VICTIMS,’ Reuters, 9 January 2026, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/intended-killings-tanzanias-election-violence-ensnared-unsuspecting-victims-2026-01-09/>.

57 ‘Tanzania: Reports of Hundreds Killed and Detained Following Deadly Election Violence’ UN News, 11 November 2025, at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166334>.

58 Elizabeth Ojina ‘Siaya family seeks help to repatriate body of kin killed in Tanzania election unrest’ NTV Kenya, at <https://ntvkenya.co.ke/news/siaya-family-seeks-help-to-repatriate-body-of-kin-killed-in-tanzania-election-unrest/>.

59 Joint Press Statement on the Condition of Two Kenyan Nationals John Okoth Ogutu and Fredrick Lorent Obuya and Attempts to Scapegoat Kenyans for the Tanzanian Electoral Crisis, 7 November 2025, at <https://www.amnestykenya.org/joint-press-statement-on-the-condition-of-two-kenyan-nationals-john-okoth-ogutu-and-fredrick-lorent-obuya-and-attempts-to-scapegoat-kenyans-for-the-tanzanian-electoral-crisis/>.

2025 events and brings into sharper focus concerns regarding the right of families, regardless of nationality, to recover and bury their loved ones with dignity.



Picture 3.12: Family members of John Okoth Ogutu speak to the media while appealing for the repatriation of his body for burial following his reported killing during the October 2025 unrest

3.1.1.5. Reaction of Local Stakeholders

The October 2025 unrest and reported killings in Tanzania prompted strong and varied reactions from senior statesmen, religious leaders, civil society organizations, media bodies, and opposition actors. While the tone and emphasis differed, most statements converged on demands for accountability, transparency, and respect for constitutional rights.

LHRC, alongside other like-minded organizations including Twaweza, JamiiAfrica, and others, issued a joint statement condemning excessive use of force, unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and violations of due process rights.⁶⁰ They cited constitutional protections against arbitrary detention and emphasized the right to bail and access to legal representation. These organizations also criticized the six-day nationwide internet shutdown, arguing that it violated rights to freedom of expression and access to information under both domestic and international law. Their joint call to government included immediate release or lawful charging of detainees; independent, transparent, and time-bound investigations into

⁶⁰ CSOs' Joint Statement Condemning Pre and Post-Election Grievous Human Rights Violations in Tanzania, 7th November 2025, at https://humanrights.or.tz/en/news-events/Joint_statement_election.

killings; prosecution of those responsible for unlawful use of lethal force; protection of journalists and media freedom; compensation for families who lost loved ones; and engagement in inclusive national dialogue.

Jukwaa la Katiba Tanzania (JUKATA) condemned what it described as excessive and unlawful use of force against civilians during and after the 29th October election.⁶¹ In its public statement, JUKATA framed the events as a constitutional crisis, arguing that the reported shootings violated fundamental rights protected under the Constitution, including the right to life, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly. The organization emphasized that the use of firearms must be a last resort and called for an independent, impartial investigation whose findings would be made public. It urged the government to restore constitutional order and ensure accountability for any unlawful killings.

Similarly, Policy Forum expressed deep concern over credible reports of excessive force by police and security agencies. While mourning the loss of life and extending solidarity to affected families, Policy Forum focused on the broader implications for governance and public trust.⁶² The organization stated that accountability and justice are essential for restoring confidence in state institutions and called for transparent, time-bound investigations into the unrest. It emphasized the need for renewed commitment to democratic values, human rights protections, and civic participation as foundations for lasting peace and national unity.

The Tanzania Editors' Forum (TEF) issued a public appeal urging citizens to verify information before sharing it, in light of widespread reports and graphic content circulating on social media. While encouraging calm and responsible journalism, TEF acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and the need for credible investigations.⁶³ The statement reflected concern about misinformation but also recognized the gravity of reported loss of life.

One of the major opposition parties, Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), issued a formal public statement condemning what it described as excessive and unlawful use of force by security agencies against peaceful demonstrators.⁶⁴ The party called for independent investigations, accountability for those who ordered or carried out shootings, and engagement

61 Jukwaa la Katiba Tanzania, Taarifa kwa Umma, 11/11/2025, at <https://www.instagram.com/p/DQ7DBwxjExG/>.

62 Policy Forum, Statement on Tanzania's Post-Election Situation and Human Rights Concerns, 6 November 2025, at <https://www.policyforum-tz.org/news/2025-11-07/statement-tanzanias-post-election-situation-and-human-rights-concerns>.

63 Jukwaa la Wahariri Tanzania (TEF), Poleni Watanania, Tujiisahihishe, 6 November 2025, at <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DQ77izTDX18/>.

64 Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), Taarifa kwa Umma, 2 November 2025, at <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DSJx1GbDWGp/>.

of international institutions to monitor the situation. CHADEMA also raised concerns about reports of bodies being removed from hospitals and the need for transparency regarding the number of victims.

Likewise, another opposition party, ACT Wazalendo released a public statement condemning the killings and describing them as grave human rights violations.⁶⁵

The party expressed solidarity with affected families and called for an independent international investigation into the events of 29th October and the days that followed. ACT Wazalendo demanded that those who authorized, executed, or concealed unlawful killings be held accountable, that the use of excessive force against civilians cease immediately, and that national dialogue be initiated to address underlying democratic and governance concerns.

Religious leaders also spoke out strongly. The Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), representing the Catholic Church, issued multiple statements condemning the killings. TEC stressed that “the punishment for protesters is not death,” affirming that the right to life under Article 14 of the Constitution must be upheld. Church leaders, through its Secretary General Fr. Dr. Charles Kitima, questioned why lethal force was used against civilians and called for those responsible to be held accountable. TEC further demanded that investigations into the 29th October killings be conducted by an independent body, not solely by state institutions, to ensure impartiality and credibility. The bishops expressed concern that some victims were killed in their homes without participating in demonstrations. They also linked the unrest to broader governance concerns, including democratic deficits and long-standing grievances, and called for national dialogue to restore peace and justice. TEC emphasized the sanctity of human life and urged transparency regarding the number of those killed, the release of bodies to families for dignified burial, and national dialogue aimed at reconciliation.

Similarly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) issued a public statement mourning those killed and calling for justice.⁶⁶ The church urged the government to conduct credible investigations and ensure that families receive truth and accountability. ELCT framed the events as a national tragedy requiring compassion, justice, and respect for the sanctity of human life.

Former Vice President and Prime Minister retired Judge Joseph Warioba stated in media interviews that the government should acknowledge serious

⁶⁵ Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT-Wazalendo), Taarifa kwa Umma: Kauli ya ACT Wazalendo Kufuatia Mauaji ya Tarehe 29/10/2025 na Siku Zilizofuata Baada ya Uchaguzi, at <https://www.instagram.com/p/DQteZJJDI1y/>.

⁶⁶ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), Neo la KKT kuhusu Matukio ya Wiki ya Uchaguzi Mkuu wa Tanzania Oktoba 2025, at https://mission-einewelt.de/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025_11_12_NENO_LA_KKKT_KUHUSU_MATUKIO_YA_WIKI_YA_UC_HAGUZI_MKUU.pdf.

”
When you look at the figures being talked about, the number of those killed is greater than those who died in the Kagera War.
Judge Warioba
“

mistakes in the handling of the October 29th events.⁶⁷ He suggested that the scale of reported deaths was deeply troubling and warned that the situation appeared as though policing authority had been exercised without adequate oversight. Warioba emphasized that accepting responsibility and confronting the truth would be necessary steps toward

reconciliation and national healing.

Professor Samuel Wangwe, a Tanzanian economist and public policy expert known for his work on governance, economic reform, and development policy, argued that the Presidential Commission established to investigate the unrest must conduct a thorough and impartial inquiry, including scrutiny of police conduct. He stressed that officers who unlawfully used firearms must also be investigated and held accountable. He noted that reports of individuals being shot inside their homes or shot from behind required careful examination and cautioned against limiting accountability to civilians alone. He stressed that justice must be even-handed if public trust is to be restored.

Key Stakeholder Responses and Emerging Accountability Demands

Across religious institutions, civil society networks, media associations, political actors, and regional organizations, several consistent demands emerged, namely:

- Independent and impartial investigations into the killings.
- Accountability for unlawful use of lethal force.
- Protection of constitutional rights, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.
- Disclosure of the fate and whereabouts of missing persons.
- Compensation and dignified burial rights for affected families.
- National dialogue aimed at reconciliation and institutional reform.

Collectively, these reactions reflect widespread domestic and regional concern that the October 2025 events represented not only isolated incidents of violence but a broader crisis of governance, accountability, and public trust.

⁶⁷ 'Joseph Warioba, Tanzania's Respected Elder Statesman, Breaks Silence on Post-Election Violence, Questions Use of Force' The Chanzo, 24 December 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/12/24/joseph-warioba-tanzanias-respected-elder-statesman-breaks-silence-on-post-election-violence-questions-use-of-force/>.

3.1.1.6.Reaction of the International Community

The events of 29th October 2025 and their aftermath also prompted significant and sustained reactions from the international community, including regional bodies, diplomatic missions, foreign governments, regional CSOs, and international human rights organizations. Statements issued in the weeks following the violence expressed concern over reported killings, injuries, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, restrictions on civic space, and disruptions to media and internet access.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the violence and questioning the credibility of the elections. The resolution called for an immediate end to the use of excessive force by security services, the unconditional release of political detainees including opposition leader Tundu Lissu, restoration of internet access, and protection of journalists and civil society actors. It further urged the European Union to review financial assistance to Tanzanian authorities and to consider targeted measures against individuals responsible for human rights violations. The resolution also called on Tanzania to resume inclusive political dialogue involving opposition parties and civil society.

A joint diplomatic statement by the British High Commission, the Canadian High Commission, multiple European embassies, and the EU Delegation expressed deep concern over reported deaths, injuries, and restrictions on civic freedoms.⁶⁸ The diplomats emphasized restraint by security forces, credible and transparent investigations, and respect for constitutional rights, including freedom of expression and assembly.

The United States government indicated it was “comprehensively reviewing” its bilateral relationship with Tanzania in light of the events, signaling potential diplomatic consequences.⁶⁹ Similarly, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) called for restraint, dialogue, and peaceful resolution of tensions, while Ghana’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged accountability and protection of human rights.

Human Rights Watch reported that while it could not independently verify all casualty figures, credible reports pointed to killings, widespread arrests, and a broader crackdown following disputed elections.⁷⁰ It noted that regional

68 Joint Statement by the British High Commission, the Canadian High Commission, the Embassies of Norway, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the European Union Delegation, on Recent Events in Tanzania, 5 December 2025, at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tanzania/joint-statement-recent-events-tanzania_en?s=124.

69 U.S Department of State, Review of U.S.-Bilateral Relationship with Tanzania, Press Statement, 4 December 2025, at <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/12/review-of-u-s-bilateral-relationship-with-tanzania>.

70 ‘Tanzania: Killings, Crackdown Follow Disputed Elections’ Human Rights Watch, 4 November 2025, at

and international bodies, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, SADC, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the European Union, had publicly raised concern about the high number of fatalities and the overall human rights situation.

In November 2025, a coalition of international lawyers and human rights actors, including the World Jurists Association and the Madrid Bar Association, urged the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate alleged mass killings and serious human rights violations linked to Tanzania's October 2025 elections.⁷¹ They argued that the violent crackdown on post-election protests, reportedly involving the use of lethal force against civilians, arbitrary arrests, and potential crimes against humanity, requires international scrutiny, particularly in light of concerns that domestic accountability mechanisms may be inadequate or compromised.

Regionally, SADC (through a statement by Malawi's President H.E. Arthur Peter Mutharika as Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation) expressed concern over deaths and destruction, called for restraint by all parties, and urged peaceful resolution and dialogue.⁷² Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also issued a press statement expressing concern over civilian casualties and calling for accountability, protection of human rights, and adherence to the rule of law.⁷³

The Pan-African Solidarity Statement, endorsed by a broad coalition of African civil society organizations, activists, academics, and human rights defenders, expressed deep concern over alleged electoral irregularities, state violence, enforced disappearances, internet restrictions, and civilian killings surrounding Tanzania's 29th October 2025 elections.⁷⁴ The coalition condemned the excessive use of force, referenced reports of bodies being removed and possible mass graves, and described the events as part of a wider pattern of democratic backsliding and repression. It called for an independent international investigation, engagement by the African Union and SADC, activation of international accountability mechanisms, restoration of internet

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/04/tanzania-killings-crackdown-follow-disputed-elections>.

71 Antony Sguazzin, Helen Nyambura, & Charlotte Hughes-Morgan 'ICC Urged to Probe Alleged Killings After Tanzania Election' Bloomberg, 25 November 2025, at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-11-25/icc-urged-to-probe-alleged-mass-killing-during-tanzania-election>.

72 Statement by H.E. Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, 31 October 2025, at <https://www.sadc.int/latest-news/statement-he-professor-arthur-peter-mutharika-president-republic-malawi-and-chairperson>.

73 Republic of Ghana, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Statement: Post-Election Political and Human Rights Situation in Tanzania, at <https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/news/ghana-expresses-grave-concern-over-post-election-violence-in-tanzania-calls-for-human-rights-protection/2025/>; 'Ghana Calls for Credible Investigations on Post-Election Violence in Tanzania' The Chanzo, 4 December 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/12/04/ghana-calls-for-credible-investigations-on-post-election-violence-in-tanzania/>.

74 Pan-African Solidarity Statement, Africa Will Not Be Silent: Pan-African Solidarity Statement to End the Bloodshed and Demand Justice for Tanzanians, at https://www.instagram.com/p/DQuOnT7jKv9/?img_index=1.

access, protection of journalists and civil society, and the release of political detainees. Emphasizing continental unity, the statement positioned the crisis as a matter of democratic integrity and human dignity

Across the East African region, the October killings were widely condemned by human rights groups and other stakeholders, including the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC),⁷⁵ which condemned the deliberate killings by state security forces and alleged the use of mass graves to conceal the scale of fatalities. KHRC also urged the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate possible crimes against humanity. Amnesty Kenya announced legal action before the East African Court of Justice concerning the killing of a Kenyan citizen in Tanzania and broader human rights concerns. The statement called for repatriation of the body and accountability for cross-border violations.

Vocal Africa, an NGO working with regional human rights monitors, condemned the reported killings, arbitrary arrests, and alleged enforced disappearances following Tanzania's 29th October 2025 elections, stating that it was actively documenting violations to pursue accountability at national, regional, and international levels. The organization expressed concern over the use of live ammunition against civilians and emphasized that the rights to life, assembly, and expression are protected under domestic and international law. It called for an independent and transparent investigation extending through the full chain of command, the release of arbitrarily detained individuals, and the restoration of civic space, positioning the crisis within a broader regional struggle against impunity and democratic backsliding in East Africa.

Escalating Scrutiny and Calls for Accountability

Across these reactions, common themes which emerged were condemnation of excessive force, demands for independent and transparent investigations, concerns over democratic legitimacy, calls for release of detainees, and warnings of diplomatic or legal consequences. While some actors emphasized dialogue and restraint, others escalated their language to include references to crimes against humanity and potential ICC intervention, indicating mounting international scrutiny over Tanzania's post-election crisis.

3.1.1.7. Government's Position and Response

The Government rejected allegations of systematic killings and excessive use

⁷⁵ Sheriff Bojang Jnr 'Morgues overflow, hidden graves in Dar es Salaam: Tanzania accused of mass killings' the africa report, 21 November 2025, at <https://www.theafricareport.com/399625/morgues-overflow-hidden-graves-in-dar-es-salaam-tanzania-accused-of-mass-killings/>.

of force following the unrest of October 29th, 2025, and consistently framed the events as organised and violent riots rather than peaceful demonstrations.⁷⁶ While speaking with elders of Dar es Salaam in December 2025, the President of Tanzania, H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, publicly defended the actions of the security forces, stating that the disturbances had involved attacks on police stations, destruction of public and private property, and attempts to seize weapons.⁷⁷ She argued that the force used corresponded to the gravity of the situation and maintained that the state had acted to preserve national stability, constitutional order, and public safety. In her remarks, she characterised the unrest as deliberate efforts to destabilise the country, rather than legitimate civic protest.

Senior government officials reiterated this position. The Minister of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports, Hon. Prof. Palamagamba Kabudi stated that the government did not recognise any policy or practice of intentional brutality against civilians and categorically rejected claims that “shoot-to-kill” orders had been issued.⁷⁸ He maintained that security operations had been conducted within the framework of the law and were subject to legal safeguards. The Prime Minister, Hon. Dr. Mwigulu Nchemba, similarly dismissed circulating casualty figures, some of which ranged into the thousands, as exaggerated and politically motivated.⁷⁹ He criticised those publishing such figures, arguing that they were exploiting tragedy for political or financial gain, and contended that it would have been premature to issue definitive numbers before the completion of official investigations.



While initially denying that protesters had been killed, the government later acknowledged that casualties had occurred but declined to release an official death toll. Officials maintained that releasing unverified figures would have been irresponsible and disrespectful to grieving families. The Ministry of Health also questioned the authenticity of widely circulated footage showing numerous bodies in a hospital setting, and the

76 Ally Mayala “Ignore divisive narratives” *Daly News*, 24 November 2025, at <https://dailynews.co.tz/ignore-divisive-narratives/>.

77 Larry Madowo ‘Tanzanian president defends police after hundreds killed in October election protests’ *CNN*, 2 December 2025, at <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/12/02/world/tanzania-president-justifies-police-killings>.

78 Aaron Ross & Vincent Mumo Nzilani “INTENDED KILLINGS’: TANZANIA’S ELECTION VIOLENCE ENSNARED UNSUSPECTING VICTIMS,’ *Reuters*, 9 January 2026, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/intended-killings-tanzanias-election-violence-ensnared-unsuspecting-victims-2026-01-09/>.

79 ‘Tanzanian Prime Minister Disputes 10,000 Death Toll Over Election Day Protest’ *The Chanzo*, 19 December 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/12/19/tanzanian-prime-minister-disputes-10000-death-toll-over-election-day-protest/>.

government spokesperson criticised international media reports, particularly CNN's investigative documentary, as misleading, unbalanced, and based on unverified information. A public notice indicated that the government was reviewing the documentary's contents and would issue a formal response following verification. No official findings from the review and verification process have been made public to date.

In response to domestic and international pressure, H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan announced the formation of a Commission of Inquiry on November 20th, 2025, to investigate the causes of the unrest, the conduct of security forces, and the roles played by political actors and other stakeholders. The commission was mandated to identify the root causes of the violence and recommend measures to prevent recurrence. Government officials presented the establishment of the commission as evidence that the state took concerns about the use of force seriously and was committed to accountability through national mechanisms.⁸⁰ However, opposition parties and segments of civil society expressed scepticism regarding the commission's independence and called for an international investigation instead.

⁸¹ This scepticism stemmed from concerns over the manner of its establishment, perceived lack of institutional autonomy, limited transparency in its proceedings, and the absence of meaningful participation of independent actors, including civil society. Additional concerns were raised regarding past experiences with similar commissions, where recommendations were not fully implemented, as well as the broader context of restricted civic space, which has affected public confidence in domestic accountability mechanisms.⁸²

Overall, the government's reaction centred on defending its sovereignty, justifying the security response as lawful and proportionate, disputing reported casualty figures, and framing the unrest as a matter of national security and economic sabotage rather than a suppression of peaceful dissent. However, the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) publicly condemned the outbreak of violence during the October 2025 post-election unrest and expressed concern over the loss of life, injuries sustained, loss of private property, and destruction of public property. It called on all parties to exercise restraint, respect the rule of law, and uphold human rights standards.⁸³

⁸⁰ 'The Full Text of President Samia's Address at the Launch of the Commission of Inquiry' The Chanzo, 20 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/20/the-full-text-of-president-samias-address-at-the-launch-of-the-commission-of-inquiry/>.

⁸¹ 'Tanzania Opposition Rejects President's Probe Team into Election Unrest, Demands International Inquiry' The Chanzo, 19 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/19/tanzania-opposition-rejects-presidents-probe-team-into-election-unrest-demands-international-inquiry/>.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ 'Tume ya Haki za Binadamu na Utawala Bora, imeamua kufanya uchunguzi wa kina juu ya matukio ya vurugu yaliyotokea katika kipindi cha uchaguzi.' ChannelTen Tanzania, at <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DQrmlQXjBQ-/>.

CHRAGG further emphasized the importance of peaceful coexistence, national unity, and adherence to legal procedures, urging citizens to avoid acts that could escalate tensions. At the same time, the Commission indicated its intention to investigate and follow up on reported incidents, including allegations of human rights violations, in line with its constitutional mandate. CHRAGG's response reflected a balanced institutional position, combining condemnation of violence with calls for calm, respect for the law, and continued observation of the human rights situation.

3.1.1.8.LHRC's View

The October 2025 unrest marked one of the most consequential and polarising moments in Tanzania's recent political history, triggering significant loss of life, widespread arrests, and deep domestic and international concern regarding the protection of fundamental rights. While the Government defended its response as lawful and necessary to restore order, civil society organisations, regional actors, and international bodies questioned the proportionality of the force used and the transparency surrounding casualty figures and accountability processes.

The true scale of casualties arising from the 2025 unrest remains uncertain. In the absence of a thorough, transparent, and inclusive verification process, it is not possible to conclusively determine the number of those killed. This uncertainty raises serious concerns regarding accountability, documentation, and the State's obligation to safeguard the right to life. LHRC fears that the failure to hold perpetrators accountable will only serve to further deepen public mistrust in law enforcement institutions and entrench a culture of impunity.

The persistence of the problem of extrajudicial killings, particularly in light of the October 2025 killings, strongly necessitates the existence of an external civilian oversight of police actions and operations, which shall investigate incidents or allegations of extrajudicial killings and police brutality. A police oversight body can help the police and other law enforcement organs restore or enhance public trust, which is a prerequisite for effective policing, and prevent police misconduct and a culture of impunity.

3.1.2. Other unlawful killings

The unlawful killings in 2025 were not limited to state actions. LHRC also documented reports of other unlawful killings, particularly witchcraft-motivated killings, intimate partner homicide (IPH), and mob killings.

3.1.2.1. Witchcraft-motivated killings

Despite repeated government and police warnings, witchcraft-motivated killings continue to occur across Mainland Tanzania, driven by persistent beliefs that misfortunes are caused by witchcraft. Women, particularly elderly women, remain the primary victims, reflecting entrenched gender and age-based discrimination. While the problem is nationwide, it is historically concentrated in the Lake Zone and parts of the Central Zone, especially Shinyanga and Tabora. Police data indicate that since 2020, over 100 such killings have been reported annually, highlighting the ongoing and structural nature of this human rights concern.



8 out of 10

Victims of witchcraft-motivated killings in Tanzania are elderly persons

Police report on crime and traffic incidents for the year 2024, released in April 2025, showed that across Tanzania, a total of 168 murders linked to superstitious beliefs occurred from January to December 2024⁸⁴ accounting for approximately 8% of all

recorded murders. This means that nearly one in every ten homicides nationally was belief driven.

The data demonstrates that these killings are not isolated incidents but constitute a persistent pattern of structural violence rooted in harmful traditional beliefs, witchcraft accusations, and ritual-related practices. Critically, the overwhelming majority of victims (approximately 82%) were elderly persons, with isolated cases affecting persons with albinism.

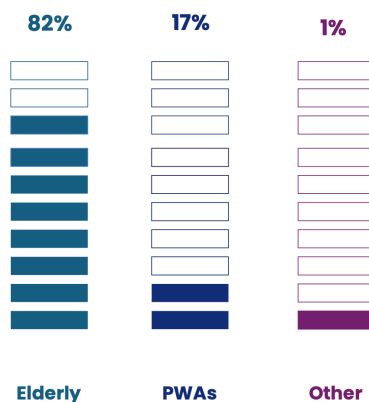


Figure 3.2: #Victims of witchcraft-motivated killings in Tanzania, January to December 2024, Source: TPF & NBS

⁸⁴ Tanzania Police Force (TPF) & National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2025). Crime and traffic incidents statistics: January–December 2024. Government of Tanzania. <https://www.nbs.go.tz/uploads/statistics/documents/en-1744876106-Crime%20and%20Traffic%20Incidents%20Statistics%20%20January%20-%20December%202024.pdf>.

Further analysis of the 2024 incidents revealed that witchcraft-related killings are geographically concentrated rather than evenly distributed. Three of the five highest-risk regions are located in the Lake Zone, confirming long-documented patterns of witchcraft accusation violence in that geographic cluster. These regions are Kagera (22), Geita (8), and Mwanza (8). Another region, which tied with Geita and Mwanza, is Njombe (8). Tabora also made the top five list, with 12 incidents. The top three regions (Dodoma, Kagera, and Tabora) accounted for 41% of all the killings.

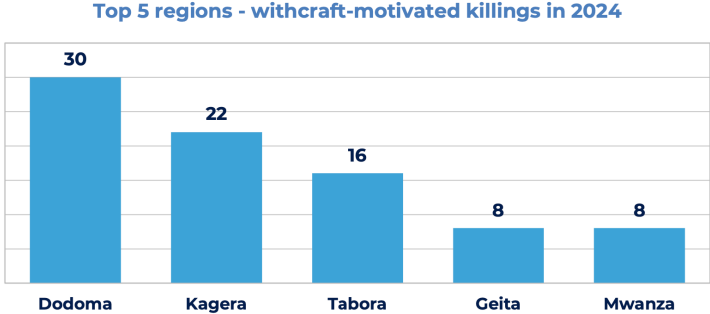


Figure 3.3: Top 5 Regions with highest witchcraft-motivated killings (2024)

Analysis shows that superstition-related killings are not limited to the traditionally assumed Lake Zone areas. Instead, regions such as Dodoma in the Central Zone and Njombe in the Southern Highlands also record notably high levels of cases, indicating that the problem is more geographically widespread than previously assumed.

In 2025, LHRC documented a total of 4 incidents of witchcraft-motivated killings, significantly decreasing from 12 in 2024. These incidents were reported in Manyara, Geita, Mtwara, and Rukwa Regions.

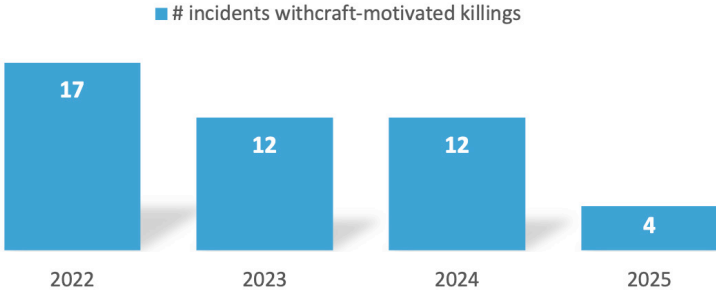


Figure 3.4: #Incidents of witchcraft-suspicion killings recorded by LHRC – 2022 to 2025

In Manyara Region, specifically Babati District, a Form Four student, Yohana Konki (17), was killed on the night of 27th January 2025 after relatives allegedly accused him of using witchcraft to cause his father's death.⁸⁵ According to police reports cited on 27th February 2025, the killing followed claims by family members that the deceased had bewitched their father. The Regional Police Commander, stated that the murder occurred at the victim's home and was linked to these accusations. Authorities launched a manhunt for a traditional healer alleged to have provided misleading divination that contributed to the accusation and subsequent killing.

In Rukwa Region, Kalambo District, four members of the same family were arrested for allegedly killing and beheading their relative, Mashaka Michael Sichone (30), a resident of Kalipula Village, Ulumi Ward, Mwimbi Division.⁸⁶ The victim, who served as a local CCM branch secretary, was reportedly attacked with a machete at his home during the night of 27th January 2025. According to the Rukwa Regional Police Commander, the suspects accused the deceased of using witchcraft to kill their father. After killing him, they allegedly removed his head and fled with it.

In another incident, police in Mtwara arrested and arraigned two 24-year-old men from Mraushi A, Masasi District, Danford Steven Seif and Daniel Steven Seif, in connection with the murder of their mother, Upendo Methew Mayaya (42).⁸⁷ According to a statement issued on 13th January 2025 by Mtwara Regional Police Commander, the suspects allegedly attacked their mother using a hoe, inflicting injuries that led to her death, reportedly driven by beliefs in witchcraft.

Given the relatively high numbers of witchcraft-motivated killings, a purely criminal justice response is insufficient to address the problem. A comprehensive approach is required, including strengthened community-level prevention strategies, enhanced protection mechanisms for elderly persons who are disproportionately affected, sustained public education campaigns to challenge harmful beliefs, and region-specific monitoring and interventions in high-incidence areas to ensure targeted and effective prevention.

3.1.2.2. Intimate partner homicide (IPH)

Intimate Partner Homicide (IPH) simply refers to the killing of a spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. It is an extreme outcome of Intimate partner violence (IPV), define as physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current

⁸⁵ 'Police hunt witch doctor linked to student's death' THE CITIZEN Newspaper, 19 August 2025; LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, August 2025.

⁸⁶ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, August 2025.

⁸⁷ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, August 2025.

or former partner or spouse.⁸⁸ It remains one of the most persistent and lethal forms of gender-based violence globally.

In 2025, LHRC documented 25 incidents of IPV through media survey, social media monitoring, and overall human rights monitoring. 18 of these incidents (72%), resulted in IPH, decreasing from 41 in 2024. Although financial disputes and separation issues were also reported, jealousy-related conflict was the most frequently cited trigger, highlighting patterns of control and mistrust within intimate relationships.

The 2025 monitoring findings revealed a persistent and geographically dispersed pattern of lethal intimate partner violence in Tanzania. Women constituted the majority of victims (72%), while men accounted for most alleged perpetrators. The incidents spanned multiple regions across the country, indicating that intimate partner homicide was not an isolated occurrence but a nationwide structural concern requiring coordinated prevention and protection efforts.

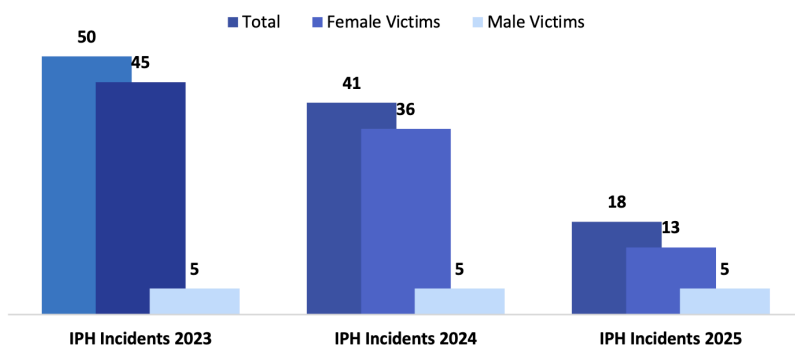


Figure 3.5: IPH incidents documented by LHRC in 2023-2025

IPH incidents were recorded across 11 regions, indicating a clear national spread. Most of the incidents were reported in Geita and Pwani (16.7% each), followed by Mara, Morogoro, and Arusha (11.1% each). The remaining incidents were distributed across Manyara, Ruvuma, Mtwara, Songwe, Mwanza, and Mbeya (5.6% each), with one incident (5.6%) reported without a specified location. Overall, the distribution indicated that intimate partner homicide was not concentrated in a single area but occurred across diverse regions of the country.

⁸⁸ See CDC “Intimate Partner Violence” at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>.

In terms of the methods used, knife or stabbing incidents accounted for 33.3% of cases, while panga or machete attacks and blunt object assaults each accounted for 11.1%. In 38.9% of cases, the method of killing was not specified, including one incident in which the perpetrator reportedly ingested poison after the killing in an apparent suicide attempt. Where the method was specified, use of sharp objects, primarily knives or machetes, accounted for nearly half of the documented cases. This pattern suggested that the killings often resulted from escalation during domestic disputes within private settings rather than from organized or premeditated criminal activity involving specialized weapons.

Some of the Reported Incidents

In February 2025 in Morogoro Region, Philibert Mtamiela (52) was accused of killing his wife, Christina Tollo (47), by striking her with a blunt object after earlier threatening relatives. Following the killing, he reportedly took his own life.

In May 2025 in Mara Region, Samwel Emmanuel (20) was arrested for allegedly stabbing his partner, Josephina Magani (52), to death after accusing her of infecting him with HIV. The confrontation reportedly arose from relationship tensions and resulted in fatal injuries inflicted with a sharp weapon inside a private residence.

In September 2025 in Hanang District, Manyara Region, Veronica Muhale (40) was arrested after she allegedly stabbed to death her husband, Josephat Kasi (45), following repeated marital disputes reportedly linked to jealousy. The incident occurred at night in their home, and authorities indicated that the couple had experienced ongoing conflict prior to the fatal escalation.

In November 2025 in Geita Region, a man was accused of attacking his wife to death with a sharp weapon following a domestic dispute reportedly linked to jealousy. After the killing, he allegedly attempted suicide by ingesting poison, reflecting an extreme and lethal escalation of intimate partner violence within the household.

LHRC's view: IPV presents a serious threat to right to life, right to health, right to liberty and personal security, and freedom from violence. The victims of these incidents are mostly women and girls who are more vulnerable compared

to men. The number of reported cases is worrying and there are fears that there might be more unreported incidents. LHRC has also observed that IPV is common among youth and adult groups.

All stakeholders, both government and non-government, need to come together and develop strategies to enhance protection of women and men from IPV, including awareness-raising strategies. Enactment of anti-GBV or domestic violence law to enhance protection for survivors and potential survivors would be a good starting point, since it has been established that most of the violence occurs at home. This will be a crucial step towards domesticating the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) of 2003.

3.1.2.3. Mob killings

Mob killings remain a big threat to right to life in Tanzania, as police crime statistics show that over 400 such incidents occur each year since 2020, averaging over 33 incidents each month. The incidents are more prevalent in Mainland Tanzania, accounting for over 95% of all incidents. Burning alive and severe beatings remain recurrent methods.

In April 2025, the Tanzania Police Force (TPF) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), released crime statistics for the year 2024, which showed that between 2023 and 2024 alone, killings declined by 12.1%. However, the 405 incidents recorded by police in 2024 still represent more than one mob killing per day nationally.

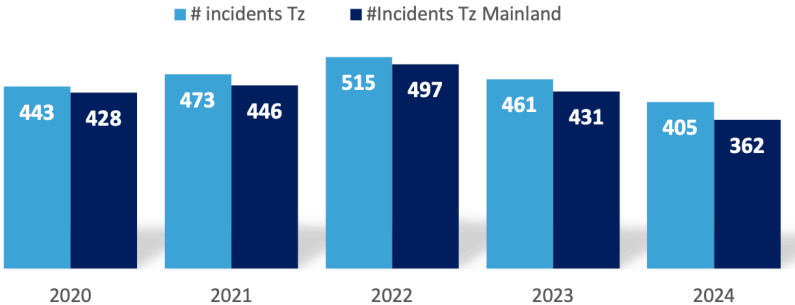


Figure 3.6: #Mob violence killings in Tanzania, 2020 to 2024, Source: TPF & NBS

In 2024, based on the national total of 405 mob killings, Dodoma recorded 37 cases (9.14%), followed by Kagera with 31 cases (7.65%) and Mbeya with

20 cases (4.94%). Ruvuma and Lindi each reported 18 cases (4.44%), while Tanga recorded 17 cases (4.20%). Geita, Mwanza, and Rukwa each registered 16 cases (3.95%), and Morogoro recorded 13 cases (3.21%). Together, these ten Mainland regions accounted for approximately 49.93% of all mob killings nationwide in 2024, meaning that nearly half of the country’s recorded mob killings were concentrated in these areas.

In 2025, LHRC documented 15 incidents of mob killings through human rights monitoring and media survey, 24 less than those documented in 2024. Two thirds of the victims (66%) were killed due to theft allegation. The incidents were reported in Geita, Kilimanjaro, Mara, Iringa, Mwanza, Mbeya, Manyara, Morogoro, Shinyanga, Ruvuma, Arusha, and Kigoma Regions.

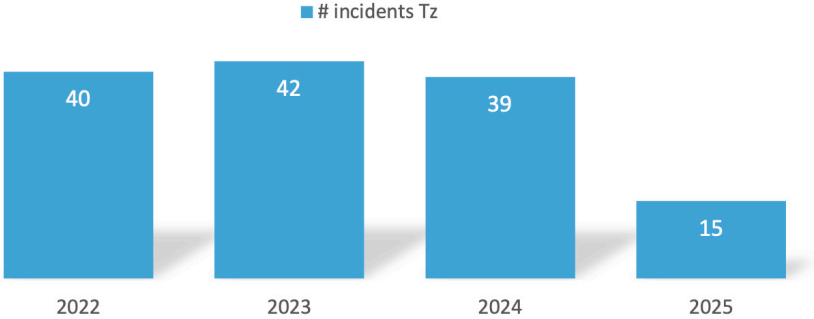


Figure 3.7: Mob violence incidents documented by LHRC - 2022 to 2025

Most mob killings were triggered by accusations of motorcycle theft, livestock theft, and other forms of property theft. Common methods included severe beatings, burning alive, stoning, machete or panga attacks, and public humiliation prior to killing, while firearms were notably absent in most cases. Most of the victims (60%) were youth, with the youngest victim aged just 14 years old.

Some of the Reported Incidents

In June 2025 in Kahama Municipality, Shinyanga Region, four individuals who were alleged to be thieves were killed by a mob. Residents stoned them before setting their bodies on fire in Mhongolo area. The incident reflected the extreme brutality associated with mob justice and the use of burning as a recurring method of collective punishment.

In Geita Region, Enoch Thomas Mhangwa was beaten to death by a crowd after being accused of theft in July 2025. Video footage circulating on social media showed the assault, prompting police to open an investigation. Two suspects, including a village official, were arrested. The incident reflects a pattern of mob justice triggered by theft allegations and widely publicized through online platforms.

In Mwanza Region, two men accused of motorcycle theft were attacked by a crowd, severely beaten, and set on fire in September 2025. Police later confirmed arrests and recovered stolen property allegedly linked to the incident. The case reflects a recurring pattern in which motorcycle theft allegations provoke collective violence, often resulting in fatal outcomes and public burning. In the same region, the severed head of a **bodaboda** driver Dickson Yusuph (24) was recovered earlier in August after two suspects led police to a forest in Nsumba area where they had hidden it, having separated it from his body after killing him and stealing his property. While police were at the scene with the suspects, a group of angry residents followed and began attacking the two men. Both suspects were killed by the mob, and two police officers were injured during the chaos and taken to hospital for treatment.

In September 2025, in Iringa Region, a 14-year-old boy, Yohani Mgaya, was beaten to death by a group of individuals after being accused of theft. Police reported that approximately 15 suspects were arrested in connection with the killing. The incident illustrates the vulnerability of minors in mob justice situations and the rapid escalation of community violence following theft accusations.

LHRC's View: Despite long-term statistical decline, mob justice remains structurally entrenched and continues to pose a serious human rights concern. It is contributed by citizens' lack of trust and confidence in the criminal justice system, mainly due to perception of corruption within law enforcement organs, and ignorance about criminal law, especially on the issue of bail. Criminal justice reforms are therefore needed to enhance trust and confidence in the justice delivery institutions and reduce incidents of mob violence. Nevertheless, LHRC calls upon community members to refrain from taking matters into their own hands and NGOs and other stakeholders to continue raising awareness about how the criminal justice system works as well as the dangers of this practice of mob violence.

ZANZIBAR

In Zanzibar, unlawful killings have been rare in recent years. In 2025, the main incident that was reported was the killing of Sheikh Jabir Haidar Jabir.⁸⁹ His killing in May 2025 became one of the most high-profile incidents in Zanzibar,⁹⁰ raising serious concerns about the protection of the right to life and the conduct of security actors. Sheikh Jabir, a prominent religious leader, was reportedly taken from his home under unclear circumstances and later found dead, with initial reports indicating no visible physical injuries. The case generated widespread public attention and speculation, particularly following reports that some of the suspects were members of the security forces. In July 2025, six individuals were brought before the High Court of Zanzibar and charged with murder, marking a significant step toward judicial accountability.⁹¹



The circumstances surrounding the case exposed broader systemic concerns, including gaps in transparency, forensic investigation capacity, and the handling of cases involving state actors. Conflicting accounts about the events leading to his death, combined with delays in clarifying the cause of death, highlighted weaknesses in

investigative processes. From a human rights perspective, the incident engages the State's obligation to ensure prompt, independent, and effective investigations into suspicious deaths. While the progression of the case to court is a positive development, the extent to which justice will be achieved depends on the independence, transparency, and integrity of the judicial process.

3.2. MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES AND ABDUCTIONS

3.2.1. Overview

Abductions and enforced disappearances continued to be one of the most serious human rights concerns in Tanzania in 2025, particularly in the period preceding and following the October 2025 General Elections. Documented

89 Zuleikha Fatawi 'Mwili wa Sheikh Jabir waokotwa, Polisi waeleza' 28 May 2025, at <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/zanzibar/mwili-wa-sheikh-jabir-waokotwa-polisi-waeleza-5060436>.

90 Jesse Mikofu 'Sita wafikishwa mahakamani tuhuma mauaji ya Sheikh Jabir' 19 July 2025, at <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/zanzibar/sita-wafikishwa-mahakamani-tuhuma-mauaji-ya-sheikh-jabir-5112260>.

91 Najjat Omar 'Zanzibar: Mahakama Kuu Yawapeleka Watuhumiwa Sita Rumande kwa Tuhuma za Mauji ya Sheikh Jabir Haidar' The Chanzo, 9 July 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/07/09/zanzibar-mahakama-kuu-yawapeleka-watuhumiwa-sita-rumande-kwa-tuhuma-za-mauji-ya-sheikh-jabir-haidar/>.

reports and incidents, including from CSOs, media, and victims' families, indicated a persistent and escalating pattern of individuals being forcibly taken by unidentified persons, often believed to be linked to security agencies or individuals operating with apparent impunity. In many cases, victims reportedly disappeared after being seized from their homes, workplaces, or public spaces, while families and legal representatives struggled to obtain official confirmation regarding detention or whereabouts.

Under global⁹² and Africa⁹³ human rights standards, enforced disappearance constitutes a continuing violation involving deprivation of liberty followed by refusal to acknowledge detention or disclose the fate or whereabouts of the victim. Such acts simultaneously violate multiple non-derogable rights including the right to life, liberty, security of person, dignity, and freedom from torture.

3.2.2. Reported Incidents in 2025

Incidents documented by LHRC in 2025 indicated a noticeable escalation in disappearance and abduction cases affecting a broad cross-section of Tanzanian society. Victims included opposition party members, activists, religious leaders, professionals, social media commentators, and ordinary citizens with no known political affiliation. Incident analysis further showed that the situation escalated during the election period, with incidents occurring across geographically diverse regions, including Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, Morogoro, Geita, Dodoma, Simiyu, Kilimanjaro, and Arusha. While some individuals later resurfaced in police custody or were released after detention, many cases remained unresolved, leaving families without information and fueling anxiety among community members. The persistence of similar methods across incidents strengthened concerns raised by domestic and international observers that the phenomenon could not easily be explained as isolated criminal activity.

In total, LHRC documented 80 incidents of mysterious disappearances and abductions from January to December 2025, constituting the highest concentration of reported disappearances and abductions in Tanzania in at least a decade and significantly surpassing annual patterns previously documented by LHRC, as illustrated in Figure 3.8 below.

92 See Article 10 of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, 1992, at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-protection-all-persons-enforced-disappearance>.

93 See African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Guidelines on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances in Africa, 2022, p. 24, at <https://achpr.au.int/en/special-mechanisms-reports/protection-all-persons-enforced-disappearances>.

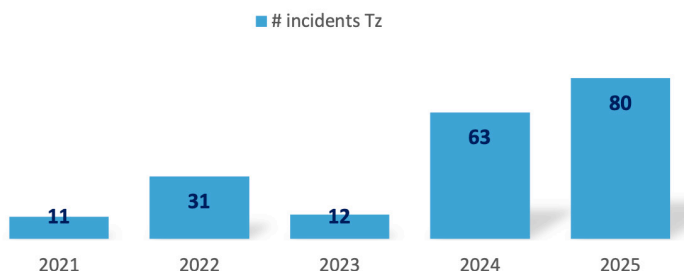


Figure 3.8: #Incidents of abductions & disappearances documented by LHRC – 2021 to 2025

Table 31: General pattern of abductions and disappearances in Tanzania – 2021 to 2025

Year	Pattern
2021	Low but re-emerging cases following earlier decline
2022	Gradual increase in politically sensitive incidents
2023	Growing public concern and recurring disappearance allegations
2024	Significant rise - 63 documented incidents
2025	Peak escalation - estimated 80-95 incidents

Comparison of incidents reported and documented in previous years shows a clear upward trajectory in incidents of abductions and enforced disappearances in Tanzania between 2021 and 2025. While earlier years recorded sporadic and isolated cases, the period beginning in 2021 marked the gradual re-emergence of disappearance allegations linked to political activity, civic engagement, and public criticism of state institutions. By 2023, human rights organizations, including LHRC, were already warning of renewed patterns involving individuals taken by unidentified persons claiming links to security authorities. The trend accelerated significantly in 2024, when LHRC documented 63 incidents of abduction and disappearance, including 33 cases believed to constitute enforced disappearance. These incidents reflected increasing threats to personal security and indicated that disappearances were evolving from isolated occurrences into a recurring national concern.

Further analysis of the incidents revealed that the incidents accelerated sharply three months before elections, peaked in October 2025, and continued after the elections during security crackdowns. This explains why disappearance and abduction became the most reported human rights issue of 2025 in Tanzania, based on LHRC documentation.

Disappearances during the post-election period, accounting for approximately 30% of the reported incidents, occurred alongside mass arrests, internet shutdowns, and allegations of excessive use of force by security agencies. Victims included those who participated in the 29th October protest, youth activists, social media commentators, and ordinary citizens suspected of protest mobilization.

Some of the Reported Incidents in 2025

Among the most prominent cases was the disappearance of former ambassador, CCM cadre, and government critic, Hon. Humphrey Polepole, in October 2025. Unknown individuals reportedly broke into his residence in Dar es Salaam, leaving visible signs of violent struggle, including bloodstains and damaged property. His disappearance attracted immediate national attention and international condemnation, symbolizing growing fears about political repression during the electoral period.

The unresolved disappearance of the politician and activist Mdude Nyagali earlier in 2025 similarly became a defining case. Nyagali was reportedly abducted from his home in Mbeya by unidentified individuals, and despite legal efforts, including habeas corpus applications, his whereabouts remained unknown. His case was repeatedly cited by human rights defenders as evidence of enforced disappearance practices.

Other incidents illustrated the widening scope of victims. Religious leader Steven Jacob was allegedly abducted and later discovered injured.⁹⁴ The 35-year-old preacher and pastor of Huduma ya Kristo [Ministry of Christ] in Arusha, was reportedly abducted and later dumped by his captors on May 17th, 2025, in the West Kilimanjaro Forest in Kilimanjaro. In another incident, a Catholic priest from the Archdiocese of Songea, Father Camillus Nikata, reportedly went missing in early October 2025 under unclear circumstances, prompting appeals from church authorities and police investigations.⁹⁵ However, he was

⁹⁴ 'Doomsday Preacher Who Shared 'Visions' About Tanzania's Leadership Abducted, Tortured, and Dumped in the Forest' The Chanzo, 18 May 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/05/18/doomsday-preacher-who-shared-visions-about-tanzanias-leadership-abducted-tortured-and-dumped-in-the-forest/>.

⁹⁵ 'Key questions in the disappearance and discovery of Catholic priest Nikata' The

later found alive after about nine days in a weakened condition in a rural area, with authorities concluding that his disappearance was voluntary and linked to psychological distress arising from financial difficulties, health challenges, and personal relationship issues. The Catholic Church disputed the conclusion of the authorities. The incident highlights the vulnerability of faith leaders who publicly address governance and social concerns.

In another incident, the disappearance linked to motorcycle driver Deogratus Shirima in Kilimanjaro in July 2025 raised public alarm due to allegations connecting law enforcement officials to the incident, prompting family demands for accountability.⁹⁶ Similarly, Nicodemus Julius Loyore, a young activist known for mobilising youth for the 29th October protests through TikTok, was reportedly taken from his office on 19th December 2025 by individuals believed to be police officers, after which his whereabouts remained unknown, raising serious concerns about a possible enforced disappearance.⁹⁷

Reports circulating in December 2025 indicated that Fortunatus Buyobe, an online activist and investigative content creator, was allegedly abducted in Dar es Salaam by individuals who identified themselves as police officers and took him to an unknown location.⁹⁸ Prior to the incident, Buyobe had publicly expressed fear for his safety, stating on social media that armed individuals had been pursuing him and had reportedly entered his residence without legal authorization. The incident, widely discussed on online platforms, intensified public concern over a growing pattern of abductions involving individuals engaged in digital activism and critical commentary, particularly where alleged involvement of security personnel was suggested.

In the lead-up to the 2025 General Elections, Tanzania witnessed a disturbing pattern of enforced disappearances targeting opposition members and perceived government critics. In October 2025 it was reported that at least 13 members and supporters of the opposition party CHADEMA were reported missing under suspicious circumstances, allegedly abducted by unidentified individuals, often using unmarked vehicles.⁹⁹

Citizen, 19 October 2025, at <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/key-questions-in-the-disappearance-and-discovery-of-catholic-priest-nikata-5236120>.

⁹⁶ 'Family pleads with President Samia over missing bodaboda rider' The Citizen, 12 August 2025, at <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/family-pleads-with-president-samia-over-missing-bodaboda-rider-5152416>.

⁹⁷ 'Desperate Searches and Arrests Continue to Define Tanzania's Post-Election Crackdown' The Chanzo, 30 December 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/12/30/a-nation-in-fear-desperate-searches-and-arrests-continue-to-define-tanzanias-post-election-crackdown/>.

⁹⁸ 'Dar: Fortunatus Buyobe adaiwa kutekwa na wasiojulikana' Jamii Forums, 6 December 2025, at <https://www.jamiiforums.com/threads/dar-fortunatus-buyobe-adaiwa-kutekwa-na-wasiojulikana.2406070/>.

⁹⁹ 'Opposition Members Vanish in Wave of Alleged Abductions as Tension Grows Ahead of Election in Tanzania' The Chanzo, 9 October 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/10/09/opposition-members-vanish-in-wave-of-alleged-abductions-as-tension-grows-ahead-of-election-in-tanzania/>.

Cross-border incidents further intensified concern. Kenyan human rights defender Boniface Mwangi and Ugandan journalist Agather Atuhaire were arrested while visiting Tanzania and later subjected to enforced disappearance and alleged torture before being abandoned near international borders.¹⁰⁰ Their treatment drew strong condemnation from regional and international human rights mechanisms and elevated the issue beyond domestic concern.

Other reported cases involving activists, commentators, and political actors, including Clemence Mwandambo, Joseph Lema, Gasper Temba, Dr. Hashim Titto, and Victoria Swebe, demonstrated how individuals engaged in civic discourse increasingly perceived personal risk linked to political expression or online criticism.

Taken collectively, these incidents contributed to an atmosphere in which fear of abduction became a recurring feature of public life in 2025.

Additionally, in 2025, there were still no answers from the State regarding mysterious disappearances of various people in the past nine years, including that of Azory Gwanda, Shadrack Chaula, Deusdedith Soka, Ben Saanane, and Simon Kanguye.

3.2.3. Domestic Reaction to Disappearances and Abductions

Domestic reaction to the growing wave of abductions and enforced disappearances in 2025 was unusually strong, widespread, and notable for crossing political, institutional, religious, and professional boundaries. Unlike previous years, concern over disappearances moved beyond opposition politics and evolved into a broader national debate about public safety, constitutional governance, and the rule of law. Public discussion intensified particularly in the months leading to and immediately following the October 2025 General Elections, when reports of missing persons became frequent across traditional media, social media platforms, religious forums, and professional associations.

Opposition political parties were among the earliest and most consistent voices raising alarm. One of the opposition parties, CHADEMA, repeatedly characterized the disappearances as posing a direct threat to democratic participation and political freedoms. Party leaders argued that abductions were contributing to an atmosphere of fear intended to discourage political mobilization, silence criticism, and weaken opposition engagement during the

¹⁰⁰ Pan African Lawyers Unions, Agather Atuhaire, Boniface Mwangi and leading Civil Society Organisations File Landmark Case Before the East African Court of Justice, 21 July 2025, at <https://www.lawyersofafrica.org/agather-atuhaire-boniface-mwangi-and-leading-civil-society-organisations-file-landmark-case-before-the-east-african-court-of-justice/>.

electoral period. In public statements and documentation released in October 2025, CHADEMA emphasized that victims represented a wide cross-section of Tanzanian society, including teachers, religious leaders, local officials, activists, and ordinary citizens, suggesting that targeting was not limited to formal political actors but extended to individuals perceived as influential or outspoken within their communities.

Similarly, ACT Wazalendo expressed concern regarding what it described as an increasingly restrictive political environment marked by arrests, intimidation, and disappearances affecting political actors and supporters.¹⁰¹ The party called for transparent and impartial investigations into all reported cases and urged state institutions to guarantee that citizens could participate freely in political processes without fear of retaliation or personal harm. ACT Wazalendo leaders warned that unresolved disappearances risked undermining public confidence in electoral processes and democratic governance.

Beyond party politics, reactions from religious institutions played a particularly influential role in shaping national opinion. Religious leaders increasingly spoke out as disappearances began affecting clergy members, congregants, and community figures. Tanzania Episcopal Council Secretary, Fr. Dr. Charles Kitima, a prominent public voice in 2025, warned that unexplained disappearances were eroding social trust and generating widespread anxiety among citizens. He emphasized that peace and national unity cannot be sustained where families are left searching for relatives without answers, noting that insecurity affecting ordinary citizens ultimately threatens the moral legitimacy of governance itself.

Legal professionals and the bar association also raised strong concerns. Advocate Boniface Mwabukusi, President of the Tanganyika Law Society, stressed that transparency and accountability are fundamental requirements under the Constitution whenever state power restricts personal liberty. He argued that uncertainty surrounding arrests and detention locations undermines habeas corpus protections and weakens the rule of law. Legal stakeholders increasingly warned that prolonged failure to clarify the fate of missing persons risks normalizing unlawful deprivation of liberty.

Perhaps most striking was criticism emerging from figures traditionally associated with the ruling political establishment. Member of Parliament and religious leader Pastor Josephat Gwajima publicly condemned the wave of abductions and disappearances, questioning how leaders would react

¹⁰¹ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, September 2025.

if such incidents affected members of their own families.¹⁰² His remarks generated significant public attention and demonstrated that concern over disappearances had moved beyond partisan divisions. Shortly after his public statements condemning abductions, government regulatory actions affecting institutions linked to him further intensified public debate regarding freedom of expression and civic space.

Academic voices also played a central role in contextualizing the crisis. On 23rd October 2025, the University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly (UDASA) issued a strong statement, expressing serious concern over the increasing incidents of abductions, enforced disappearances, and killings in the lead-up to the 2025 General Elections.¹⁰³ UDASA criticized the growing impunity of so-called “unknown assailants” and questioned the failure of state authorities to prevent such acts or provide clear public explanations. In the statement, UDASA emphasized that these incidents violate constitutional guarantees, particularly the State’s obligation to ensure equal protection and safeguard citizens from abuse, intimidation, and violence.¹⁰⁴ It further warned that the apparent targeting of government critics in abduction cases raises concerns about politically motivated repression and threatens Tanzania’s multi-party democracy. UDASA called on the government and security agencies to end the wave of abductions and violence, ensure accountability through credible and independent investigations, uphold constitutional rights and the rule of law, and promote peace, dialogue, and national unity ahead of the elections. Overall, UDASA’s statement framed the situation as a serious human rights and governance concern, warning that continued impunity could erode public trust, damage Tanzania’s international reputation, and undermine democratic processes.

Renowned constitutional scholar Professor Issa Shivji warned that the normalization of fear, surveillance, and security-centered governance risks gradually weakening democratic institutions built over decades. He cautioned that when citizens begin to self-censor out of fear for personal safety, democratic participation and accountability mechanisms become fundamentally compromised.

Former Rtd. Judge Joseph Warioba, one of Tanzania’s most respected elder statesmen, later echoed these concerns during the post-election period.

102 ‘Askofu Gwajima Afunguka Mazito Sakata la Utekaji’ WAKILI TV, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKUG7Rjv9A>.

103 TAMKO LA JUMUIYA YA WANATAALUMA WA CHUO KIKUU CHA DAR ES SALAAM (UDASA) KUHUSU HALI YA KIUSALAMA NCHINI, 23 Oktoba 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TAMKO-LA-UDASA-1.pdf>; ‘Dar es Salaam University Academics Urge End to Abductions, Call for Peace Ahead of Elections’ The Chanzo, 24 October 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/10/24/dar-es-salaam-university-academics-urge-end-to-abductions-call-for-peace-ahead-of-elections/>.

104 Ibid.

Reflecting on the broader national situation, he described Tanzania as entering a climate increasingly dominated by fear and coercive enforcement measures rather than dialogue and persuasion. Warioba warned that excessive reliance on security responses to political dissatisfaction could deepen social tensions and undermine long-term political stability.

Civil society organizations, journalists, and community stakeholders similarly amplified calls for accountability. Public discussions increasingly focused on unresolved historical disappearance cases, reinforcing perceptions that impunity had allowed the problem to persist over time. Media commentary and public forums frequently questioned why investigations into disappearance cases rarely resulted in arrests or publicly disclosed findings.

Following the wave of reported disappearances, families and legal representatives also increasingly turned to the filing of habeas corpus applications before the High Court as a critical legal remedy to compel state authorities to account for the whereabouts of missing persons suspected to be in custody. This remedy, grounded in constitutional protections of the right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention, became particularly relevant in cases where individuals disappeared in circumstances suggesting possible involvement of security agencies. In high-profile instances, including the reported disappearance of Humphrey Polepole, such legal action was pursued to require the state to either produce the individual before court or formally deny custody, thereby placing a legal obligation on authorities to respond and helping to bring visibility, urgency, and judicial oversight to cases that might otherwise remain unresolved.

Taken together, domestic reactions in 2025 showed one of the most unified expressions of concern over human rights violations witnessed in recent years. The convergence of criticism from opposition parties, religious institutions, legal professionals, academics, and former senior state officials signaled a growing national consensus that disappearances and abductions represent not only individual criminal acts but a systemic challenge affecting constitutional governance, public trust, and democratic stability in Tanzania.

3.2.4. International Reaction to Disappearances and Abductions

International concern over disappearances and abductions in Tanzania intensified markedly throughout 2025, particularly as reports of missing persons converged with election-related violence, restrictions on political participation, and broader allegations of shrinking civic space. The growing number of incidents attracted sustained attention from United Nations human rights mechanisms, regional and international political institutions, and international human rights organizations, transforming what had initially been

viewed as a domestic security concern into an issue of significant international human rights scrutiny.

United Nations human rights experts were among the earliest international actors to raise alarm.¹⁰⁵ In June 2025, several UN Special Procedure mandate holders, including the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, and the Special Rapporteur on Torture, warned that Tanzania was experiencing a troubling pattern of enforced disappearances and acts of intimidation targeting political opponents, journalists, and civil society actors in the lead-up to the general elections. The experts emphasized that enforced disappearance constitutes a continuing violation under international law and occurs when authorities deprive individuals of liberty while refusing to acknowledge detention or disclose their whereabouts.

The UN experts specifically highlighted cases involving activists and election observers, noting that concealment of detention effectively removes individuals from legal protection and exposes them to heightened risks of torture or ill-treatment. They urged Tanzanian authorities to immediately disclose the fate and whereabouts of all missing persons, ensure access to legal safeguards, and conduct prompt, impartial, and independent investigations capable of identifying and prosecuting those responsible. Importantly, the experts stressed that restrictions on media coverage, intimidation of critics, and suppression of peaceful assembly during electoral periods are incompatible with Tanzania's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

International concern deepened further following the October 2025 elections. In December 2025, UN experts issued another strong statement condemning what they described as widespread and systematic human rights violations in the post-election period, including allegations of enforced disappearances, mass arbitrary arrests, and unlawful use of lethal force against protesters.¹⁰⁶ The experts reported credible allegations suggesting that hundreds of individuals may have been killed during security operations and that families faced obstacles in locating or recovering the bodies of victims. They called on the government to ensure identification of victims, return remains to families with dignity, and guarantee accountability and reparations.¹⁰⁷

105 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Tanzania: UN Experts alarmed by pattern of enforced disappearance and torture to silence opposition and critics, 13 June 2025, at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/tanzania-un-experts-alarmed-pattern-enforced-disappearance-and-torture>.

106 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Tanzania: UN experts condemn post-election lethal crackdown and digital blackout, 4 December 2025, at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/12/tanzania-un-experts-condemn-post-election-lethal-crackdown-and-digital>.

107 Ibid.

Within the European Union, political concern also escalated significantly. Committees of the European Parliament formally objected to a proposed €156 million development funding allocation to Tanzania under the EU's external cooperation framework, citing democratic backsliding and serious human rights concerns linked to the electoral environment.¹⁰⁸ Parliamentary discussions referenced restrictions placed on opposition parties, reports of disappearances and political violence, and limitations on media freedoms.¹⁰⁹ Although the objection did not automatically halt funding, European lawmakers described it as a clear political signal that continued partnership required demonstrable improvements in governance, rule of law, and protection of fundamental freedoms. The debate reflected growing unease within European institutions regarding Tanzania's democratic trajectory and international reputation.

International human rights organizations played a central role in documenting and amplifying concerns. Amnesty International repeatedly called on Tanzanian authorities to disclose the fate and whereabouts of disappeared individuals, including high-profile cases such as former ambassador Humphrey Polepole. The organization warned that repeated disappearances occurring without accountability risked entrenching a culture of impunity and undermining constitutional protections. Amnesty further linked disappearances to increasing political repression ahead of elections and urged authorities to guarantee the safety of critics and human rights defenders.

Human Rights Watch similarly concluded that Tanzania's pre-election environment was characterized by intensifying repression, documenting cases of abduction, assault, harassment, and torture affecting activists, opposition members, lawyers, journalists, and religious leaders.¹¹⁰ The organization noted that disappearances were occurring alongside broader restrictions on political opposition and media activity, raising serious doubts about whether citizens could participate freely and safely in democratic processes.

Additional international reports and investigative journalism highlighted these concerns.¹¹¹ Reports published by international media outlets alleged overcrowded morgues, difficulties faced by families attempting to retrieve

108 'EU Parliament Committees Object to €156 Million Funding for Tanzania Amid 'Democratic Backsliding'' The Chanzo, 20 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/20/eu-parliament-committees-object-to-e156-million-funding-for-tanzania-amid-democratic-backsliding/>.

109 'EU Parliament Committees Adopt Objection to Block 2025 Financing for Tanzania Over Human Rights and Election Concerns' Tanzania Invest, 21 November 2025, <https://www.tanzaniainvest.com/economy/eu-parliament-motion-block-financing-aap>.

110 'Tanzania: Deepening Repression Threatens Elections' Human Rights Watch, 29 September 2025, at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/09/29/tanzania-deepening-repression-threatens-elections>.

111 'Tanzania: Whereabouts of government critic unknown: Humphrey Polepole' Amnesty International, 21 November 2025, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr56/0505/2025/en/>.

bodies of victims, and claims that some remains were transferred to undisclosed burial locations following post-election violence.¹¹² While these allegations remained contested, they contributed to increased global scrutiny and calls for independent investigations.

Regional and international civil society coalitions also issued joint statements condemning the situation. African and international organizations emphasized that enforced disappearance represents one of the gravest human rights violations because it simultaneously affects victims, families, and society at large. Several groups urged Tanzania to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and strengthen safeguards preventing arbitrary detention and torture.

Collectively, international reactions in 2025 reflected growing consensus that disappearances and abductions were no longer isolated incidents but part of broader governance and human rights concerns linked to political competition and state accountability.¹¹³ The convergence of pressure from the United Nations,¹¹⁴ European institutions,¹¹⁵ and global human rights organizations significantly elevated the issue within international diplomatic and human rights agendas,¹¹⁶ placing Tanzania under increased scrutiny regarding its compliance with regional and international human rights obligations.

3.2.5. Government Response

Throughout 2025, the Government of Tanzania maintained that state security institutions were not involved in systematic enforced disappearances and asserted that reported incidents were under investigation through existing law enforcement mechanisms. Authorities emphasized that some alleged abductions were criminal acts carried out by unknown individuals or cases influenced by misinformation circulating in public discourse. Government officials reiterated their commitment to the rule of law and urged the public to rely on official investigative processes while avoiding speculation that could heighten national tension.

The President, H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, publicly acknowledged growing public concern over disappearances and condemned the incidents, describing

112 'HRW fears over 1,000 people killed in Tanzania post-election crackdown' France 24, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMJFR64bOd8&t=36s>.

113 See International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances Statement at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/ced/statements/2025-08-30-stm-en-fr-sp.pdf>.

114 'Tanzania: Deaths and injuries amid election-related protests' UN Briefing Notes, 31 October 2025, at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/10/tanzania-deaths-and-injuries-amid-election-related-protests>.

115 EU, Human rights violations in Tanzania, Iran and Tunisia, Press Release, 27 November 2025, at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20251120IPR31502/human-rights-violations-in-tanzania-iran-and-tunisia>.

116 'Tanzania: ICJ joins other CSOs to raise concerns about the escalating human rights crisis in Tanzania following the 29 October 2025 elections' International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), 10 November 2025, at <https://www.icj.org/tanzania-icj-joins-other-csos-to-raise-concerns-about-the-escalating-human-rights-crisis-in-tanzania-following-the-29-october-2025-elections/>.

them as a “wave of terror” that had created fear among citizens. She directed security and defence forces to take action to address the situation and restore public confidence. In response to mounting domestic and international scrutiny, the government announced measures aimed at strengthening policing accountability and established a commission of inquiry to investigate election-related violence and allegations of human rights violations, including disappearances and unlawful arrests.

Despite these assurances and reform initiatives, many disappearance cases remained unresolved by the end of 2025, leaving families without clear information regarding the fate or whereabouts of missing relatives. Limited public disclosure on investigation outcomes continued to generate concern among civil society actors and legal professionals, who called for greater transparency, independent investigations, and accountability measures capable of rebuilding public trust in state institutions responsible for protecting citizens’ rights and security.

3.2.6. LHRC’s View

Mysterious disappearances and abductions present a serious threat to right to life and warrant official police investigation. They have also caused fear and uncertainty among citizens and infringe enjoyment of the right to equality before the law, freedom from torture, and right to liberty and personal security guaranteed under the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977.

The developments observed in 2025 suggest that the impact of disappearances extended far beyond individual violations. The phenomenon influenced patterns of public behavior, reduced openness in civic engagement, and contributed to declining confidence in institutional protection of rights. Restoring public trust will therefore require not only resolving individual cases but also ensuring transparent accountability, strengthening safeguards against arbitrary detention, and reaffirming protections for civic participation and freedom of expression.

ZANZIBAR

In Zanzibar, ZAFAYCO documented one incident of mysterious disappearance, involving Sheikh Jabir Haidar Jabir. On 27th May 2025, the sheikh was reportedly visited by a young man who claimed to have known him for some time. They spoke for about thirty minutes, after which three other individuals joined them.¹¹⁷ At around 8:30 p.m., they all left together with Sheikh Jabir. From that moment, his whereabouts remained unknown until his body was later discovered by the roadside in Kizimbani area in Mjini Magharibi (Urban West) Region, according to the account provided by police. The incident sparked public concern and raised serious questions about the circumstances surrounding his death, particularly in light of reports suggesting the involvement of individuals known to him or linked to authority, thereby highlighting broader issues of accountability and the need for independent investigations in such cases.

3.3. HARASSMENT, TORTURE, AND ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

3.3.1. Overview

Arbitrary arrest and detention mean arrest and/or detention of a person accused of a crime without following laid down procedures. Examples include conducting arrest without an arrest warrant, not informing the person reasons for arrest, not allowing a person to communicate with family, using excessive and/or unnecessary force during arrest, and not taking the accused person to court promptly (within 24 hours in Tanzania).¹¹⁸

The year 2025 was characterized by a significant increase in reported incidents of harassment, arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention, and allegations of torture and ill-treatment in Tanzania. These developments unfolded within an increasingly tense political environment preceding and following the October 2025 general elections, during which civic space narrowed considerably and security operations intensified across multiple regions of the country.

Arrests frequently occurred during political meetings, court proceedings, religious gatherings, or public commentary on governance and electoral

117 Jesse Mikofu 'Sita wafikishwa mahakamani tuhuma mauaji ya Sheikh Jabir' 19 July 2025, at <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/zanzibar/sita-wafikishwa-mahakamani-tuhuma-mauaji-ya-sheikh-jabir-5112260>.

118 See Article 9(2) of ICCPR of 1966; Human Rights in the Administration of Justice: A Manual on Human Rights for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers; BODY OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL PERSONS UNDER ANY FORM OF DETENTION OR IMPRISONMENT, adopted by the UN General Assembly in resolution 43/173 on 9 December 1988 at New York; Section 12 of the Criminal Procedure Act, CAP 20.

processes. In several instances, individuals were detained preventively before planned activities took place, raising concerns regarding the proportionality and legality of police interventions.

Although the Government consistently maintained that arrests were undertaken to preserve public order and enforce national laws, the frequency, geographic spread, and political sensitivity of many cases generated widespread concern regarding compliance with constitutional protections and international human rights obligations.

3.3.2. Reported Incidents

In 2025, LHRC documented a total of 709 reported incidents of harassment, torture, arbitrary arrest, and detention, a significant increase compared to 63 incidents recorded in 2024. Notably, 641 of these incidents occurred within a concentrated period between October and December 2025, indicating a sharp escalation before, during, and after elections. Other incidents included the arrest and detention of 12 Muslim clerics (Uamsho sheikhs), who had previously spent approximately ten years in prolonged pre-trial detention on terrorism-related charges before their release in March 2025, raising renewed concerns regarding patterns of repeated detention and due process violations.

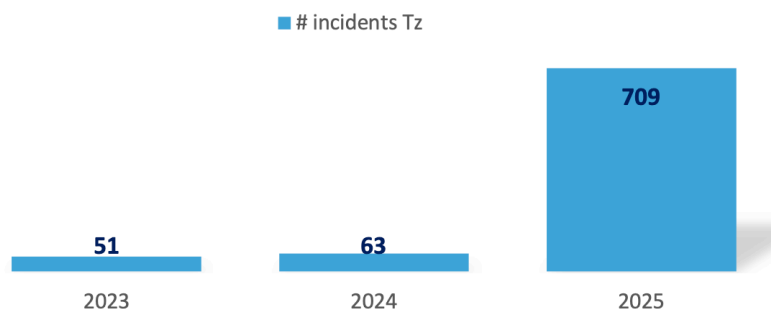


Figure 3.9: #Incidents of harassment, torture, arbitrary arrests and detention documented by LHRC – 2023 to 2025

The data further shows that **arbitrary arrests and detentions overwhelmingly dominated, accounting for 687 out of 709 incidents (97%)**, thereby emerging as the principal enforcement tool affecting individuals during this period. This trend reflects a marked shift towards the use of deprivation of liberty as a primary mechanism of control, particularly in contexts linked to civic and political activity.

While other forms of violations such as harassment, intimidation, torture, and ill-treatment were also documented, they constituted a relatively small proportion of total incidents. Nevertheless, such violations remain significant, particularly given their severity and impact on affected individuals.

Geographically, the incidents were widely distributed, confirming a nationwide pattern rather than isolated occurrences. However, a disproportionate concentration was observed in key urban and political centres. Dar es Salaam recorded the highest number of incidents (245), followed by Mwanza (165), particularly in October and November 2025. These regions, as major hubs of political activity, protests, and civic engagement, experienced increased enforcement actions during periods of increased political tension.

The distribution of incidents reveals a clear correlation between electoral processes and increased restrictions on rights, with the overwhelming majority occurring during and immediately after the election period. This pattern highlights the extent to which political dynamics influenced law enforcement practices and the protection of fundamental rights.

The arrest of opposition figures in most regions began well before the 2025 election, targeting leaders and supporters of the opposition party, CHADEMA. Prominent among these was the April 2025 arrest of CHADEMA Chairperson Tundu Lissu, detained on treason and incitement charges after calling for electoral reforms at a rally, charges that carry the potential death penalty, and effectively sidelined him from the electoral process. He was subsequently barred from contesting the election, a move widely criticised as politically motivated suppression of dissent.¹¹⁹

Ahead of this, police action against CHADEMA had started in late 2024 and early 2025, with senior party officials and cadres repeatedly detained or subjected to enforced disappearances.¹²⁰ Reports documented a wave of abductions and arrests of CHADEMA ward and constituency leaders weeks before the polls, including the detention of figures such as John Heche shortly before the 29th October vote.¹²¹

Human rights and civic space observers have linked these pre-election

119 B10-0261/2025 Motion for a European Parliament resolution on the arrest and risk of execution of Tundu Lissu, Chair of Chadema, the main opposition party in Tanzania (2025/2690(RSP)) The European Parliament, Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-10-2025-0261_EN.pdf

120 'Arrested, Tortured, Dumped in Bushes': Tanzania's Escalating Crackdown on Opposition Ahead of 2025 Elections' The Chanzo, 25 April 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/04/25/arrested-tortured-dumped-in-bushes-tanzanias-escalating-crackdown-on-opposition-ahead-of-2025-elections/>

121 'Opposition Members Vanish in Wave of Alleged Abductions as Tension Grows Ahead of Election in Tanzania' The Chanzo, 9 October 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/10/09/opposition-members-vanish-in-wave-of-alleged-abductions-as-tension-grows-ahead-of-election-in-tanzania/>

arrests to a broader pattern aimed at weakening organised opposition and stifling political mobilisation. Organisations and independent monitors raised alarms over the use of arrest and intimidation to prevent peaceful political activities, undermining fundamental freedoms of association, expression and participation as the country approached the general election.¹²²

Post-election treason arrests and detentions in 2025 were widely regarded as arbitrary due to serious due process violations and their apparent use to suppress dissent rather than address individualized criminal responsibility. Reports indicated that many arrests were carried out on an unclear legal basis, with detainees not promptly brought before courts or given a meaningful opportunity to challenge the lawfulness of their detention, prompting calls for immediate and unconditional release.¹²³ A significant number of those charged reportedly lacked access to legal representation, while some detainees alleged ill-treatment in custody, including beatings, illness, and denial of medical care. These concerns were compounded by the broader context in which the arrests occurred, characterized by a pattern of targeting opposition members, activists, journalists, and critics of the government. Taken together, these factors raise serious concerns that the treason charges and related detentions were not consistent with constitutional guarantees and international human rights standards on liberty, fair trial, and protection from arbitrary arrest.

Overall, the scale, concentration, and nature of incidents documented in 2025 point to a significant contraction of civic space, characterized by widespread use of arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly in urban centres and during politically sensitive periods.

Some of the reported incidents

Arrests and harassment of CHADEMA members

Throughout 2025, numerous arrests involved members and leaders of the opposition party Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA). Police operations were reported in several regions including Dar es Salaam, Rukwa, Kilimanjaro, Mwanza, Pwani, and Dodoma, where party officials and supporters were detained for allegedly organising unlawful assemblies or political meetings without authorization.

122 THRDC “SITUATION REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS & CIVIC” Available at: <https://thrdc.or.tz/online-center/download-reports-file/SITUATION%20REPORT%20ON%20HRDS%20%26%20CIVIC%20SPACE%20IN%20TANZANIA%202024.pdf>

123 UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Tanzania: Election-related killings and other violations must be investigated – Türk, 11 November 2025, at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/11/tanzania-election-related-killings-and-other-violations-must-be-investigated>; United Nations News, Tanzania: Reports of hundreds killed and detained following deadly election violence, 11 November 2025, at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166334>; ‘Western countries press Tanzania to release bodies of post-election victims’ BBC, 5 December 2025, at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8xdvg2ydddo>.

A notable incident was the arrest of the former Member of Parliament, Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) President, and the CHADEMA National Chairperson, Hon. Tundu Lissu, in Mbinga, Ruvuma Region, which drew significant public and international attention.¹²⁴ His arrest, reportedly linked to political activities and public engagement, was widely perceived by opposition actors and observers as part of a broader pattern of targeting opposition leadership during a politically sensitive period.¹²⁵

In some instances, groups of party members were arrested collectively shortly before planned political engagements. Observers noted that such arrests often occurred in anticipation of mobilisation activities rather than as a response to violence or criminal conduct already committed. These developments contributed to growing perceptions that criminal law mechanisms were increasingly used to regulate political competition.

The continued detention and prosecution of Tundu Lissu became the most prominent political detention case of the year.¹²⁶ Following his arrest after a political rally, he was charged with treason and other offences linked to political expression and electoral advocacy.¹²⁷ International scrutiny intensified after the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention later concluded that his detention lacked legal basis and violated fundamental rights protections, calling for his immediate release and reparations.¹²⁸ Lissu's prosecution and the numerous postponements of his trial raise unfair trial concerns.

The arrest of senior opposition figures, including CHADEMA's John Heche, who were detained shortly before elections, highlighted concerns raised by international observers that opposition participation in the electoral process was being significantly constrained.

Harassment and arrest of advocates and members of the Tanganyika Law Society

Serious alarm emerged within Tanzania's legal community following incidents involving advocates representing politically sensitive cases. Reports indicated that lawyers from the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) were

124 Alfred Lasteck 'Top opposition politician arrested days before Tanzania election' BBC News, 22 October 2025, at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy9pd2j0138o>.

125 International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Tanzania: Joint statement condemning violent crackdown, malicious arrest, and treason charges against Tundu Lissu, 15 April 2025, at <https://www.icj.org/tanzania-joint-statement-condemning-violent-crackdown-malicious-arrest-and-treason-charges-against-tundu-lissu/>.

126 Ibid.

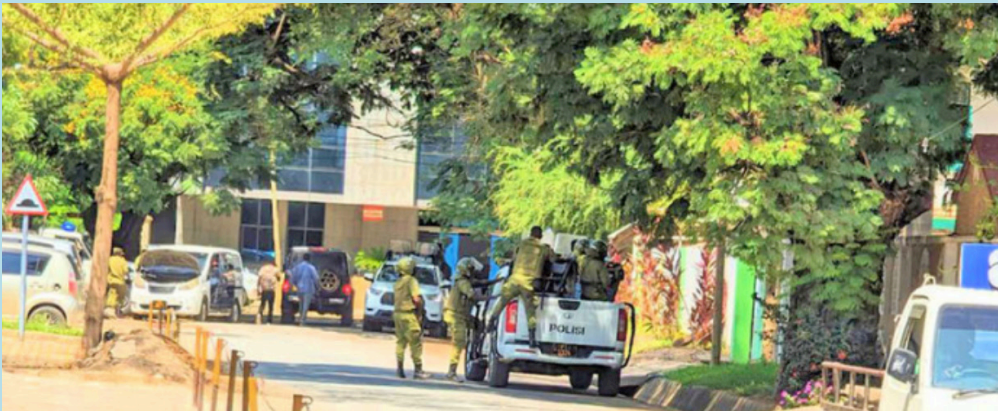
127 Reginald Saga 'Treason or Legitimate Concern? Reflecting on Recent Accusations in Afrikan Political Discourse' Afrikan Identity, 5 June 2025, at <https://afrikanidentity.medium.com/treason-or-legitimate-concern-reflecting-on-recent-accusations-in-afrikan-political-discourse-3330dc884085>.

128 The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) formally ruled that the detention of Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu is arbitrary and unlawful in Opinion No. 74/2025.

arrested, questioned, or allegedly subjected to intimidation while carrying out professional duties. Particularly concerning were reports of confrontations involving defence advocates within or around court premises, environments traditionally protected to safeguard fair trial guarantees.

Notably, Advocate Deogratias Cosmas Mahinyila with Roll No. 10205, a member of the TLS and part of the legal team representing Tundu Lissu, was subjected to harassment and arrest alongside other advocates outside court premises. These incidents occurred in a context of increased political tension and raised concerns regarding interference with the constitutional right to legal representation.¹²⁹

Further concern arose when police surrounded the TLS headquarters in Dar es Salaam on 22nd September 2025, effectively preventing a planned peaceful protest by lawyers against police brutality targeting advocates.¹³⁰ The deployment of armed officers around the TLS offices was widely perceived as an act of intimidation aimed at discouraging lawful assembly and silencing the legal profession.



Picture 3.13: Police observed camping outside the TLS office in Dar es Salaam ahead of planned peaceful protest on 22nd September 2025

The legal fraternity publicly warned that interference with advocates undermines access to justice and threatens the independence of the legal profession, which forms a cornerstone of the rule of law. Such incidents raised broader institutional concerns regarding whether individuals facing politically sensitive charges could effectively access legal representation without intimidation. These developments raise serious concerns under both national

¹²⁹ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, September 2025.

¹³⁰ 'Tanzanian Police Surround Lawyers' Association Headquarters to Quash Planned Protest' The Chanzo, 22 September 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/09/22/tanzanian-police-surround-lawyers-association-headquarters-to-quash-planned-protest/>.

and international standards, including the right to legal representation and the protection of lawyers from intimidation as recognized under the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.¹³¹

Re-arrest of Twelve Muslim Clerics

Another case that generated sustained public debate involved the re-arrest of twelve Muslim clerics shortly after judicial decisions had facilitated their release. Religious leaders and community organisations questioned the legality of repeated detention following court proceedings, arguing that the practice weakened public confidence in judicial authority and due process protections. The incident also highlighted longstanding tensions surrounding national security prosecutions and preventive detention measures involving religious leaders.

Arrests of Public Figures, Professionals and Activists

In 2025, several arrests involved professionals and public personalities whose cases attracted national attention. Among them were former Cabinet Minister Godfrey Mwambe, who was accused of plotting to kill a senior police officer; Clemence Mwandambo, a social media activist; Winfrida Malembeka; Dr. Kibaba Michael; and businessman Simon Mkondya *alias* Dr. Manguruwe, who reportedly remained in remand custody for an extended period before resolution of legal proceedings. These cases reflected an emerging trend whereby criminal investigations increasingly intersected with political debate, online expression, or public commentary. Observers expressed concern that prolonged pre-trial detention risked functioning as punishment prior to conviction.

Arrests of Journalists and Restrictions on Media Freedom

Media freedom concerns intensified in 2025 following arrests of journalists across different regions. LHRC documented six such arrests within the period of January to December 2025. In August, two journalists Julius Msagati (EATV) and Given Mashati (A24), were arrested by police in Manyara while carrying out their professional duties covering CCM primary (*kura za maoni*) elections in Mirerani.¹³² Authorities stated that the journalists were being held for questioning and would be released afterwards, but the incident raised concerns among media stakeholders regarding interference with journalistic work during politically sensitive processes.¹³³ The incident reflects a pattern of interference with media coverage of political processes, raising concerns about the protection of press freedom during elections.

131 UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers; available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/basic-principles-role-lawyers>.

132 LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, August 2025.

133 *Ibid.*

In October, Kenyan journalist Shoka Juma was reportedly at the country's coastal Horohoro border to report on stranded cargo trucks, when a group of plainclothes security personnel arrested him.¹³⁴ He was released into the custody of Kenyan officials after about four hours, following public outcry and interventions by local advocacy groups Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) and Vocal Africa.¹³⁵ In the same month, a broadcast reporter¹³⁶ was reportedly arrested by men in military uniform in Dar es Salaam. He was found unconscious in a ditch the following day, minus his equipment.¹³⁷

In another incident, Godfrey Thomas Ng'omba, a bureau chief for privately owned Ayo TV, was arrested in Arusha, Tanzania, on October 29th, 2025, during election-day protests. After an initial six-day detention, he was rearrested on November 7th and charged with treason and conspiracy. He was accused alongside 62 others of obstructing the election and damaging government property. In November, another journalist, Alphonse Kusaga, who runs the online media outlet Kusaga TV and reports for Arusha-based Sunrise Radio, was arrested on November 4th and released on bail the following day.

International monitoring organisations documented broader restrictions on media activity during the election period, including suppression of reporting and limitations on public access to information. Civil society organisations jointly warned that unlawful arrests and suppression of media freedoms formed part of wider election-related human rights violations reported nationwide.

Arrest and Detention of Activists and Civic Commentators

Authorities also arrested individuals accused of spreading misinformation or engaging in online political mobilisation, including groups popularly referred to as Wachokonozi. In another incident, Nicodemus Julius Loyore, a young activist known for mobilising youth for the 29th October protests through TikTok, was reportedly taken from his office on 19th December 2025 by individuals believed to be police officers, after which his whereabouts remained unknown.¹³⁸ These arrests reflected growing reliance on cybercrime and public order legislation to regulate digital expression and political discourse.

134 Muthoki Mumo "We cannot publish": Fear silences Tanzanian journalists over election killings, arrests' Committee to Protect Journalists, 7 December 2025, at <https://cpj.org/2025/12/we-cannot-publish-fear-silences-tanzanian-journalists-over-election-killings-arrests/>.

135 Ibid.

136 Not named out of safety concerns.

137 Muthoki Mumo "We cannot publish": Fear silences Tanzanian journalists over election killings, arrests' Committee to Protect Journalists, 7 December 2025

138 Desperate Searches and Arrests Continue to Define Tanzania's Post-Election Crackdown' The Chanzo, 30 December 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/12/30/a-nation-in-fear-desperate-searches-and-arrests-continue-to-define-tanzanias-post-election-crackdown/>.

Arrest of Thadey Kweka, a U.S Citizen

On 28th December 2025, Thadey Sabinus Kweka, a Tanzanian activist based in the United States, was arrested in Moshi, Kilimanjaro Region, on allegations of incitement after returning to the country for the holidays. His arrest, confirmed by police on 29th December, followed widespread social media reports that he had initially been abducted from his home by armed individuals, raising concerns about the circumstances of his apprehension.¹³⁹ This case, alongside other high-profile arrests, reportedly sent a chilling message to Tanzanians in the diaspora, many of whom began to fear arrest upon returning home due to their past online criticisms of the government, further indicating the shrinking civic and digital space and its extraterritorial impact on freedom of expression.

Cross-Border and Regional Incidents

The detention of Kenyan activist Boniface Mwangi and Ugandan journalist and human rights defender Agather Atuhaire, who had travelled to Tanzania to observe court proceedings, drew regional diplomatic attention. Reports indicated that both individuals were detained incommunicado for several days and later deported following international pressure. The human rights defenders also claimed they were tortured and sexually assaulted.¹⁴⁰ It was further reported that for four days, they were denied medical treatment and access to their families or legal representatives.¹⁴¹ In July 2025, the human rights defenders filed a case before the East African Court of Justice challenging grave human rights violations, including acts of enforced disappearance, torture, arbitrary detention and unlawful deportation of Agather and Boniface instructed by agents of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.¹⁴²

Similarly, Kenyan lawyer and political figure Martha Karua publicly protested restrictions placed on her entry into Tanzania while attempting to observe legal proceedings involving opposition leaders, further raising concerns regarding judicial transparency.

139 'Desperate Searches and Arrests Continue to Define Tanzania's Post-Election Crackdown' The Chanzo, 30 December 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/12/30/a-nation-in-fear-desperate-searches-and-arrests-continue-to-define-tanzanias-post-election-crackdown/>.

140 Carlos Mureithi "We won't let them get away with this': activists to sue Tanzania's government over 'sexual torture' The Guardian (Online), 29 June 2025, at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/29/activists-boniface-mwangi-agather-atuhaire-tanzania#img-3>; Basillioh Rukanga "Struggling to be alive': Kenyan activist speaks of 'sexual torture' in Tanzania' BBC, 3 June 2025, at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwy6x7jgx75o>.

141 Amnesty Kenya, Statement on The Torture, Assault and Sexual Violence Against East Africans Boniface Mwangi and Agather Atuhaire, 3 June 2025, at <https://www.amnestykenya.org/statement-on-the-torture-assault-and-sexual-violence-against-east-africans-boniface-mwangi-and-agather-atuhaire/>.

142 Pan-African Lawyers' Union, Agather Atuhaire, Boniface Mwangi and leading Civil Society Organisations File Landmark Case Before the East African Court of Justice, 21 July 2025, at <https://www.lawyersofafrica.org/agather-atuhaire-boniface-mwangi-and-leading-civil-society-organisations-file-landmark-case-before-the-east-african-court-of-justice/>.

Analysis of reported incidents throughout 2025 reveals that cases of harassment, torture allegations, arbitrary arrest, and prolonged detention were not isolated occurrences but formed part of a broader and increasingly consistent national pattern affecting civic, political, and institutional life in Tanzania. The wave of abductions, torture, and enforced disappearances has become increasingly common in Tanzania, yet no accountability or credible investigations have been undertaken despite sustained public demand. Over the past four years, more than 200 cases of enforced disappearance have been reported,¹⁴³ reflecting a deeply troubling pattern of impunity.

Reports documented across multiple regions demonstrate similar operational characteristics regardless of location, suggesting coordinated enforcement practices rather than sporadic misconduct by individual officers. The pattern became particularly pronounced in the period preceding and following the October 2025 general elections, when security responses to political mobilisation, protests, and public criticism intensified significantly. International human rights mechanisms observed that authorities expanded restrictions on opposition actors, civil society organisations, and protest organisers while arresting individuals linked to demonstrations or dissenting views.

3.3.3. Reaction by Stakeholders

Domestic reactions to the reported incidents were extensive. Political parties, religious leaders, professional bodies, and civil society organisations repeatedly called for adherence to constitutional safeguards and respect for due process. The Tanganyika Law Society issued statements emphasizing the need to protect lawyers and judicial independence, while civil society coalitions condemned widespread unlawful arrests and alleged abductions surrounding the election period.

Internationally, concern intensified as election-related violence and arrests attracted global scrutiny. United Nations human rights experts expressed alarm over patterns involving concealment of detainees' whereabouts and allegations of torture and enforced disappearance, warning that failure to disclose detention locations may amount to serious violations under international law. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called for investigations into killings, detentions, and other violations reported during and after the elections. Regional and international organisations warned that shrinking civic space and repression of dissent risked undermining democratic governance in Tanzania.

¹⁴³ For instance, as of 15 June 2025, UN report indicated that more than 200 people had become victims of enforced disappearance in Tanzania.

3.3.4. Government Response

The Government of Tanzania consistently rejected allegations of systematic repression, maintaining that security agencies acted lawfully in enforcing national legislation and preserving public order. Authorities publicly stated that police operations targeted individuals engaged in criminal conduct and emphasized that no citizen would be arrested without legal justification. Government officials further indicated that investigations into alleged misconduct by security officers would be undertaken where credible evidence existed.

Amid growing public debate, the Minister for Home Affairs, Hon. George Simbachawene, issued several public statements responding to concerns surrounding arrests and alleged abductions reported across the country. He urged citizens to remain vigilant and advised that arrests must follow established legal procedures, including proper identification by officers and compliance with statutory requirements. He further directed members of the public to immediately report suspected unlawful arrests or individuals posing as police officers, stressing that the government would not tolerate criminal acts carried out under the guise of law enforcement authority. The Minister also reaffirmed that the Tanzania Police Force operates within the framework of the law and that any officer found engaging in misconduct would be subject to investigation and disciplinary action. The Government also stressed Tanzania's sovereignty and the independence of its judicial processes in response to growing international criticism.

3.3.5. Impact on Enjoyment of Human Rights

The cumulative effect of arrests, detentions, and reported ill-treatment in 2025 had a direct chilling effect on fundamental human rights, particularly those enshrined under the Constitution of Tanzania. Article 18, which guarantees freedom of expression, press, and access to information, was effectively curtailed as journalists, media houses, and social commentators faced harassment, intimidation, and threats of arrest for reporting on political events or election-related unrest.¹⁴⁴ This environment of fear fostered widespread self-censorship, including on digital platforms, undermining the public's right to receive and disseminate information.

Similarly, Article 21, protecting the right to freedom of association and participation in political activities, was restricted.¹⁴⁵ Political actors reported significant obstacles in organizing meetings, rallies, and campaign activities, while civil society activists and ordinary citizens experienced heightened risks

¹⁴⁴ Article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Article 21.

when engaging in lawful political discourse. The arrest of lawyers, observers, and other civic actors further impeded access to justice, fair trial rights, and oversight mechanisms, weakening accountability for potential abuses.

Post-election protests and the state's subsequent security response, including mass arrests and reports of injuries, illustrate how these restrictions collectively undermined the exercise of fundamental freedoms. The climate of intimidation and suppression placed substantial pressure on freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and political participation, demonstrating a systematic erosion of constitutionally guaranteed rights during this period.

3.3.6. LHRC's View

Oversight of law enforcement conduct remains limited. While legal mechanisms exist to investigate misconduct by security personnel, few publicly reported investigations or disciplinary actions followed allegations of excessive force or torture in 2025, raising concerns about impunity. LHRC emphasizes that law enforcement powers must always operate within constitutional and international human rights limits.

Prolonged procedures for seeking redress compound these challenges, as most remedies currently available are slow and difficult to access. This delays justice for affected individuals and undermines trust in the rule of law.

LHRC calls on the Government to provide easy, flexible, and timely remedies for victims of unlawful detention, torture, or excessive force. Independent investigations, strengthened oversight of security agencies, and protection of civic freedoms are essential to uphold constitutional governance, restore public confidence, and ensure accountability.

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In 2025, ZAFAYCO did not document any reported incidents of harassment, torture, and arbitrary arrests and detention. However, these issues, particularly arbitrary detention, remain a concern among stakeholders.

3.4. SHRINKING OF CIVIC SPACE & DIGITAL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

3.4.1. Overview

Throughout 2025, Tanzania experienced a visible tightening of civic space, particularly at the intersection of politics, media, and digital communication.

Civil society actors described a year in which online expression, investigative reporting, and reform advocacy were increasingly met with regulatory warnings, criminal charges, content removals, or public condemnation. Observers noted that these measures intensified as the 2025 General Elections approached, creating what some organisations characterised as a “dual-track” restriction environment, where digital controls and physical enforcement operated simultaneously.

International and regional human rights bodies repeatedly stated that access to the internet and digital platforms is now central to the enjoyment of freedom of expression, association, political participation, and access to information. They argued that when connectivity is restricted during elections or politically sensitive moments, the public’s ability to make informed decisions and monitor state conduct is significantly weakened.¹⁴⁶

3.4.2. Legal Environment and Reported Incidents

3.4.2.1. Legal Environment

Tanzania’s legal environment governing digital space is shaped by legislation and regulations that grant authorities broad powers over online content, platform access, and media licensing. Digital governance stakeholders have argued that while states have legitimate interests in combating cybercrime and misinformation, restrictions must meet strict legal standards of necessity and proportionality.

In its analysis of internet governance trends, Tech & Media Convergency (TMC) stated that decisions to disrupt internet access, especially during elections, should be subject to independent oversight and judicial review to prevent abuse. The organisation warned that shutdowns imposed without transparent criteria or judicial scrutiny risk undermining constitutional guarantees and regional obligations.¹⁴⁷

Official crime statistics show that cyber-related offences are increasingly prominent in national enforcement. According to the National Bureau of Statistics’ Crime and Traffic Incidents Statistics (January–June 2024), reported cybercrime cases increased from 623 to 704, reflecting a 13% rise.¹⁴⁸ Categories

146 African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Press release on the Nationwide Internet Outage on Election Day in the United Republic of Tanzania, Nov 01, 2025, at https://achpr.au.int/en/news/press-releases/2025-11-01/nationwide-internet-outage-election-day-tanzania?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

147 Tech & Media Convergency (TMC). (2025, November). Advocacy brief: The digital blackout: State control, violence, and the silencing of Tanzania’s 2025 general election (Issue 06). Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group. Retrieved from https://tmc.co.tz/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Advocacy-Brief-THE-DIGITAL-BLACKOUT-State-Control-Violence-and-the-Silencing-of-Tanzania’s-2025-General-Election_NOV.pdf?download=10950&utm_source=chatgpt.com.

148 Tanzania Police Force (TPF) & National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2025). Crime and traffic incidents statistics: January–December 2024

included cyber harassment, computer-related fraud, identity-related offences, and publication-related violations. While these statistics demonstrate the growing digital dimension of crime prevention, they also highlight the expanding enforcement framework within which speech-related offences may be pursued.

In practice, this environment means that online commentary, especially on political or governance issues, can fall under scrutiny through multiple legal channels, including cybercrime laws, communications regulations, and licensing rules.

3.4.2.2. Reported Incidents

1. Nationwide internet shutdown during the October 2025 elections

During the 29th October 2025 General Elections and the days following contested results, internet connectivity across Tanzania was significantly disrupted. Authorities reportedly cut internet access nationwide for more than five days amid protests and unrest.¹⁴⁹ The blackout restricted access to information at a time when the public most needed reliable updates and transparency. UN human rights experts described the events as involving a “lethal crackdown and digital blackout,” arguing that shutting down the internet during unrest compounded the seriousness of alleged human rights violations because it impeded documentation, communication, and emergency response. They called for accountability and restoration of full connectivity.¹⁵⁰

The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights stated that it was following developments with concern and emphasised that free, fair, and credible elections require uninterrupted access to information. The Commission reiterated that internet shutdowns are incompatible with Article 9 of the African Charter, which guarantees the right to receive and disseminate information.¹⁵¹

Following partial restoration of connectivity, it was reported that police warned citizens against sharing images online that could “cause panic” or degrade dignity. Observers noted that such warnings extended the chilling effect beyond the blackout period itself.¹⁵²

149 LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, November 2025.

150 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2025. “Tanzania: UN Experts Condemn Post-Election Lethal Crackdown and Digital Blackout,” December 4, 2025. OHCHR. https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/12/tanzania-un-experts-condemn-post-election-lethal-crackdown-and-digital?utm_source=chatgpt.co.

151 African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. “Press Release on the Nationwide Internet Outage on Election Day in the United Republic of Tanzania.” ACHPR, 1 Nov. 2025.

152 ‘Tanzanian police warn against sharing images following deadly election protests’ Reuters, 4 December 2025, at https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/tanzanian-police-warn-against-sharing-images-following-deadly-election-protests-2025-11-04/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

Beyond rights implications, digital economy analysts have observed that nationwide internet shutdowns can carry measurable economic costs, particularly for small and medium enterprises, mobile money users, digital traders, transport logistics, and online service providers. Even short disruptions interrupt transactions, communication, and business continuity.

2. Restrictions on X (formerly Twitter) and other online platforms

In May 2025, authorities restricted access to X following reports of cyberattacks and alleged disinformation involving compromised accounts. International media reported that the government stated the action was necessary to protect cybersecurity and national stability. However, civil society organisations cautioned that blocking a major platform during a politically sensitive period risks suppressing legitimate political debate and criticism.¹⁵³

Civil society groups further urged authorities to restore access and avoid further disruptions, warning that digital restrictions can disproportionately affect youth, journalists, activists, and entrepreneurs who rely on online spaces for civic participation and economic survival.¹⁵⁴

For many young Tanzanians, X and similar platforms function not only as spaces for debate but also as primary sources of news, civic mobilisation, and professional networking. Blocking access therefore has implications extending beyond political speech into economic and social life.

The year 2025 also increasing restrictions placed on online platforms such as Clubhouse, TikTok, and Telegram, alongside heightened scrutiny of individual social media accounts. Authorities intensified regulatory and enforcement actions targeting digital expression and prominent online voices and influencers. Reports also indicated episodes of content takedowns, account suspensions, and disruptions to access, especially during the election period, contributing to a climate of fear and self-censorship among users.¹⁵⁵

3. Suspension of media outlets and regulatory enforcement by TCRA

In early September 2025, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory

153 'Tanzania blocks access to X after it says hackers targeted government accounts' AP News, 21 May 2025, at <https://apnews.com/article/tanzania-cyberattack-x-disabled-government-d8a4a16349541ccb6f20181fbd4a655e>.

154 CIPESA, Tanzania Should Restore Access to X and Desist from Further Internet Disruptions, 22 May 2025, at https://cipesa.org/2025/05/tanzania-should-restore-access-to-x-and-desist-from-further-internet-disruptions/?utm_source=chatgpt.com/

155 LHRC Human Rights Monitoring 2025.

Authority (TCRA) announced that it had suspended the Online Content Services Licence issued to Vapper Tech Limited, the operator of JamiiForums, for 90 days and ordered access to the platform blocked nationwide.¹⁵⁶ TCRA explained that the decision followed publication of what it described as “misleading and insulting content” that disrespected the Government and the President, contending that such material violated the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2020 and subsequent amendments in 2022 and 2025. Regulatory officials stated that the platform had failed to moderate user content that contained offensive language and defamatory material directed at senior public figures, and argued that continued access could undermine peace, cohesion, and Tanzanian values. TCRA’s public notice did not detail the specific posts but identified non-compliance with a broad range of online content rules as justification for the suspension.

In response, the Coalition on Rights to Information (CoRI) issued a statement condemning the suspension as a disproportionate restriction on constitutional rights to freedom of expression and access to information under Article 18 of the Constitution, as well as international protections under the ICCPR and the African Charter.¹⁵⁷ CoRI argued that requiring JamiiForums to defend itself on the same day the regulator issued its notice denied the platform reasonable time to prepare a defence, and that suspending such a widely-used forum, especially during a critical electoral period, deprived millions of users of verified information relied upon for civic engagement. Civil society sources emphasised that the action undermined principles of transparency, accountability, and open public dialogue essential in a democratic society.

On 27th May 2025, **The Chanzo**, an independent digital media outlet in Tanzania, announced that it had removed an article covering a 24th May 2025 press conference on abductions by Bishop Gwajima following a directive from TCRA.¹⁵⁸ The order to take down the report illustrates the increasing use of regulatory mechanisms to limit independent journalism and suppress reporting on sensitive issues.

156 ‘TCRA suspends JamiiForums licence over ‘misleading, insulting content’ The Citizen (online), 6 September 2025, at <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/tcra-suspends-jamiiforums-licence-over-misleading-insulting-content-5183050>; ‘Tanzanian Government Suspends Jamii Forums, Africa’s Largest Homegrown Social Network, Over ‘Misleading and Insulting’ Content’ The Chanzo, 6 September 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/09/06/tanzanian-government-suspends-jamii-forums-africas-largest-homegrown-social-network-over-misleading-and-insulting-content/>.

157 Statement by the Coalition on Right to Information (CoRI) Condemning the Suspension of JamiiForums, 11 September 2025, at <https://www.policyforum-tz.org/news/2025-09-11/statement-coalition-right-information-cori-condemning-suspension-jamiiforums>.

158 CIVICUS, Government intensifies crackdown on opposition & online spaces ahead of 2025 elections, at https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/government-intensifies-crackdown-on-opposition-online-spaces-ahead-of-2025-elections/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

Observers stated that such suspensions, particularly when occurring close to elections, have a significant impact on media pluralism. Reduced access to independent reporting limits citizens' ability to access diverse viewpoints and scrutinise political actors.

Journalists have also reported receiving warning letters and directives regarding content, contributing to self-censorship. Media sustainability challenges, such as delayed government advertising payments and financial pressures, further compound vulnerability to regulatory pressure.

4. Removal of over 80,000 websites and social media accounts

In May 2025, authorities reportedly removed more than 80,000 websites, blogs, and social media accounts. The move was publicly framed as part of efforts to protect children's mental health and eliminate unethical content. However, civil society observers noted that the scale of removals and lack of transparent review processes raised concerns about overbreadth and due process.¹⁵⁹

Digital rights groups argued that mass removals without clear public criteria risk sweeping in legitimate civic, journalistic, or advocacy content. When individuals or organisations lose digital presence without transparent justification or appeal mechanisms, trust in regulatory fairness is eroded.

5. Arrest of “Wachokonozi” and criminal exposure for online speech

In June 2025, police confirmed the arrest of individuals associated with the “Wachokonozi” online platform on allegations of misusing social media. Initial reports that the duo had been abducted sparked alarm online, particularly because it was unclear which police station they had been taken to. Concerns grew further after it was reported that they were taken by individuals driving a white Land Cruiser, a vehicle commonly linked to previous abduction incidents in the country. However, the police issued an official statement on June 22nd, 2025, clarifying the situation.¹⁶⁰ Reports indicated that charges were linked to online content publication.¹⁶¹

There were also reports that some digital commentators were facing blatant attacks and arrests. For instance, on 16th June in Dar es Salaam, unidentified attackers severely assaulted Japhet Matarra, a vocal government critic on X, leaving him unconscious.¹⁶² While receiving treatment in hospital,

159 CIVICUS, Government intensifies crackdown on opposition & online spaces ahead of 2025 elections.

160 ‘Viral Tanzanian Political Podcasters Wachokonozi Arrested for Alleged Social Media Abuse’ The Chanzo, 22 June 2025, at https://thechanzo.com/2025/06/22/viral-tanzanian-political-podcasters-wachokonozi-arrested-for-alleged-social-media-abuse/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

161 Ibid.

162 CIVICUS, Government intensifies crackdown on opposition & online spaces ahead of 2025 elections.

assailants disguised as medical staff attempted to attack him again before fleeing. On 20th June 2025, police officers reportedly detained Janeth Rithe, the women's wing chairperson of ACT-Wazalendo after she criticised the government during a campaign rally, alleging that the President had misrepresented the state of the economy and that the ruling party was operating a police state.¹⁶³ Rithe voluntarily presented herself to the police after officers arrived at the party's headquarters in Dar es Salaam seeking her arrest. She was held in custody before being released without charge on 23rd June 2025.

Human rights defenders expressed concern regarding due process and the broader signal sent to digital commentators. They stated that when online criticism or satire leads to arrest and prosecution, it contributes to fear and self-censorship among content creators and youth-led digital initiatives.

3.4.3. Disappearances as a Threat to Civic Space

The growing incidence of abductions and enforced disappearances in 2025 had a profound impact on civic space in Tanzania, significantly shaping how citizens, civil society actors, journalists, and political participants engaged in public life. Beyond the immediate harm suffered by victims and their families, disappearances generated wider societal consequences that affected freedom of expression, political participation, and public confidence in state institutions responsible for protecting fundamental rights.

One of the most visible effects was the emergence of a climate of fear among individuals engaged in civic and political activity. Reports throughout the year indicated that activists, opposition supporters, lawyers, religious leaders, and social media commentators increasingly exercised caution when expressing political opinions or participating in public discussions. Several stakeholders noted that disappearances created uncertainty regarding personal safety, particularly where individuals were reportedly taken shortly after criticizing government actions or engaging in political mobilization. As a result, many citizens reduced public engagement, avoided political gatherings, or limited online expression, contributing to what observers described as a shrinking civic space.

The impact was particularly evident in digital spaces. Social media platforms, including X (formerly Twitter), Clubhouse, and JamiiForums, had previously served as important platforms for public debate and government accountability. However, repeated reports linking disappearances or arrests to online criticism

¹⁶³ Ibid.

led to growing self-censorship among users. Journalists and commentators reported heightened surveillance concerns, while some activists temporarily suspended online activity altogether. This chilling effect extended beyond political actors to academics, professionals, and ordinary citizens who feared misinterpretation of public commentary.

Civil society organizations also experienced operational constraints. Human rights defenders involved in monitoring elections, documenting abuses, or providing legal assistance to victims reported increased intimidation risks. The disappearance or targeting of prominent activists strengthened perceptions that human rights work itself carried personal danger. In such an environment, organizations faced challenges maintaining outreach activities, community engagement, and independent monitoring functions essential to democratic oversight.

Public confidence in law enforcement and investigative institutions was similarly affected. For instance, families searching for missing relatives frequently reported difficulties obtaining timely information regarding arrests, detention locations, or investigation progress. The absence of clear outcomes in many disappearance cases contributed to growing skepticism about accountability mechanisms. For many citizens, uncertainty surrounding whether disappearances were criminal acts, unauthorized security operations, or unresolved investigations blurred the distinction between lawful enforcement and unlawful deprivation of liberty.

The psychological and social consequences extended beyond directly affected families. Communities where abductions occurred often experienced heightened anxiety, rumours, and mistrust toward authorities. In some areas, disappearances became a dominant topic of public discussion, reinforcing perceptions that personal security could no longer be taken for granted even outside traditional political activism.

Importantly, the timing of many incidents within the electoral cycle amplified their democratic implications. Elections depend fundamentally on citizens' ability to organize, debate, criticize leadership, and participate freely in political processes. When disappearances occur in politically sensitive periods, they risk undermining confidence that participation can take place safely and without retaliation. Domestic observers therefore warned that unresolved disappearance cases could weaken long-term trust in democratic institutions and electoral legitimacy.

3.4.4. Overall Impact on Enjoyment of Human Rights

The cumulative impact of digital restrictions, media controls, arrests, and broader security concerns was reported to have significantly affected the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. Freedom of expression was described as being constrained not only through direct regulatory measures but also through fear-induced self-censorship, as individuals increasingly avoided public commentary to minimize risk.

Access to information was similarly reported to have been weakened. During critical periods such as elections, restrictions on media and digital platforms were said to reduce transparency and limit the public's ability to access diverse and reliable information necessary for informed decision-making.

Freedom of association and peaceful assembly were also reported to have been affected, as both physical and digital spaces play a central role in organizing civic activities, advocacy, and public participation. Restrictions on these spaces were described as disrupting coordination and reducing opportunities for collective engagement.

In addition, economic rights were reported to have been indirectly impacted. Many individuals, including journalists, online entrepreneurs, freelancers, and digital service providers, were said to depend on stable access to communication platforms, with disruptions and regulatory uncertainty contributing to financial losses and reduced confidence in the digital economy.

Overall, these developments were described as reflecting a broader pattern in which regulatory measures, security concerns, and enforcement practices intersect to limit the effective enjoyment of rights and freedoms, with significant implications for democratic participation and accountability.

3.4.5. LHRC's View

LHRC maintains that civic space and digital space are inseparable in modern democratic governance. LHRC argues that internet shutdowns, blanket platform blocks, and mass content removals are extreme measures that undermine constitutional guarantees under Article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania and Tanzania's obligations under regional and international human rights instruments.

LHRC emphasises that any restriction on digital communication must be clearly prescribed by law, pursue a legitimate aim, and meet strict tests of necessity and proportionality. LHRC further calls for judicial oversight over any decision to disrupt connectivity, transparent publication of regulatory criteria,

and accessible appeal mechanisms for individuals and organisations affected by takedowns or suspensions.

ZANZIBAR

Civic space in Zanzibar continued to be a concern among stakeholders in 2025, mainly due to the restrictive legal environment. Like in Mainland Tanzania, legal and regulatory frameworks governing media and digital civic space, including laws on cybercrime, online content, and public communication, have been applied in ways that restrict fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and right to participate in public affairs, including political processes and decision-making. The broad and sometimes ambiguous provisions within these laws allow for discretionary enforcement, which can be used to target individuals expressing critical views. One of the chilling effects is self-censorship among users and reduced openness of digital platforms as spaces for free expression. At the same time, social media remains a key tool for information sharing and mobilization, especially among young people.

3.5. MEDIA FREEDOM

3.5.1. Overview

Media freedom in 2025 experienced a marked decline, particularly in the months preceding and immediately following the General Elections of 29th October 2025. The year 2025 was mainly characterised by arrests and prosecutions, regulatory suspensions, accreditation restrictions, public warnings issued by security authorities, and repeated accounts of intimidation. Taken together, these developments reflect not isolated incidents but a broader pattern of constraint on independent journalism and digital expression in Tanzania.

Information documented through media reports, social media posts, official police notices, and testimonies from journalists suggests that media practitioners operated in an increasingly hostile environment. Journalists described a climate defined by fear of licence revocation, criminal prosecution, economic retaliation, and physical harm. The cumulative effect of legal restrictions, regulatory enforcement, and security measures created what some observers referred to as an “architecture of silence,” in which formal and informal pressures discouraged critical reporting and limited public debate during a crucial democratic period also encouraged self-censorship of media.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ TMC Advocacy Brief, *Censorship, Surveillance, and Digital Freedoms: Navigating Tanzania’s Online Space Ahead of the 2025 General Election*, at <https://tmc.co.tz/censorship-surveillance-and-digital->

3.5.2. Legal Environment and Reported Violations

The legal framework governing media and digital expression remained a central factor shaping the restrictive environment. Laws such as the Media Services Act, 2016, the Cybercrimes Act, 2015, and the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, 2020 (as amended) continued to grant broad discretionary powers to regulatory and enforcement bodies. Stakeholders consistently raised concerns that several provisions within these laws are overly vague, permit disproportionate sanctions, and lack sufficient safeguards for due process.

In 2019, the East African Court of Justice concluded that 16 provisions of the Media Services Act of 2016¹⁶⁵ were inconsistent with the principles of democracy, good governance, and the rule of law under Articles 6(d) and 7(2) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.¹⁶⁶ Although some amendments were introduced in June 2023, LHRC's analysis indicated that only 5 of the 16 impugned provisions were amended. Stakeholders continued to express dissatisfaction, arguing that core structural concerns, including broad ministerial and regulatory discretion, remain largely unaddressed. Even more concerning is that the Government has continued to enforce the impugned provisions, despite a binding regional court decision. This undermines confidence in the reform process and reflects a disregard for regional legal obligations. Such persistent non-compliance raises serious concerns about the State's commitment to the rule of law and the protection of media freedom.

The role of the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) has been particularly scrutinised. Reports indicate that the regulator has the authority to initiate complaints, conduct investigations, and impose sanctions, effectively concentrating prosecutorial and adjudicative functions within a single institution. This structure raises serious concerns regarding institutional independence and procedural fairness.

Media outlet suspension

Regulatory enforcement intensified during the election period. In September 2025, TCRA imposed a 90-day suspension on JamiiForums, one of Tanzania's most prominent online civic platforms. The founder of JamiiForums, Maxence Melo, stated that the ban stemmed from content allegedly considered

freedoms-navigating-tanzanias-online-space-ahead-of-the-29-october-2025-general-election/

165 The Court declared that the provisions of sections 7(3) (a), (b), (c), (f), (g), (h), (i) and (j); sections 19,20 and 21; sections 35,36,37,38,39 and 40; sections 50 and 54; sections 52 and 53; and sections 58 and 59 of the Media Services Act violate Articles 6(d) and 7(2) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.

166 Media Council of Tanzania, Legal and Human Rights Centre & Human Rights Defenders Coalition versus The Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania, Reference No. 2 of 2017, Judgement of the Court, 28th March 2019 at <http://eacj.eac.int/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Referene-No.2-of-2017.pdf>.

misleading or defamatory. He reportedly argued that if specific content violated regulations, established procedures existed to address it, and that shutting down an entire platform was disproportionate. He further warned that arbitrary bans risk discouraging local innovation and undermining Tanzania's digital ecosystem. Melo also indicated that he had received threatening communications and that there had been pressure to moderate public complaints during campaign periods. The suspension reportedly reduced the platform's daily traffic from approximately four million visits to under two million, significantly limiting public discourse at a critical time.

Other media outlets reportedly received formal warning letters directing them to remove specific content. Journalists described receiving anonymous calls instructing them to delete material or face unspecified consequences.¹⁶⁷ These actions, taken together, contributed to a climate of regulatory fear. Most of the FM Radio stations and TV, which rebroadcast news from international outlets particularly BBC and DW, were ordered to stop broadcasting. Several times the programme were stopped by the order from the authorities while on Air, specifically during the October general elections violence and killings.¹⁶⁸

Arrests, attacks, harassment, and intimidation of journalists

The year 2025 was also marked by serious incidents involving violence against journalists, raising increased concerns about press freedom and the safety of media practitioners in Tanzania. Press freedom concerns intensified following a pattern of arrests, attacks, harassment, and intimidation reported across different regions. LHRC documented eight such incidents between January and December 2025, pointing to an increasingly restrictive and insecure working environment for journalists. Reports indicated that several journalists were subjected to both targeted and context-related violence. In one widely reported case, journalist Charles Mwita was shot dead by unknown assailants in January 2025 in Tarime District, with the circumstances surrounding the attack remaining unclear and raising concerns about motive and accountability.¹⁶⁹ In a separate incident linked to the October 2025 unrest, Master Tindwa Ngamba Mtopa of Clouds Media was reportedly shot and killed at his home.

Additional reports referred to the deaths of Kelvin Lameck Mwakangondya of Baraka FM and freelance journalist Maneno Selanyika. While details surrounding these cases varied, they collectively highlighted concerns about the safety of journalists operating in different regions and contexts, including those working outside major urban centres and those engaged in independent reporting.

¹⁶⁷ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, November 2025.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ 'Journalist shot dead by unknown assailants' The Citizen 17 January 2025, at <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/journalist-shot-dead-by-unknown-assailants-4892554>.

In some instances, stakeholders noted limited publicly available information on investigations or outcomes, further deepening concern within the media community.

Arrests of journalists further compounded these concerns. Journalists Julius Msagati and Given Mashati were reportedly arrested in Manyara while covering party election processes in August 2025. Reports also indicated that journalists covering protests risked facing criminal charges, including serious offences that carry severe penalties. Such prosecutions created a perception that reporting on politically sensitive matters could result in harsh legal consequences.

In another incident, Godfrey Thomas Ng'omba, bureau chief of Ayo TV, was arrested on election day, 29th October 2025, in Arusha and detained for six days before being released on bail.¹⁷⁰ He was rearrested on 7th November and charged with conspiracy and treason in relation to allegations of obstructing the elections, before the charges were later withdrawn on 25th November 2025.¹⁷¹ His case reflected the broader use of serious criminal charges to intimidate journalists and suppress independent reporting during the post-election period. In another incident, also reported in Arusha, Alphonse Kusaga who runs the online media outlet Kusaga TV and reports for Arusha-based Sunrise Radio, was arrested on November 4th and released on bail the following day.¹⁷²

Two more incidents were reported in October. In the first incident, which occurred on 31st October, a Kenyan journalist called Shoka Juma, a reporter with privately owned Nyota TV, was reportedly arrested in the country's coastal Horohoro border by a group of plainclothes security personnel.¹⁷³ It was further reported that the men held him at a police facility on the Tanzanian side of the border, asked him if he had been filming, and reviewed images on his phone. In another incident, which reportedly occurred on the same day, a broadcast reporter was arrested by men in military uniform in Dar es Salaam.¹⁷⁴ The journalist was found unconscious in a ditch the following day, without his equipment.

Police public notices issued in 2025 emphasised the monitoring of online communication and warned against the alleged misuse of social media. On 12th November 2025, the Tanzania Police Force announced the arrest of Ambrose

170 Committee to Project Journalists, Godfrey Thomas Ng'omba, at <https://cpj.org/data/people/godfrey-thomas-ngomba/>.

171 Ibid.

172 Muthoki Mumo "We cannot publish": Fear silences Tanzanian journalists over election killings, arrests' Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 7 December 2025, at <https://cpj.org/2025/12/we-cannot-publish-fear-silences-tanzanian-journalists-over-election-killings-arrests/>.

173 Ibid.

174 Muthoki Mumo "We cannot publish": Fear silences Tanzanian journalists over election killings, arrests' Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 7 December 2025.

Leonce Dede in connection with alleged mobilisation through a WhatsApp group. Other notices referenced arrests in Rufiji and Dar es Salaam related to allegations of incitement or dissemination of information considered threatening to public order. These official communications consistently warned that legal action would be taken against individuals deemed to be violating cyber or security laws, reinforcing a climate of surveillance.

International media access was also reportedly constrained, while journalists also reported that lockdowns and curfews prevented them from accessing affected areas, limiting independent reporting on election-related unrest. This significantly constrained verification of events and reduced transparency. Additionally, according to the Committee to Project Journalists (CPJ), several journalists described a suffocating climate of fear of retaliation for speech perceived to question official narratives.¹⁷⁵ Despite the deaths of three journalists and the continued detention of others on remand, media organisations and professional associations in Tanzania remained largely silent and did not issue public statements calling for accountability. This contrasts with the response of the Tanganyika Law Society, which publicly addressed post-election developments and initiated legal proceedings before the High Court, reflecting a more proactive institutional approach to defending professional and constitutional rights of members.

Concerns over Accreditation and the Journalists' Accreditation Board (JAB)

In March 2025, the Government operationalized the Journalists' Accreditation Board (JAB) under the Media Services Act, 2016, with a mandate to register and accredit journalists, enforce professional standards, and maintain a register of practitioners. While framed as a step towards enhancing professionalism and accountability in the media sector,¹⁷⁶ its implementation has raised significant human rights concerns.¹⁷⁷

A key issue is the requirement for mandatory accreditation, which effectively conditions the practice of journalism on prior approval by the Board. Under this framework, individuals cannot lawfully practice journalism without accreditation, introducing a licensing regime over the profession. This directly restricts the right to seek, receive, and impart information as guaranteed under Article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as under the ICCPR and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ 'New dawn for media sector' Africa Press, 4 March 2025, at <https://www.africa-press.net/tanzania/all-news/new-dawn-for-media-sector>; 'UNESCO Commends Government and Media Stakeholders for the Launch of Journalists' Accreditation Board in Tanzania' UNESCO News, 21 March 2025, at <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-commends-government-and-media-stakeholders-launch-journalists-accreditation-board-tanzania#:~:text=The%20Journalists'%20Accreditation%20Board%20will,trust%20in%20the%20media%20sector>

¹⁷⁷ Florence Majani 'Uamuzi wa Bodi ya Ithibati Tanzania waathiri wanahabari' DW Swahili, 23 July 2025, at <https://www.dw.com/sw/uamuzi-wa-bodi-ya-ithibati-tanzania-waathiri-wanahabari/a-73382320>.

The requirement is also inconsistent with regional standards. The African Union Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa (2002) discourages licensing of journalists and print media, recognizing its potential to limit free expression.¹⁷⁸ Previous analyses of the media law framework, including analysis conducted by LHRC in 2016, have similarly cautioned that requiring permission to practice journalism creates a chilling effect on public discourse and places Tanzania at risk of breaching its international obligations.¹⁷⁹

Concerns are further heightened by questions regarding the independence of the Board, whose members are appointed by the Government. This raises the risk of political influence over accreditation and oversight processes, particularly in a context where media freedom remains constrained. There are credible fears that accreditation requirements may be applied selectively, potentially excluding critical voices and limiting media pluralism.

In practice, the accreditation regime may disproportionately affect freelance journalists, community reporters, and investigative actors, who may face barriers in obtaining certification. Reports of enforcement measures, including actions against unaccredited journalists, reinforce concerns that the Board's role extends beyond professional regulation to controlling access to journalism.

In line with international and regional human rights standards, there should be no compulsory accreditation requirement for journalists, and it should not be an offence to practise journalism without being accredited. Moreover, possession of a degree or diploma in journalism should not be a mandatory precondition to entry into the profession.

Overall, while the JAB has the potential to promote professional standards, its current design and implementation risk undermining freedom of expression and media independence. Without clear safeguards to ensure independence, proportionality, and compliance with human rights standards, the accreditation framework may operate as a restriction rather than a protection of media freedom in Tanzania.

3.5.3. Performance in the World Press Freedom Index

According to the 2025 World Press Freedom Index, published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), economic fragility has emerged as the leading global threat to press freedom. For the first time in the history of the Index, the overall global situation of press freedom has been classified as a “difficult

¹⁷⁸ AU Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa 2002, Principle I.

¹⁷⁹ See also Article 19's Legal Analysis: Tanzania – Media Services Bill, 10 August 2015, at <https://www.article19.org/resources/legal-analysis-tanzania-media-services-bill/>.

situation.” RSF emphasises that while physical attacks and legal repression remain serious concerns, economic pressure is increasingly undermining the sustainability and independence of media worldwide.

The 2025 Index reports that in 160 out of 180 countries assessed, media outlets achieve financial stability only “with difficulty” or not at all.¹⁸⁰ Nearly one-third of countries have witnessed the closure of news outlets due to economic hardship. RSF highlights that without financial independence, editorial independence cannot be sustained, as media houses become vulnerable to political influence, advertising pressure, or state control.

In 2025, Tanzania was ranked 95th out of 180 countries, with an overall score of 53.68, slightly declining from 54.8 in 2024. The country’s economic indicator score stood at 42.04,¹⁸¹ reflecting precarious financial conditions within the media sector. The Index notes that journalists in Tanzania often work under unstable employment conditions, with low wages and limited job security. Many privately owned outlets reportedly rely heavily on government advertising revenue, in some cases accounting for between 40% and 80% of total income. This dependence creates structural vulnerability, as media outlets perceived to be critical of the government risk losing crucial advertising revenue.

These findings align with domestic observations documented in 2025. Media stakeholders in Tanzania repeatedly described widespread financial distress across newsrooms, with approximately 90 percent of outlets reportedly operating under fragile economic conditions. Delays in government advertising payments and caution among private sector advertisers, who reportedly consider how an outlet is perceived by authorities before placing advertisements, have further strained media sustainability.¹⁸²

3.5.4. Impact on Enjoyment of Human Rights

The deterioration of media freedom had direct and far-reaching implications for the enjoyment of other fundamental rights. Restrictions on reporting and suspension of digital platforms limited citizens’ access to diverse information during the electoral process, undermining meaningful participation in public affairs. When journalists are prevented from reporting freely, voters are deprived of the information necessary to make informed choices.

The climate of fear fostered widespread self-censorship. Journalists reported exercising restraint in publishing sensitive material due to concerns about

¹⁸⁰ Reporters Without Borders. RSF World Press Freedom Index 2025: Economic Fragility a Leading Threat to Press Freedom. 2 May 2025, <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-world-press-freedom-index-2025-economic-fragility-leading-threat-press-freedom>.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, 2025.

regulatory retaliation, criminal charges, or personal safety. Anonymous threats and official warnings contributed to a perception that certain topics were too risky to cover.

Economic pressures further compromised editorial independence. Reports indicated that many media outlets were financially fragile, with delayed government advertising payments and private sector hesitation to advertise in outlets perceived as critical. This economic vulnerability increased susceptibility to external influence and discouraged investigative reporting.

The suspension of JamiiForums illustrated the chilling effect on digital innovation and civic engagement. By limiting one of the country's largest online discussion platforms during an election period, authorities significantly curtailed open civic dialogue. Police notices targeting online groups strengthened a perception that digital spaces were under constant scrutiny.

3.5.5. LHRC's View

LHRC maintains that restrictions on expression must strictly comply with the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality. Blanket platform suspensions, broad criminal charges against journalists, and regulatory concentration of investigative and adjudicative powers undermine due process and constitutional safeguards. LHRC believes that the cumulative effect of regulatory sanctions, arrests, violence, accreditation restrictions, and economic pressure has created an environment inconsistent with Tanzania's constitutional and international obligations.

ZANZIBAR

The legal and regulatory environment governing the media in Zanzibar in 2025 remained outdated and restrictive, significantly constraining freedom of expression and access to information. Despite longstanding calls for reform, Zanzibar continues to rely on the Information Policy of 2006 and the News Agents, Newspapers and Books Act of 1988, legal instruments that no longer reflect contemporary media realities. Stakeholders in the media sector have expressed concern over prolonged delays in amending these laws, noting that reform discussions have been ongoing for nearly two decades without tangible progress. During the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day in May 2025, media practitioners questioned the Government's commitment to reform, highlighting that more than thirty consultative meetings had been held without clarity on the status of the legislative process. This prolonged inaction has contributed to uncertainty and has reinforced concerns about the lack of political will to create an enabling environment for media freedom.

In addition to delays in reform, existing laws continue to contain restrictive provisions that undermine press freedom and expose journalists to arbitrary control. A review conducted by the Zanzibar Media Experts Committee (ZAMECO) identified at least twelve laws with provisions that hinder freedom of expression and access to information. Key statutes, including the Registration of News Agents, Newspapers and Books Act (1988, as amended) and the Zanzibar Broadcasting Commission Act (1997, as amended), grant broad discretionary powers to authorities, including the ability to register and deregister media outlets without clear due process safeguards. These laws also permit intrusive inspections, impose severe penalties, and criminalize defamation, while lacking adequate protections for journalists and failing to address emerging issues such as digital media and access to information rights.

The cumulative effect of these legal constraints has been the entrenchment of a climate of caution and self-censorship within the media sector. Journalists operate in an environment where legal uncertainty and the risk of sanctions discourage critical reporting, particularly on governance, accountability, and politically sensitive issues. Media stakeholders have consistently emphasized that the absence of a modern, rights-based media law undermines not only press freedom but also broader democratic governance. Efforts by ZAMECO and other stakeholders to advocate for reform, including engagement with government institutions and the House of Representatives, reflect growing recognition that a free and independent media is essential for transparency, accountability, and public participation.

“
For many years, journalists have operated under difficult and restrictive laws that undermine the same rights that are supposed to uphold.

- ZAMECO Vice Chairperson Dr. Mzuri Issa

“

From a human rights perspective, the continued application of outdated and restrictive media laws is inconsistent with Zanzibar's obligations under international and regional instruments that guarantee freedom of expression and access to information. The persistence of these legal barriers, combined with delays in reform, underscores the urgent need for comprehensive

legislative change to align the media framework with constitutional principles and international human rights standards.

3.6. FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

3.6.1. Overview

The year 2025 marked one of the most consequential periods for the enjoyment of the right to peaceful assembly in Tanzania in recent years. Although the Constitution guarantees citizens the right to assemble peacefully, the practical exercise of this right became increasingly constrained, particularly in the context of political mobilization, civic advocacy, and election-related protests. Preventive policing, often justified on grounds of maintaining public order or preventing unlawful gatherings, became a defining feature of the civic landscape. In several cases, gatherings were characterized as unlawful before they occurred, effectively transforming notification procedures into de facto authorization requirements. By late October 2025, the situation escalated dramatically, with security forces responding to protests with force that international human rights organizations later described as unnecessary and disproportionate. The events of 29th October to 3rd November 2025 marked a critical turning point, raising serious concerns not only about the right to peaceful assembly but also about the right to life, liberty, and political participation

3.6.2. Legal Environment and Reported Incidents

Legal and regulatory context

Tanzania's legal framework provides for freedom of peaceful assembly, but it also vests broad discretionary powers in law enforcement authorities to regulate public gatherings. Public order laws require organizers to notify police of intended assemblies. In practice, however, this notification requirement has often operated as a system of prior authorization, with police retaining wide discretion to deny, postpone, or restrict assemblies on grounds such as public safety, security, or the likelihood of disorder.

During the year 2025, these discretionary powers were applied frequently in politically sensitive contexts.¹⁸³ Courts and administrative bodies also issued decisions that had direct implications for assembly rights. In June 2025, the High Court issued a temporary injunction barring CHADEMA from conducting political activities pending determination of a substantive dispute related to party resource distribution. While framed as an interim judicial measure, the injunction effectively halted the party's public mobilization at a critical political moment.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ For instance, Tundu Lissu Trial, Luhaga Mpina disqualifications, CHADEMA Ban of political activities.

¹⁸⁴ 'Tanzania's Main Opposition Chadema Party Barred from Upcoming Elections' ICTJ, 12 April 2025, at <https://www.ictj.org/latest-news/tanzania%E2%80%99s-main-opposition-chadema-party-barred-upcoming-elections>.

Earlier in the year, disputes involving the Registrar of Political Parties, including decisions affecting party leadership structures and access to state subsidies, contributed to legal uncertainty and operational constraints for opposition actors. These measures collectively narrowed the civic space available for lawful political gatherings.¹⁸⁵

Repeated prevention of opposition assemblies

Throughout 2025, multiple reported incidents illustrated a pattern of restrictions on opposition gatherings. In Mbeya on 25th March 2025, a CHADEMA meeting was reportedly halted by police authorities who stated that procedural requirements had not been fulfilled. On 23rd April 2025 in Mwanza, the Regional Police Commander publicly announced a ban on what was described as an unlawful gathering associated with CHADEMA supporters, warning of legal consequences for participants.

In the lead-up to the 2025 general elections, tensions escalated following CHADEMA's decision not to sign the Electoral Code of Conduct, a move that effectively excluded the party from formal participation in the electoral process. Subsequent attempts to mobilize supporters, convene political meetings, and protest perceived electoral injustices were frequently met with prohibitions, dispersals, and heightened surveillance by security authorities.

On 6th September 2025 in Kilimanjaro, 18 individuals, including youth leaders, were arrested on allegations of organizing an unlawful assembly and incitement. Authorities indicated that investigations were ongoing and that further legal steps would follow. On 8th September 2025 in Mbeya Region, six CHADEMA members were reportedly arrested in Rungwe District on similar allegations of unlawful assembly and incitement.

On 18th August 2025 in Pwani Region, police reported that they had arrested 10 CHADEMA members who were alleged to be planning criminal activities during a meeting at Kibaha. In several of these cases, police communications emphasized the need to prevent disorder or criminal acts. However, the repeated reliance on pre-emptive arrests and dispersal measures against opposition gatherings contributed to the perception that assembly rights were being selectively curtailed.

¹⁸⁵ 'Kivulini Talks: Tanzania's Multi-Party System— Fix It or Forge Ahead Without Course Correction?' 17 March 2026, at <https://thechanzo.com/2026/03/17/kivulini-talks-tanzanias-multi-party-system-fix-it-or-forge-ahead-without-course-correction/>.

Restrictions beyond political parties

The tightening of assembly space extended beyond partisan politics. In early June 2025, following the deregistration of the Ufufuo na Uzima Church led by Bishop Josephat Gwajima, police reportedly entered church premises and arrested congregants. Media accounts described confrontations between security forces and worshippers, with allegations of mass arrests and excessive force. The events highlighted the intersection between freedom of religion, expression, and assembly, particularly where religious leaders addressed matters of public concern such as abductions and enforced disappearances.

In September 2025, the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) planned nationwide demonstrations to protest the alleged assault of a lawyer during court proceedings. Reports indicated that heavy police deployment around TLS offices effectively prevented the demonstrations from proceeding. Authorities maintained that proper procedures had not been followed. Similarly, public gatherings linked to demands for accountability over alleged disappearances were frequently disrupted or subjected to heavy policing, further constraining civic activism.

October–November 2025 election protests

The most serious violations of assembly rights occurred between 29th October and 3rd November 2025 following contested election results. Security forces reportedly used unnecessary and disproportionate force, including lethal force, to suppress election-related protests in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Mbeya, Songwe, Tunduma, and other regions. Multiple reports suggested that live ammunition was used in residential areas and that hundreds of people were feared killed or injured. Authorities disputed aspects of these reports, stating that figures were exaggerated and that security operations were aimed at restoring order. Nonetheless, more than 2,000 individuals were reportedly arrested in connection with what officials described as “election chaos,” with many facing serious charges, including treason-related offences. In early December 2025, ahead of planned nationwide protests on 9th December, UN human rights experts and other human rights stakeholders publicly urged Tanzanian authorities to respect and protect the rights to peaceful assembly and expression and to refrain from excessive force. These international interventions highlighted the gravity of the situation and the global concern it generated.

3.6.3. Human Rights Implications

The developments observed during 2025 raise significant concerns under both domestic and international human rights standards. Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Tanzania is a State Party, protects the right of peaceful assembly. Any restrictions must be lawful, necessary, and proportionate to legitimate aims such as national security or public order. The use of lethal force against protesters represents the most serious concern. International standards, including the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms, require that lethal force be used only as a last resort when strictly unavoidable to protect life. Reports of live ammunition deployed in civilian areas, coupled with large-scale arrests and allegations of mass burials, raise profound questions about compliance with the right to life under Article 6 of the ICCPR.

Beyond the immediate physical harm, the cumulative impact of repeated restrictions has created a chilling effect. Citizens may refrain from organizing or participating in peaceful assemblies due to fear of arrest, injury, or prosecution. This erosion of civic confidence weakens political pluralism and undermines public trust in state institutions.

3.6.4. LHRC's View

LHRC maintains that freedom of peaceful assembly is not a discretionary concession but a fundamental constitutional and human right essential to democratic governance. LHRC emphasizes that the State has a positive obligation not only to refrain from unjustified interference but also to actively facilitate and protect peaceful assemblies, including those expressing dissenting or critical views. Preventive bans, selective enforcement, and broad interpretations of public order laws risk transforming regulatory frameworks into instruments of suppression. Equal political participation requires that all parties and civic actors enjoy the same protection under the law.

LHRC emphasizes that sustainable peace and democratic stability cannot be achieved through suppression. Instead, they require open civic space, inclusive dialogue, institutional accountability, and full respect for the right of every person in Tanzania to gather peacefully and express their views without fear.

ZANZIBAR

As was the case in 2024, there were no reported incidents of arbitrary restrictions or infringement on freedoms of association and assembly in 2025. However, the legal environment continued to affect enjoyment of these fundamental human rights. Report of the presidential taskforce on multiparty democracy, released in October 2022, showed the need to amend the Political Parties Act, as well as review and amendment of the Police Force and Auxiliary Services Act (Cap 322). The recommendation is yet to be implemented to ensure compliance with international human rights standards.

3.7. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS

3.7.1. Background and Context

On 29th October 2025, Tanzania experienced widespread unrest following disputed general elections, with protests reported in Dar es Salaam and other urban centres. Demonstrations emerged amid allegations of electoral irregularities, political exclusion, and growing restrictions on civic space. In response to escalating violence and public disorder, the Government deployed police and military forces and introduced a range of emergency security measures intended to restore stability. These measures included the imposition of curfews, movement controls, roadblocks, transport disruptions, and communication restrictions, all of which significantly affected civilian mobility and economic activity across the country.

3.7.2. Restrictions on Movement of People

Immediately after the protests, authorities imposed a night-time curfew in Dar es Salaam, reportedly beginning as early as 6:00 PM, restricting civilian movement during evening and night hours.¹⁸⁶ The curfew remained in place for several days before being lifted on 4th November 2025 as authorities announced gradual normalization of the situation. During this period, movement within the city and surrounding areas was heavily limited, public gatherings were effectively suspended, and many workplaces, markets, and schools temporarily closed. Public transport services were also halted in several areas, further restricting residents' ability to travel for work, healthcare, or essential needs. Reports indicated that daily life slowed considerably, with residents facing difficulties accessing food and other necessities as commercial activities declined.

¹⁸⁶ 'Curfew declared in Tanzania's main city after election-day protests' RFI, 30 October 2025, at <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20251030-curfew-declared-in-tanzania-dar-es-salaam-after-election-day-protests-hassan>.

Security forces simultaneously established roadblocks and checkpoints along major roads, urban entry points, and areas surrounding government installations. Police and military officers conducted searches of passenger buses, private vehicles, and commercial transport while verifying identification documents of travellers. Individuals who failed to present identification reportedly faced harassment, arrest, or temporary detention. Movement between neighbourhoods and regions became uncertain as travellers were frequently required to justify their journeys. Increased scrutiny was also reported in relation to foreign nationals and visitors during the period of heightened security operations.

3.7.3. Question Marks over the Legality of Curfew

The declaration and enforcement of the curfew raised significant legal and human rights concerns, particularly regarding its compatibility with the right to freedom of movement as guaranteed under the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977). While such restrictions may be permissible under law in the interest of public safety, they must meet the requirements of legality, necessity, and proportionality. Regional and international human rights standards, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter), further require that any such limitations be lawful, time-bound, non-arbitrary, and strictly necessary in a democratic society.

In November 2025, the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) filed a landmark constitutional petition against the Tanzanian government, challenging the legality of a controversial five-day curfew.¹⁸⁷ The petition argued that the order lacked a clear legal basis and effectively usurped the President's constitutional authority to declare a state of emergency. It further alleged that the curfew led to violations of fundamental rights, including the rights to life, liberty, freedom of movement, dignity, and freedom of religion, and raised concerns about inadequate public notice and its application beyond its stated scope.¹⁸⁸

In this context, the imposition of the curfew, coupled with communication restrictions, raised broader questions about whether emergency-style security measures were applied in a manner consistent with constitutional and international obligations. The developments highlight the need for clear legal frameworks, transparent justification, and effective oversight to ensure that such measures do not unduly infringe on fundamental rights, including freedom of movement and broader civic participation.

¹⁸⁷ 'Tanganyika Law Society Sues Tanzanian Government Over Post-Election Curfew' *The Chanzo*, 24 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/24/tanganyika-law-society-sues-tanzanian-government-over-post-election-curfew/>.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

3.7.4. Disruption of Transport and Mobility

Movement restrictions extended beyond urban curfews and significantly affected national transportation systems. Public transport interruptions limited mobility within cities, while inter-regional travel became unpredictable due to security screening and road closures. Reports indicated disruptions affecting ferry services and flights, contributing to broader travel uncertainty. Security patrols and checkpoints created delays along major transport corridors, slowing passenger travel as well as commercial logistics operations. The combined effect of curfews, transport suspension, and intensified security presence resulted in reduced internal mobility across several regions during the immediate post-election period.

3.7.5. Restrictions Affecting the Movement of Goods

The security response also had substantial consequences for the movement of goods throughout the country. Roadblocks and inspections slowed cargo transportation, with truck drivers experiencing extended delays when moving goods between regions. Closure of markets and reduced operating hours for businesses disrupted supply chains, particularly affecting food distribution into urban areas such as Dar es Salaam. During the unrest, many shops closed and shortages of essential commodities were reported, accompanied by rising prices and long queues once commercial activity gradually resumed. The interruption of logistics networks affected wholesalers, retailers, and transport operators, highlighting the broader economic consequences of movement restrictions imposed during the security response.

3.7.6. Internet Shutdown and Compounding Effects

Physical restrictions on movement were compounded by a nationwide internet disruption imposed during the unrest. The shutdown limited communication, access to information, and coordination of transport and trade activities. Businesses dependent on digital payments and online transactions experienced operational difficulties, while individuals faced challenges accessing emergency updates and essential services. The communication blackout therefore amplified the practical effects of movement restrictions by weakening economic and social connectivity at a critical moment.

3.7.7. Human Rights Implications

Although states may adopt exceptional measures to address violent unrest, international human rights law requires that any restriction on movement be lawful, necessary, proportionate, and limited in duration. The October–November 2025 measures had significant implications for several protected rights. Limitations on mobility contributed to reduced access to food and basic commodities, raising concerns regarding the right to an adequate standard of living. Informal workers, small-scale traders, itinerant vendors, and transport

operators were particularly affected, as curfew enforcement prevented many from earning daily income, thereby undermining the right to work as protected under international human rights standards.

Access to essential social services was also affected during the restriction period. Temporary school closures disrupted education, while transport limitations constrained access to healthcare facilities for some residents. Reports of arrests or harassment linked to identification checks further raised concerns regarding protection from arbitrary detention and the risk of disproportionate enforcement practices during emergency policing operations. Human rights organizations and international observers expressed concern that the broader security crackdown following the elections affected civilians beyond those directly involved in protests.

3.7.8. Conclusion

The restrictions introduced following the 29th October 2025 election-related unrest constituted a far-reaching limitation on the movement of people and goods across Tanzania. While authorities framed these measures as necessary to restore public order, their implementation produced significant socio-economic consequences, particularly for urban populations and individuals dependent on daily mobility for livelihoods. The experience highlights the importance of ensuring that emergency security responses remain transparent, proportionate, and consistent with Tanzania's constitutional guarantees and international human rights obligations. Future responses to public unrest should incorporate safeguards that preserve civilian access to food, health-care, education, and economic activity while maintaining public security.

ZANZIBAR

Unlike in Mainland Tanzania, there were no reports of restrictions of movement of people and goods in Zanzibar in 2025. The October unrest, which triggered the restrictions, only occurred in Mainland Tanzania.

3.8. DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY AND OTHER PROPERTY RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

3.8.1. Overview

In 2025, Tanzania recorded a significant number of incidents involving destruction of property and broader violations of property rights. These incidents emerged in different contexts, including election-related unrest, law enforcement operations, land and resource conflicts, and community disputes.

Evidence gathered from media reports, civil society statements, and official communications indicates that property damage affected private businesses, homes, farms, vehicles, and public infrastructure.

Property rights are protected under Article 24 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as international human rights standards including Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 14 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The events documented in 2025 therefore raise concerns regarding protection of ownership, security of tenure, and accountability for unlawful destruction.

3.8.2. Property Destruction During the October Unrest

The most extensive destruction of property occurred during the October 2025 election-related unrest. Reports indicated widespread vandalism, arson, and damage to both public and private property across several urban centres. Witnesses interviewed in major cities including Mwanza, Dar es Salaam, and Arusha described demonstrations that escalated into violent confrontations, during which government offices, infrastructure, and properties associated with political actors were set on fire or vandalized.

Government statements later confirmed the scale of destruction, noting that thousands of assets were damaged nationwide. Official figures reported that 1,642 motor vehicles, 2,268 motorcycles (bodaboda), and 672 fuel stations and related facilities were destroyed or severely damaged during the disturbances. Commercial premises were also affected, including retail shops in Kariakoo, Dar es Salaam, where fires destroyed business properties and goods, leaving traders with substantial economic losses.

The consequences extended beyond immediate physical damage. Insurance providers reportedly declined compensation claims linked to politically motivated violence, leaving many victims without effective remedies or financial recovery. As a result, affected individuals and businesses bore long-term economic hardship despite not directly participating in the unrest.

3.8.3. Other Property Rights Violations: Land Disputes and Conflicts

Beyond the election period, land disputes remained one of the most persistent sources of property rights violations in Tanzania during 2025 and continued to contribute significantly to violence, insecurity, and destruction of livelihoods. Judicial authorities, including the Chief Justice of Tanzania, publicly acknowledged that land conflicts are among the leading causes of criminal offences nationwide and remain a major source of social instability, affecting investment, inheritance systems, and peaceful community coexistence.

Police statistics on land disputes

Crime and traffic incidents statistics covering the period of January to December 2024, released in 2025, showed that land disputes were among the most reported incidents at police stations in 2024. The incidents involved farmers and herders, farmers themselves, citizens versus investors or the Government, and citizens among themselves. A total of 199 land dispute incidents were recorded nationwide in 2025, confirming land governance challenges as a persistent driver of insecurity and rights violations.

The majority of disputes were linked to family, farmer, and pastoralist conflicts, which accounted for 165 cases (about 83%) of all reported land disputes. An additional 26 incidents were related to disputes over livestock access to farms or reserved grazing areas, reflecting continued tensions between agricultural and pastoral livelihood systems. Institutional or administrative land conflicts were comparatively fewer, with 8 reported cases, but these often involve complex ownership or allocation decisions.

Land disputes resulted in serious human consequences. Police data recorded 47 deaths, comprising 44 male victims and 3 female victims, indicating that men are disproportionately involved in violent confrontations linked to land conflicts. In addition, 70 injuries were reported (68 males and 2 females), indicating that many disputes escalate beyond civil disagreements into physical violence. Land disputes accounted for 2% of all murders documented by the police.

Land-related conflicts also led to destruction of productive assets and property essential for livelihoods. Recorded damage included 3 houses or plots destroyed, 1 boundary beacon destroyed, 19 livestock losses, and 15 incidents involving destruction of crops or farms. These forms of destruction directly affect food security, income generation, and rural economic stability.

Most incidents arose from disputes over farms and land ownership boundaries, accounting for 123 cases, followed by border-related disputes (11 cases) and pasture or grazing conflicts (9 cases). This pattern confirms that competition over land use and unclear demarcation remain the primary structural causes of rural conflict in Tanzania.

The data demonstrates that land disputes are not merely administrative disagreements but constitute a major public security and human rights concern, contributing to deaths, injuries, and destruction of livelihood assets. The dominance of farmer-pastoralist and family-based conflicts highlights persistent weaknesses in land administration, boundary demarcation, and local dispute resolution mechanisms, reinforcing the need for strengthened land governance and preventive conflict management systems nationwide.

In 2024, LHRC documented over 20 land disputes, which included boundary, compensation for land acquisition, conservation-related disputes. In 2025, at least six major land dispute-related incidents were reported and documented by LHRC, reflecting a broader nationwide pattern of conflict linked to land ownership, boundary disagreements, and competing land-use practices between farmers, pastoralists, and local communities. These incidents demonstrate how unresolved land administration challenges frequently escalate into violence and serious human rights violations.

In Shinyanga Region, Kishapu District, a violent confrontation linked to a land ownership dispute occurred in January 2025 in Nhobola Village, Tagala Ward, where Mussa Ngassa (40) sustained serious injuries after being attacked with arrows by individuals allegedly involved in a conflict over farmland. Police investigations confirmed that the attack stemmed directly from competing land claims within the community.

Similarly, in Mbeya Region, Mbarali District, a deadly land conflict resulted in the killing of Wilbrod Mjengwa (38) and Maige Jirafu (44) following clashes between groups disputing control and use of agricultural land. Several other individuals were injured during the incident, illustrating the increasingly violent nature of land-related disputes in rural areas where access to productive land remains central to livelihoods.

Land conflicts were also prominently reported in Morogoro Region, particularly Kilosa District, where recurring tensions between farmers and pastoralists continued throughout 2025. Communities in areas such as Dumila reported repeated destruction of farms by grazing livestock, retaliatory violence, and prolonged disputes over grazing corridors and cultivation land. Local stakeholders further alleged weaknesses in mediation systems and corruption within local administrative structures, which contributed to the persistence of the conflict and delayed sustainable resolution.

A particularly serious case was documented by LHRC in Ngenge Ward, Muleba District, Kagera Region. In February 2025, residents reported forced demolition and destruction of homes, burning of farms, and confiscation of livestock, allegedly carried out during operations involving government authorities.¹⁸⁹ The incidents occurred between 7th–9th February 2025 in Kishuro Village, Binoni sub-village, despite the existence of an ongoing court matter before the High Court in Bukoba (Application No. 25174/2024). More than 16 houses were demolished, crops destroyed both in storage and on farms, livestock taken,

¹⁸⁹ LHRC, Taarifa kwa Vyombo vya Habari: Kukemea Vikali Vitendo vya Uvunjifu wa Haki za Binadamu katika Kata ya Ngenge, Wilaya ya Muleba Mkoa wa Kagera, Dar es Salaam 10 Februari 2025.

and over 12 residents arrested. The operations allegedly continued even while legal proceedings concerning the land dispute were pending, raising concerns about disregard for judicial processes, proportionality in enforcement actions, and protection of civilian property. LHRC received similar complaints reported in Tanga (Kilindi) and Morogoro (Mlimba) in March 2025, involving Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) and Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA).¹⁹⁰ The organization received reports of arrests, demolition of houses, destruction of farms, and loss of personal property affecting residents of Bondo Kitongoji, Kilindi District Council, Tanga Region. The actions were reportedly justified on allegations that residents had encroached into protected or conservation areas, despite some of them living in the area for over 56 years.

At the national level, property rights concerns were further reflected in ongoing litigation involving residents from 23 villages in Mbeya Region, who continued pursuing legal action after challenging government decisions affecting village land status and settlement rights. The dispute, affecting thousands of residents, highlighted growing tensions between communities and state land management decisions and highlighted the importance of judicial protection of land tenure security.

In addition, civil society organizations documented incidents involving forced evictions, demolition of homes, destruction of crops, and confiscation of livestock during enforcement or conservation-related operations in several parts of the country. Reports indicated that some of these actions allegedly occurred despite pending court proceedings or unresolved legal disputes, raising concerns regarding compliance with due process guarantees, proportionality standards, and rule-of-law safeguards.

Overall, the reported cases demonstrate that land governance challenges remain a structural driver of property rights violations in Tanzania. Unclear land demarcation, competing livelihood systems, population pressure, and delays in dispute resolution mechanisms continue to expose individuals and communities to displacement, violence, and loss of economic security.

¹⁹⁰ LHRC, *Taarifa*, Machi 3, 2025.

Land Disputes Documented by LHRC's Legal Aid Clinics

In 2024, LHRC's legal aid clinics in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Dodoma received a total of 2,680 new land rights violations complaints, of which, 857 (32%) were filed by women and 1,823 (68%) by men.¹⁹¹ Land, family, and labour disputes dominated the legal aid provided to clients in 2024. Through her legal aid programme, in 2025 LHRC attended 27,257 land dispute clients, with men accounting for 63% and women 33%.¹⁹²

3.8.4. Impact and Overall Human Rights Implications

The destruction of property and related property rights violations recorded in 2025 had wide-ranging human rights consequences and directly affected several interconnected rights guaranteed under national and international law. Loss of homes, businesses, farms, and productive assets undermined livelihoods, adequate housing, food security, and economic participation, particularly among small traders and informal sector workers who largely depend on daily income and often lack insurance protection or alternative sources of survival. Both state actions and acts by private individuals contributed to these violations, especially during the October 2025 unrest and in areas affected by recurring land conflicts.

Destruction of shops, markets, fuel stations, vehicles, and commercial premises resulted in loss of employment and income, thereby affecting the right to work as protected under Article 22 of the Constitution and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Similarly, demolition of homes, destruction of crops, and loss of livestock significantly weakened the right to an adequate standard of living, limiting access to food, shelter, and basic necessities for affected communities. Land disputes and violent clashes also restricted the freedom of movement, as insecurity forced some residents to flee or limit access to farms, markets, and workplaces. Election-related destruction further deepened economic insecurity in urban commercial centres, while prolonged land conflicts contributed to displacement and growing mistrust toward institutions responsible for dispute resolution.

3.8.5. LHRC's View

LHRC expresses concern over the growing incidents of property destruction associated with political unrest, land governance challenges, and enforcement operations during the year under review. LHRC observes that unresolved

¹⁹¹ LHRC LAC data 2024.

¹⁹² LHRC, Legal Aid Annual Report 2025.

land tenure systems, weak dispute resolution mechanisms, and inadequate protection of property during public disturbances continue to expose citizens to repeated violations of their property and livelihood rights.

LHRC calls on authorities to conduct impartial investigations into property destruction, ensure access to compensation and effective remedies for affected victims, strengthen transparent land administration and dispute resolution systems, and strictly follow legal procedures during evictions and enforcement operations. Protecting property rights remains critical for safeguarding livelihoods, promoting social stability, and maintaining public confidence in state institutions.

ZANZIBAR

Unlike in Mainland Tanzania, there were no reports of destruction of property in Zanzibar in 2025. The October unrest, which triggered the destruction, only occurred in Mainland Tanzania. However, other property rights violations, particularly those arising from land disputes, remained a significant governance and human rights concern in Zanzibar in 2025, with Members of the House of Representatives raising alarm over the increasing number and persistence of land-related conflicts during budget deliberations.¹⁹³ Lawmakers highlighted that disputes are widespread across both Unguja and Pemba and are affecting residential areas, public institutions, and community land. Concerns were particularly raised about conflicts involving government land allocations, competing claims of occupancy rights, and disputes between local residents and state institutions, including areas reserved for public use such as security or institutional land.

The reported disputes often involve overlapping claims to land rights, reflecting structural challenges within Zanzibar's land tenure system, where all land is vested in the State and individuals hold rights of occupancy rather than ownership. This framework, combined with population pressure, urban expansion, and increasing demand for land for housing and investment, has contributed to rising tensions. In several constituencies, representatives reported ongoing disputes between residents and government entities, as well as intra-community conflicts over boundaries and land use.¹⁹⁴

193 Jesse Mikofu 'Zanzibar lawmakers raise alarm over land disputes, call for accountability in budget debate' The Citizen, 19 May 2025, at https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/zanzibar/zanzibar-lawmakers-raise-alarm-over-land-disputes-call-for-accountability-in-budget-debate-5047760?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

194 Issa Yusuf 'Zanzibar settles 373 land dispute cases' DAILY NEWS, 12 February 2026, at https://dailynews.co.tz/zanzibar-settles-373-land-dispute-cases/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

The Ministry of Lands and Housing Development reported that the Land Tribunal, which was established to hear land disputes, received 170 land disputes from both Unguja and Pemba in the period of July 2024 to March 2025,¹⁹⁵ increasing from 135 land disputes in the period of July 2023 to March 2024.

Table 32: Land Disputes at the Land Tribunal in Zanzibar (2023/2024)

Part	Regions	Filed (New)	Resolved	Ongoing
Unguja	Mjini Magharibi	59	51	97
	Kaskazini Unguja	29	19	38
	Kusini Unguja	28	16	52
Pemba	Kaskazini Pemba	20	13	24
	Kusini Pemba	34	41	32
TOTAL		170	140	243

Source: Zanzibar Ministry of Lands and Housing Development

Institutionally, the Government has established mechanisms such as the Land Tribunal and mediation committees to address these disputes. However, evidence indicates that a substantial number of cases remain unresolved or under review, pointing to delays in dispute resolution processes. Over a five-year period, for example, 468 land disputes were recorded by mediation committees, of which 95 cases remained pending,¹⁹⁶ demonstrating the continued backlog and complexity of land-related conflicts.

The persistence of land disputes raises broader human rights concerns, particularly in relation to the right to adequate housing, right to work, security of tenure, and protection from arbitrary eviction. Disputes involving state institutions and unclear allocation processes also raise questions about transparency, accountability, and equitable access to land. The situation indicates the need for strengthened land governance systems, improved dispute resolution mechanisms, and clearer legal safeguards to prevent and address conflicts effectively.

195 Serikali ya Mapinduzi ya Zanzibar Wizara ya Ardhi Na Maendeleo ya Makaazi Hotuba ya Waziri Wa Ardhi na Maendeleo Ya Makaazi Mheshimiwa Rahma Kassim Ali (MBM) Kuhusu Makadirio ya Mapato na Matumizi kwa Mwaka wa Fedha 2025/2026, Mei, 2025 p. 65, at <https://www.zanzibarassembly.go.tz/storage/documents/Budgets/all/1759317792.pdf>.
196 Ibid.

3.9. ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE BARRIERS

3.9.1. Overview

Access to justice and the functioning of Tanzania's criminal justice system remained a significant human rights issue in 2025. The year reflected a mixed picture: on one hand, the Government initiated institutional reforms aimed at improving criminal justice administration, including development of a National Criminal Justice Policy and expansion of digital court systems; on the other hand, numerous reported incidents revealed persistent barriers affecting fair trial guarantees, liberty rights, and timely administration of justice. Incidents and reports documented by LHRC in 2025 indicated recurring concerns relating to costs of legal representation, low awareness of laws and rights, lengthy court proceedings, arbitrary arrest and detention, prolonged pre-trial detention, denial or restriction of bail, delayed investigations, and repeated adjournment of politically sensitive cases.

3.9.2. Access to Justice Action and Barriers

In 2025, the Government announced several measures aimed at modernizing and coordinating the criminal justice system. The Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs confirmed completion of the Draft National Criminal Justice Policy, intended to harmonize operations among police, prosecution authorities, courts, and correctional institutions. Authorities stated that the policy seeks to ensure justice is delivered efficiently and within reasonable timeframes. Parallel reforms included expansion of digital or online court hearings (**Mahakama Mtandao**) allowing prisoners and remand detainees to participate in proceedings remotely from correctional facilities. Government officials argued that the system improves efficiency, security management, and continuity of judicial processes. While technological reforms may reduce logistical delays, human rights observers, including LHRC, cautioned that digital proceedings must not undermine fair trial guarantees, particularly confidential lawyer–client communication and effective participation of accused persons in proceedings.

A major positive development strengthening access to justice occurred in June 2025 when the Court of Appeal delivered a landmark constitutional judgment in **Onesmo Olengurumwa v Attorney General**¹⁹⁷. The Court struck down restrictive amendments to the Basic Rights and Duties Enforcement Act (BRADEA) that had required individuals to demonstrate direct personal harm before filing constitutional petitions. The ruling restored broader public interest litigation and affirmed that citizens may approach courts to defend constitutional rights without undue procedural barriers. Legal commentators

¹⁹⁷ *Onesmo Olengurumwa v Attorney General* (Civil Appeal No. 134 of 2022).

and civil society organizations described the judgment as a turning point for constitutional accountability and democratic oversight, reversing earlier legislative limitations that had significantly narrowed access to constitutional remedies.



Nearly 3 out of every 10 individuals held in prisons in Mainland Tanzania are remand prisoners - not yet been convicted of the offences for which they are accused

Despite this positive action, several barriers persisted, one of those being the slow administration of justice as reflected in by case backlogs, delayed investigations, repeated adjournments, and prolonged pre-trial detention. This results in many accused

persons remaining in remand custody for extended periods before their cases are concluded. Weak coordination among police, prosecution, courts, and correctional institutions further contributes to delays, while bail practices and strict conditions sometimes prolong detention, particularly for economically disadvantaged individuals. These challenges cause many individuals accused of crime to continue languishing in jail while awaiting court outcomes. The 2024 Prisoners Statistics Report for Tanzania Mainland, released in April 2025, showed that there 26,596 people in prison by the end of 2024, of whom 7,634 (29%) were remandees or remand prisoners.¹⁹⁸ The report also shows that 76 remandees (1%) waiting for hearing or judgment were children.

Access to justice also continued to be limited by structural inequalities, such as high cost of litigation, limited availability of legal aid services, low legal awareness among citizens, and court proximity, which especially affect rural populations. Many individuals still lack the financial resources or legal knowledge necessary to pursue claims or defend themselves effectively, while prison congestion and logistical challenges may restrict confidential consultation with lawyers and participation in court proceedings. Together, these factors create practical obstacles that undermine equality before the law and hinder full realization of fair trial and justice rights despite existing constitutional and legal protections.

¹⁹⁸ The United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Home Affairs, Tanzania Prisons Service, Prisoners Statistics Report Tanzania Mainland, 2024, NBS & TPS, April 2025, at <https://www.nbs.go.tz/uploads/statistics/documents/en-1758363441-MAGEREZA%20ENGLISH%20RIPOTI%202024.pdf>.

3.9.3. Key Criminal Justice Issues and Concerns

3.9.3.1. Arbitrary Arrest and Detention

As discussed above, incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention were widely reported in 2025, with LHRC documenting 68 distinct reported incidents of harassment, torture, arbitrary arrests and detention, 67% of which were strictly arbitrary arrest and detention. These incidents, which affected at least 162 individuals, constitute violation of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of accused person, including the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, the right to be informed about the reason for arrest, and the right to be presented before the court within 24 hours.

3.9.3.2. Prolonged Detention and Restrictions Affecting Fair Trial

Despite reform commitments, prolonged detention remained one of the most serious criminal justice concerns documented in 2025. Several criminal proceedings continued for extended periods due to delayed investigations, repeated adjournments, and slow prosecutorial processes. For instance, in *Republic v Alex Manyanza & 3 Others*,¹⁹⁹ the accused persons spent nearly 10 years in remand prison before release. Similarly, Sheikh Said Mohammed Ulatule and his family were held for years on terrorism-related charges, with Sheikh Ulatule dying in custody in 2023. They were among thirty terrorism suspects who had remained in detention for approximately ten years before eventually concluding their cases through plea agreements.²⁰⁰ Such cases illustrate systemic delays capable of converting remand detention into de facto punishment prior to conviction.

LHRC has previously documented similar patterns, including detainees remaining in custody for six to twelve years awaiting trial, contributing significantly to prison overcrowding and undermining fair trial guarantees. Long-running prosecutions involving *Uamsho* sheikhs similarly continued to symbolize unresolved concerns regarding excessive trial duration and delayed justice outcomes.

The Tundu Lissu case: Right to fair trial concerns

The prosecution of opposition leader Tundu Lissu emerged as one of the most prominent criminal justice concerns in 2025. Following his arrest and arraignment on serious criminal charges, court proceedings experienced repeated postponements that extended his period in remand custody. Political

¹⁹⁹ *Republic v Alex Manyanza & 3 Others*, (Criminal Session 34 of 2017) [2024] TZHC 1656 (16 April 2024).

²⁰⁰ Daniel Mjema 'Historia mpya, washtakiwa 30 wakiri makosa ya ugaidi' Mwananchi, 10 September 2025, at <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/historia-mpya-washtakiwa-30-wakiri-makosa-ya-ugaidi-5188046>.

leaders and legal observers publicly argued that continued adjournments effectively risked denying justice through delay, reinforcing concerns that prolonged remand detention may be used as a procedural consequence rather than a necessity grounded in investigation requirements.

Equally concerning were reports regarding restrictions placed on confidential communication between Lissu and his legal counsel while detained at Ukonga Prison. According to reported accounts, consultations allegedly occurred under supervision or through separated communication arrangements rather than private meetings. Such restrictions raise serious fair trial concerns because confidentiality between a lawyer and their client constitutes a fundamental component of defence preparation recognized under international human rights law. Limitations on confidential legal access undermine equality of arms between prosecution and defence and may impair an accused person's ability to effectively challenge criminal charges.

Proceedings in the case involving opposition leader Tundu Lissu also raised significant concerns regarding the right to a fair trial, as well as broader issues relating to access to information and media freedom. Reports indicated that restrictions were imposed on the dissemination of information relating to the case, including the removal or limitation of online content covering court proceedings. Such measures limited public access to information on a matter of high public interest and constrained the ability of the media and citizens to follow and scrutinize judicial processes.

These developments raise important legal questions under both national and international human rights frameworks. The right to a fair and public hearing, as protected under the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania and international instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), requires that judicial proceedings be conducted transparently, subject only to narrowly defined exceptions. Similarly, restrictions on reporting or accessing information about court proceedings must meet the strict tests of legality, necessity, and proportionality.

3.9.3.3. Denial of Bail and Expanding Use of Remand Custody

The right to bail remained a recurring issue in the year 2025. LHRC documented 33 complaints of denial of bail through human rights monitoring, decreasing from 48 incidents documented in 2024. In one of the incidents, LHRC publicly raised concern following the arrest and subsequent denial of bail for diplomat Dr. Wilbroad Slaa in January 2025,²⁰¹ emphasizing that bail constitutes a

²⁰¹ Hadija Jumanne 'Sababu Dk Slaa kushitakiwa, kunyimwa dhamana' 10 January 2025, at <https://www.>

constitutional entitlement rather than discretionary privilege where offences are legally bailable. LHRC warned against growing prosecutorial practices seeking detention orders that effectively prolong incarceration before trial completion. Such practices risk transforming remand detention into punishment prior to conviction, contrary to fair trial standards.

Another significant incident highlighting criminal justice tensions involved the arrest of individuals in Mkuranga, including women accused in connection with serious criminal allegations. LHRC publicly criticized actions taken by police authorities seeking to deny bail despite offences falling within categories legally eligible for bail consideration. LHRC emphasized that under Tanzanian constitutional principles, bail is not a discretionary privilege but a safeguard protecting the presumption of innocence. The organization warned that attempts to oppose bail without sufficient legal justification risk normalizing preventive detention practices inconsistent with constitutional protections. The incident intensified national debate regarding prosecutorial discretion and the increasing reliance on detention prior to trial, particularly in cases attracting public attention or security narratives.

Additionally, LHRC documented the widely reported arrest of former cabinet minister, Godfrey Mwambe, which raised concerns regarding denial of bail and prolonged detention without judicial oversight. Following his arrest on 7th December 2025, Mwambe was held in police custody for several days²⁰² without being brought before a court or granted bail, prompting his lawyers to file an urgent application seeking his production before court and release on bail. His legal team argued that the continued detention beyond 24 hours violated constitutional guarantees on personal liberty and the right to bail. Although a bail application was filed before the Kisumu Resident Magistrate's Court, the matter did not proceed substantively, as it was struck out after Mwambe was eventually released on police bail on 14th December 2025. Prior to this release, reports indicated that he had been denied bail while in custody and subjected to prolonged interrogation over allegations including incitement and an alleged plot to harm a senior police official, allegations he subsequently denied. The circumstances of his detention, including delayed access to bail and lack of prompt judicial review, highlighted broader concerns regarding compliance with constitutional safeguards on arrest, detention, and fair trial rights, particularly in politically sensitive cases.

mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/sababu-dk-slaa-kushitakiwa-kunyimwa-dhamana--4885116.
202 'Former minister Mwambe released on bail, questioned over alleged plan to kill police chief'
The Citizen, 15 December 2025, <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/court-news/former-minister-mwambe-released-on-bail-questioned-over-alleged-plan-to-kill-police-chief-5298124>.

3.9.3.4. Delays in Investigation, Case Management, and Court Proceedings

Delays within criminal investigations and court administration continued to undermine access to justice. Multiple cases reported repeated adjournments, incomplete investigations, and slow prosecution timelines. Political cases attracted particular concern, with allegations that postponements prolonged detention unnecessarily. Stakeholders noted that delayed justice processes may discourage public confidence in judicial impartiality and effectiveness. Government acknowledgement of these systemic challenges was reflected in ongoing criminal justice reform efforts, including development of the national policy framework intended to streamline coordination between investigative and judicial institutions.

3.9.3.5. Systemic Barriers Faced by Low-Income Citizens

Systemic barriers continued to affect ordinary citizens interacting with the justice system, particularly the criminal justice system. Access to legal representation remains uneven, particularly among low-income accused persons. The Tanganyika Law Society's intervention to provide legal defence for hundreds of detainees arrested during election-related incidents illustrated the scale of unmet legal aid needs.

3.9.4. LHRC's View

LHRC maintains that strengthening access to justice in Tanzania requires strict adherence to constitutional safeguards governing arrest, detention, bail, and fair hearing rights. Delays in the administration of justice undermine the rule of law and risk violating fundamental rights to liberty, dignity, and equality before the law. In this regard, timely and efficient investigations and prosecution processes are essential to ensuring that individuals are not subjected to unnecessary or prolonged detention while awaiting trial.

LHRC further maintains that law enforcement and prosecution authorities must respect constitutional guarantees relating to bail and uphold the presumption of innocence as a cornerstone of the criminal justice system. The Centre calls for concrete measures to prevent prolonged pre-trial detention, noting that remand custody should remain an exceptional measure rather than a routine practice. LHRC also emphasizes the importance of safeguarding confidential and unhindered access to legal representation, stressing that effective defence preparation is fundamental to the realization of fair trial rights.

While acknowledging ongoing criminal justice reform initiatives, LHRC believes that meaningful improvements in access to justice will depend on consistent implementation of reforms in line with Tanzania's constitutional framework and its regional and international human rights obligations.

ZANZIBAR

Access to justice in Zanzibar in 2025 remains constrained by a combination of structural, institutional, and socio-economic barriers that limit the ability of individuals to effectively seek and obtain remedies. While the judiciary continues to undertake reforms aimed at improving efficiency and transparency, significant challenges persist in the delivery of timely, equitable, and accessible justice. These challenges affect both civil and criminal justice processes and disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, including women, children, and low-income populations. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that strengthens institutional capacity, improves legal aid and public awareness, enhances infrastructure and digital systems, and ensures accountability across all components of the justice system.

Delays and Case Backlogs

In Zanzibar, lengthy procedures and administrative inefficiencies continued to contribute to delays in the adjudication of both civil and criminal matters. These delays undermine the right to a fair and timely hearing and weaken public confidence in the justice system.

Institutional and Infrastructure Constraints

The effectiveness of the justice system in Zanzibar is currently further limited by institutional and infrastructural challenges. The judiciary faces constraints related to inadequate court infrastructure, limited technological capacity, and inefficient case management systems.²⁰³ These factors contribute to congestion in court facilities and slow processing of cases. In addition, reports indicate that deficiencies in court infrastructure, including limited space and inadequate facilities, directly affect service delivery and the overall administration of justice.²⁰⁴

Although recent efforts to introduce digital systems and modernize court processes are underway, these reforms are still in early stages and have yet to fully address long-standing inefficiencies.

Geographic and Economic Barriers

Access to justice is also shaped by geographic and economic factors. While a majority of court users in Zanzibar reported reasonable access to court facilities in 2025, a significant proportion still faces challenges related to distance

203 Jacob Mosenda 'Modern courts on the horizon for Tanzanians' The Citizen, 4 January 2025, at https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/modern-courts-on-the-horizon-for-tanzanians-4878584?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

204 Including reports by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) cited in the article above.

and associated costs.²⁰⁵ More than half of court users reside at considerable distances from court premises, which can increase the financial burden of seeking justice and discourage individuals from pursuing legal remedies.²⁰⁶

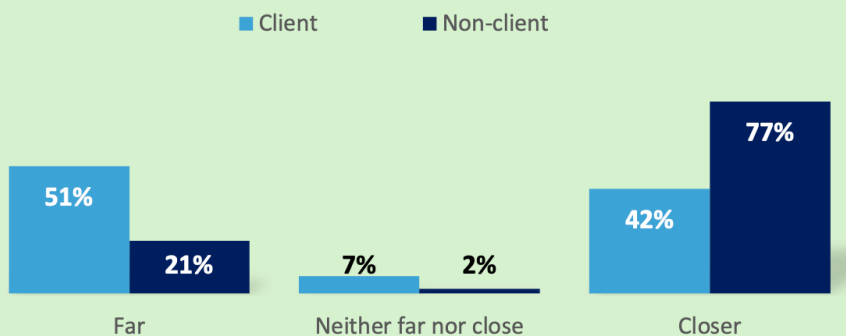


Figure 3.10: Distance to the court facility

Source: Zanzibar Court Users Satisfaction Survey Report 2025

These challenges are more pronounced in rural areas and in Pemba, where access to courts and legal services is comparatively limited. Travel costs, time constraints, and lack of transportation infrastructure continue to hinder effective access to justice.

Low Awareness of Alternative Means of Delivering Court Services

As part of increasing accessibility of court services, the Judiciary of Zanzibar has taken various reforms to enhance access to and transparency in justice by reducing the necessity of physical presence in traditional court buildings. These reforms aim to address several challenges, including the growing backlog of cases, the need for increased workplace efficiency, and the adoption of modern technological solutions to streamline legal processes. However, ZAFAYCO has observed that awareness of alternative means of delivering court services, such as mobile courts, video conference, and physical delivery of court documents, remains low. According to the Zanzibar Court Users Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2025, less than 10% of court users are aware of such alternative means.²⁰⁷

Complexity of Legal Processes and Limited Legal Aid

The complexity of legal procedures remains a major barrier to justice. The legal

²⁰⁵ REPOA (2025) Zanzibar Court Users Satisfaction Survey Report. REPOA, Dar es Salaam. Available at https://www.judiciaryzanzibar.go.tz/uploads/publications/68e0cdb0a05de_CUSS_ZANZIBAR_FINALREPORT_17.04.2025_CLEANFORMATTED.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ REPOA (2025) Zanzibar Court Users Satisfaction Survey Report. REPOA, Dar es Salaam, p. 38.

system is characterized by formalities, technical requirements, and procedural complexities that can be difficult for ordinary citizens to navigate without legal assistance. This is compounded by limited availability of legal aid services, particularly for individuals with low income.

Access to justice depends not only on the existence of courts but also on the ability of individuals to understand and engage with the legal system. Without adequate legal aid and representation, many individuals are unable to effectively pursue or defend their rights, resulting in inequality before the law.

Criminal Justice System Challenges

Within the criminal justice system, several barriers continued to undermine the protection of rights in 2025. These include delays in investigations, prolonged pre-trial detention, and limited coordination between law enforcement, prosecution, and the Judiciary. In some cases, individuals remained in detention for extended periods before their cases are heard, raising concerns about violations of due process and the presumption of innocence.²⁰⁸

The criminal justice system also faces challenges related to evidence handling, witness availability, and prosecutorial capacity, which contribute to delays and affect the quality of justice outcomes. Weak coordination among institutions further exacerbates these challenges and contributes to drop-off of cases.²⁰⁹

Inequality and Vulnerability of Special Groups

Women, children, and economically disadvantaged individuals continued to face additional barriers, including social stigma, limited awareness of rights, and financial constraints. Survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), in particular, encounter difficulties in navigating the justice system, including delays, lack of specialized support, and pressure to resolve cases outside formal legal processes. This situation is exacerbated by **Muhali** - a cultural norm where people hesitate to take action against someone they know well (a code of silence).

3.10. ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES

3.10.1. Overview

In 2025, access to quality health services in Tanzania remained a significant human rights concern, shaped by structural health system challenges, affordability barriers, mental health pressures, and allegations of interference

²⁰⁸ ZAFAYCO Human Rights Monitoring, 2025.

²⁰⁹ UN Women Africa, Community Volunteers Driving Change in Zanzibar's Efforts to End Violence against Women and Girls, 25 November 2024, at <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2024/11/community-volunteers-driving-change-in-zanzibars-efforts-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls>.

with medical care during security operations. While progress has been recorded in disease surveillance, infrastructure expansion, and policy reforms aimed at achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), many Tanzanians continued to encounter barriers in accessing quality health services. Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and the elderly continued to be disproportionately affected by these issues.

3.10.2. Key Access to Health Issues and Challenges

3.10.2.1. Budget Allocation for the Health Sector

Despite continued prioritization of healthcare within national development planning, financing constraints remain a significant obstacle affecting effective healthcare service delivery in Tanzania. For the Financial Year 2025/2026, the Government allocated approximately Tanzania Shillings 3.1 trillion to the health sector²¹⁰, equal to 5.5% of the overall budget. The allocation is intended to support expansion of health infrastructure, recruitment of healthcare workers, procurement of medicines and medical equipment, disease prevention programmes, and implementation of reforms aimed at achieving Universal Health Coverage.

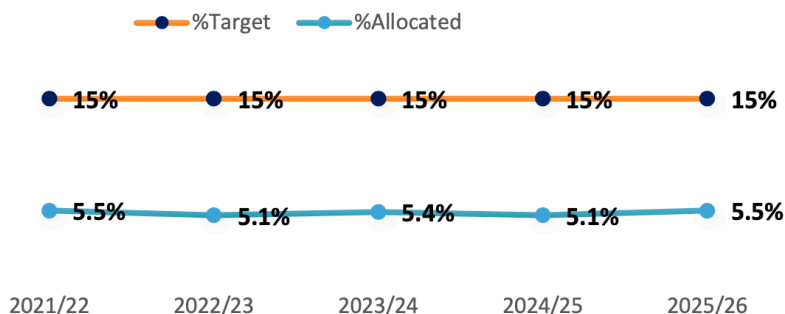


Figure 3.11: % Government budget allocation in the health sector vis-à-vis required target – 2021/22 to 2025/26, Source: MoF & MoH data

In recent years, stakeholders have expressed concern with delays in disbursement of funds and partial disbursement of such funds in the health sector. For instance, for the financial year 2023/24, the Ministry of Health was allocated Tshs. 1.2 trillion out of the 2.4 trillion allocated for the health sector.²¹¹ By March 2024, the ministry had received Tshs. 838 billion, which is equivalent to 68%

210 Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, Wizara ya Fedha, Bajeti ya Serikali ya Mwaka 2025/26 kwa Lugha Rahisi Toleo la Mwananchi, p. 10, at <https://www.mof.go.tz/uploads/documents/en-1754485897-Bajeti%20ya%20Serikali%20Toleo%20la%20Mwananchi%202025-26.pdf>; United Republic of Tanzania, Budget Insights 2025/26, Ministry of Finance, July 2025, p. 15, at <https://www.mof.go.tz/uploads/documents/en-1755779344-BUDGET%20INSIGHT%20FY%202025-26.pdf>.

211 Hotuba ya Waziri wa Afya, Mhe. Ummu Ally Mwalimu (MB.), Kuhusu Makadirio ya Mapato na Matumizi ya Fedha ya Wizara ya Afya kwa Mwaka wa Fedha 2024/25.

of the budget. Only 59% of the funds allocated for development expenditure had been received by then.²¹² However, the Government reported significant improvements for the financial year 2024/2025. According to the Ministry of Health, by March 2025, the health sector had received Tshs.1.23 trillion, equivalent to approximately 94% of the approved budget for the 2024/2025 financial year.²¹³

Of this amount, Shilingi 472.7 billion (75%) supported recurrent expenditure, including salaries and operational costs, while Shilingi 759.2 billion (112%) was reportedly directed toward development projects, largely driven by higher-than-anticipated domestic development financing.

From a human rights perspective, the current level of public health financing remains below the commitment made by African Union Member States under the 2001 Abuja Declaration, in which governments pledged to allocate at least 15 percent of their national budgets to the health sector in order to strengthen health systems and improve population health outcomes. Although Tanzania has increased health sector funding in recent years, health expenditure as a proportion of the national budget continues to fall short of this benchmark. Failure to meet the Abuja target limits the State's capacity to progressively realize the right to the highest attainable standard of health as required under Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter) of 1981. This situation risks perpetuating inequalities in access to healthcare services, particularly for rural populations, women, children, and low-income households who depend primarily on public health facilities.

3.10.2.2. Limited Access to Medical Treatment for the Wounded of the October Unrest

The year 2025 also revealed situations in which access to healthcare intersected directly with civil and political rights concerns.²¹⁴ Following the October 2025 unrest linked to election-related protests, credible reports indicated that wounded individuals encountered obstacles in accessing medical treatment in some regions.²¹⁵ According to some reports and eye-witness accounts, security personnel allegedly entered medical facilities and ordered healthcare workers to surrender injured individuals, particularly those suspected of participating in protests, while they were still receiving treatment for gunshot wounds. A healthcare professional reported that at least five severely injured patients were taken away from a hospital while still bleeding and were not seen again.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Hotuba ya Waziri wa Afya, Mhe. Jenista J. Mhagama (MB.) Kuhusu Makadirio ya Mapato na Matumizi ya Fedha ya Wizara ya Afya kwa Mwaka wa Fedha 2025/26.

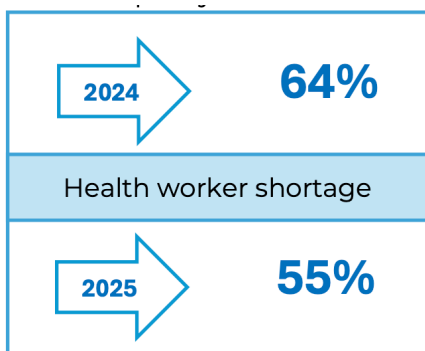
²¹⁴ 'Tanzania: Reports of hundreds killed and detained following deadly election violence' UN News, 11 November 2025, at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166334>.

²¹⁵ Federico Piana 'Tanzanian Bishops' president: 'Protesters were killed without mercy' Vatican News, 19 November 2025, at <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2025-11/tanzania-bishops-conference-president-interview-protests.html>.

Medical personnel in another facility described heavy police presence inside hospitals, where officers allegedly instructed nurses to halt treatment for some injured persons and remove patients from wards.²¹⁶ As a result, several wounded protesters and bystanders reportedly discharged themselves prematurely or avoided hospitals altogether due to fear of arrest. Such incidents raise serious concerns regarding violations of medical neutrality and the obligation of the State to ensure safe and non-discriminatory access to healthcare services, particularly during security operations.

3.10.2.3. Availability of Health Workers

Shortages of qualified health professionals remain one of the most significant barriers affecting access to healthcare services across the country. Reports during the year indicated continued strain within hospitals due to inadequate staffing levels, particularly in specialized medical fields.



Despite ongoing government efforts to address human resource gaps within the health sector, shortages of healthcare workers continue to significantly affect access to quality healthcare services across the country. According to the Ministry of Health, between July 2024 and March 2025, the Government recruited 13,564 additional health workers, bringing the total number of personnel in the health sector to 177,711 employees nation-

wide²¹⁷. While this recruitment contributed to reducing the staffing deficit from 64% to 55%, the health sector still operates far below its estimated requirement of 391,950 health workers needed to adequately serve the population.

Overburdened healthcare workers and uneven distribution of professionals between urban and rural areas continue to affect quality of care and waiting times. Rural communities remain disproportionately affected, often relying on understaffed facilities unable to provide specialized treatment. These conditions raise concerns regarding equality in access to healthcare services as required under regional and international human rights standards.

²¹⁶ Ibid; LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, November 2025.

²¹⁷ Hotuba ya Waziri wa Afya, Mhe. Jenista J. Mhagama (MB.) Kuhusu Makadirio ya Mapato na Matumizi ya Fedha ya Wizara ya Afya kwa Mwaka Wa FedhA 2025/26, para 298.

3.10.2.4. Sexual and Reproductive Health

Access to sexual and reproductive health services continues to face structural and financial limitations. Warnings issued in 2025 indicated possible shortages of maternal health supplies and contraceptives due to declining external funding support. Such shortages risk reversing gains made in maternal health and reproductive rights protection, particularly for women and adolescent girls in rural and low-income communities. The availability and affordability of reproductive health services remain central to women's autonomy, dignity, and health outcomes. Limitations in access disproportionately affect vulnerable populations and contribute to preventable health complications.

3.10.2.5. Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Menstrual health and hygiene emerged as an important access-to-health concern in 2025. Health stakeholders and civil society actors continued to call for removal of taxes on sanitary pads, arguing that menstrual products remain unaffordable for many girls and women, especially those living in rural areas.



Of women and girls often rely on cloth for menstrual protection

Limited access to menstrual hygiene products continues to affect girls' school attendance, health, and dignity. From a human rights perspective, barriers to menstrual health management reflect broader gender inequalities within access to healthcare and essential health-related services.

3.10.2.6. Mental Health

Mental health, a key component of the right to health, is key human rights concern in Tanzania. Mental health issues continued to dominate media headlines in 2025, with numerous reported suicide incidents highlighting the absence of accessible psychosocial support systems. Several cases documented across the country illustrate the human impact of untreated mental distress.

LHRC documented 28 incidents of suicide, declining from 54 documented in 2024. The suicide incidents involved students, youth, and adults reported in different regions including Simiyu, Mbeya, Morogoro, Shinyanga, and Kilimanjaro. Six suicide incidents involving university students recorded between January and July 2025 in higher learning institutions. The majority of reported suicides involved young people, students in secondary schools and universities, working-age adults, education sector employees (particularly teachers) This pattern indicates growing vulnerability among economically active and academically engaged populations. Across incidents, the most

frequently cited contributing factors were psychological distress and depression, financial hardship, academic pressure, relationship conflict and jealousy, and unemployment and economic insecurity. Stress was the most consistently reported underlying condition.

Some of the reported incidents

In May 2025, Erick Sawe (21), a second-year physiotherapy student at Kilimanjaro Institute of Health and Allied Sciences (KICHAS) in Moshi, reportedly died by suicide after experiencing financial stress related to academic obligations. In July 2025, Enock Johnson Peter (32), a primary school teacher in Muheza District, Tanga Region, was reported to have taken his life following prolonged relationship conflict linked to jealousy and emotional distress. Similarly, Ronald Malisa (35), a businessman residing in Moshi, reportedly died by suicide amid reported mental health pressures connected to personal and economic challenges.

Other incidents involved young students and community members facing psychological distress linked to poverty, family conflict, and social pressures. Christina Kalilo, an eight-year-old pupil in Katavi Region, reportedly died after experiencing emotional distress associated with unmet expectations surrounding holiday necessities, while additional student suicide cases were reported in Simiyu and higher learning institutions across the country.

The reported incidents of suicide signal a widening mental health protection gap in Tanzania. From a human rights perspective, suicide trends increasingly reflect structural shortcomings in access to mental health services, counselling systems, and early psychosocial intervention mechanisms. Indeed, an audit report on the availability of mental healthcare services, released by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) in March 2024, revealed various challenges in provision of timely and appropriate mental healthcare services in the country.²¹⁸ These include ineffective identification of mental health patients at community level; psychosocial care and support services not being effectively mainstreamed into plans, budgets, policies, programs, interventions and strategies at all levels; and insufficient resources (experts, infrastructure, medical equipment and medicines) to facilitate the provision of mental healthcare services.

Apart from suicide, other mental health concerns were reported in the aftermath of the 2025 post-election unrest. Reports indicated that many Tanzanians experienced psychological distress, including persistent sleep

²¹⁸ See The United Republic Of Tanzania, National Audit Office, Performance Audit Report on the Availability of Mental Healthcare Services in the Country, March 2024, at https://www.nao.go.tz/uploads/Performance_Audit_Report_on_the_Availability_of_Mental_Healthcare_Services_in_the_Country.pdf.

disturbances, heightened sadness, anxiety, and emotional trauma triggered by exposure to violent events, funerals, and disturbing images circulating online.²¹⁹ Psychologists explained that such reactions were common during periods of fear and uncertainty, as stress hormones keep the body in a state of alertness, making it difficult for individuals to sleep or concentrate.²²⁰ Mental health professionals also noted an increase in people seeking psychological support, while some individuals reportedly turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism, something experts cautioned against due to the risk of creating additional health and social problems.

3.10.2.7. Availability of Equipment, Medicines, and Medical Supplies

Healthcare facilities continue to face shortages of essential medical equipment and treatment capacity. Specialized treatment services remain concentrated in a limited number of referral hospitals. Inadequate availability of medicines and delayed supply chains further affect continuity of treatment for patients, particularly those suffering from chronic illnesses. Regulatory concerns were also raised regarding risks associated with unregulated traditional medicines, which may expose patients to harmful health outcomes due to insufficient monitoring mechanisms.

3.10.2.8. Proximity of Health Facilities

Geographic accessibility remains a persistent challenge affecting rural populations. Reports from Singida Region revealed that women seeking maternal healthcare services were required to walk long distances, sometimes between six and twelve kilometres, to obtain water necessary for accessing services at local health facilities. Such infrastructural deficiencies directly affect safe delivery conditions, hygiene standards, and timely access to healthcare. Long distances and inadequate transport systems continue to delay treatment seeking, particularly during emergencies, thereby undermining equal enjoyment of the right to health.

3.10.2.9. Health Insurance

Limited health insurance coverage continues to restrict access to healthcare services for a large proportion of the population. Only a small percentage of Tanzanians benefit from medical insurance schemes, leaving the majority dependent on out-of-pocket payments.

Financial barriers discourage individuals from seeking early medical attention and increase vulnerability among low-income households. Challenges within

²¹⁹ 'Tanzanians Report Sleep Disturbances, Increased Sadness, and Anxiety Following Post-Election Unrest' The Chanzo, 10 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/10/tanzanians-report-sleep-disturbances-increased-sadness-and-anxiety-following-post-election-unrest/>.

²²⁰ Ibid.

insurance reimbursement systems have also affected service provision in some facilities, further complicating access to treatment.

From a human rights perspective, inadequate financial protection mechanisms weaken the realization of equitable healthcare access and deepen socio-economic inequality. The only hope is effective implementation of the universal health insurance law and its regulations. In 2025, the Government reported that it had collected Tshs. 61.449 billion from specific sources to finance health insurance for citizens who are unable to afford it, through a special fund that has been established.²²¹

Effective implementation of the law and health financing reforms are crucial in ensuring good health and well-being for Tanzanians in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 3.

3.10.3. LHRC's View

While LHRC acknowledges government efforts to respond to disease outbreaks and expand health services, the persistence of systemic barriers, including inadequate financing, shortages of health professionals, limited mental health services, and low insurance coverage, continues to prevent many Tanzanians from accessing quality healthcare on an equal basis.

LHRC therefore emphasizes the need for increased investment in the health sector, expansion of mental health and counselling services nationwide, improved availability and equitable distribution of health workers, strengthened reproductive and menstrual health interventions, and acceleration of universal health insurance reforms to ensure that no individual is denied healthcare due to financial or geographic barriers. This is essential to safeguarding human dignity, protecting life, and fulfilling the State's human rights obligations.

ZANZIBAR

The realization of the right to health in Zanzibar remains constrained by persistent structural, financial, and systemic challenges. While the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGZ) has continued to invest in the health sector and expand service coverage, significant gaps remain in the availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality of healthcare services. These gaps disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, and residents of rural and island districts.

²²¹ United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Health, Statistical Bulletin on the Status of Health Service Delivery in the Country, For the period of January to December 2024.

Budget for the Health Sector

Despite the gradual increase of the budget for the health sector in recent years, the RGZ is yet to reach achieve the benchmark of 15% of the overall budget agreed by the international community under the Abuja Declaration. For instance, for the health budget for the financial year 2023/2024 was 8.4% of the overall budget, while for the financial year 2024/2025 it is 6.6% of the overall budget. Another critical budgetary challenge concerns the disbursement and execution of health sector funds, although improvements have been observed in recent years.

For the financial year 2024/2025, a total of TZS 166.1 billion (78%) of the allocated budget had been utilized by March 2025. A significant share of this expenditure was directed toward recurrent costs, with TZS 50.6 billion (94%) spent on salaries, TZS 55.1 billion (99%) on other operational expenses, and TZS 5.7 billion (95%) on allowances, indicating a strong absorption of recurrent funds. In contrast, development expenditure showed weaker performance, with only TZS 54.7 billion (57%) disbursed, of which TZS 32.8 billion (60%) came from the Government, TZS 15.3 billion (123%) from development partners, and TZS 6.7 billion (22%) from loans.²²² This imbalance highlights a persistent challenge in budget execution, where recurrent spending is prioritized while development funds, critical for infrastructure and service expansion, are relatively underutilized

Shortage of Health Professionals

In 2025, Zanzibar's health sector continued to face a critical shortage of health professionals, particularly specialists.²²³ Despite some improvements, the overall workforce remains insufficient to meet the growing demand for services. The doctor-to-patient ratio improved from one doctor per 6,272 patients to one per 2,963 patients by early 2026,²²⁴ yet this remains significantly below the World Health Organization (WHO) standard of one doctor per 1,000 patients. The shortage is even more pronounced in specialized fields. For instance, the number of cardiology specialists remains extremely limited, with only four specialists available, and only one capable of performing advanced heart surgery.²²⁵ This gap has serious implications for the management of non-communicable diseases and contributes to preventable morbidity and mortality.

222 Serikali ya Mapinduzi Zanzibar Wizara ya Afya Zanzibar Hotuba ya Waziri wa Afya Mhe. Nassor Ahmed Mazrui Kuhusu Makadirio ya Mapato na Matumizi kwa Mwaka wa Fedha 2025/2026 katika Baraza la Wawakilishi Zanzibar, Mei, 2025, para 14, at <https://mofzanzibar.go.tz/download/hotuba-ya-bajeti-ya-serikali-ya-mapinduzi-zanzibar-kwa-mwaka-fedha-2025-2026-dkt-saada-mkuya-salum-waziri-wa-nchi-or-fedha-na-mipango/>.

223 'Uhaba wa wataalamu watajwa kikwazo katika sekta ya afya' Mwananchi Newspaper, 28 May 2025.

224 Jesse Mikofu 'Ajira 1,300 za kada ya afya zanukia Zanzibar' Mwananchi Newspaper, 18 March 2026, at <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/zanzibar/ajira-1-300-za-kada-ya-afya-zanukia-zanzibar-5395562>.

225 'Zanzibar ina mtaalamu mmoja wa upasuaji moyo' Mwananchi Official, 15 February 2025; 'Zanzibar ina Mtaalamu Mmoja wa Upasuaji Moyo' Kili FM Radio, 26 February 2025, at <https://www.instagram.com/p/DGh0YAaMltc/>.

Health Facility Congestion and Service Pressure

The limited health workforce is compounded by increasing pressure on health facilities. In 2025, the Minister of Health acknowledged persistent congestion in regional and district hospitals, particularly in maternity wards.²²⁶ Overcrowding in these facilities reflects both population growth and insufficient expansion of healthcare infrastructure. The high patient load places additional strain on already limited human resources, reduces the quality of care, and increases waiting times, particularly for maternal and reproductive health services.

Inadequate Infrastructure and Medical Equipment

Health service delivery in Zanzibar continues to be affected by gaps in infrastructure and medical equipment. Some health facilities lack adequate surgical theatres and modern equipment,²²⁷ limiting their ability to provide comprehensive services. Although the Government has initiated rehabilitation and construction of health facilities, these efforts have not yet fully addressed the growing demand for services. The lack of modern diagnostic and treatment equipment further constrains the quality and efficiency of healthcare delivery.

Gaps in Specialized and Mental Health Services

The shortage of specialized services extends beyond cardiology to other critical areas of care. Mental health services remain particularly underdeveloped, with increasing recognition of unmet needs across the population. Pregnant women and other vulnerable groups face limited access to mental health support, despite growing demand. The absence of adequately trained personnel and specialized facilities continues to hinder the expansion of these services.

In August 2025 it was reported that a study conducted by the Zanzibar Ministry of Health in collaboration with partners found that approximately 30 percent of pregnant women in Zanzibar experience mental health challenges,²²⁸ highlighting a significant but often overlooked public health concern. The findings further indicate that a substantial proportion of women continue to face mental health issues even after childbirth, with factors such as stress, family pressures, and limited psychosocial support contributing to the problem. The study also noted that Zanzibar remains behind in addressing maternal mental health,²²⁹ indicating an urgent need for early screening, improved mental health

226 Serikali ya Mapinduzi Zanzibar Wizara ya Afya Zanzibar Hotuba ya Waziri wa Afya Mhe. Nassor Ahmed Mazrui Kuhusu Makadirio ya Mapato na Matumizi kwa Mwaka wa Fedha 2025/2026 katika Baraza la Wawakilishi Zanzibar, Mei, 2025, para 155.

227 Ibid.

228 Rahma Suleiman 'Asilimia 30 ya wawawazito Zanzibar wanakabiliwa na tatizo la afya ya akili' Nipashe Newspaper, 21 August 2025, at <https://www.ippmedia.com/index.php/nipashe/habari/kitaifa/read/asilimia-30-ya-wawawazito-zanzibar-wanakabiliwa-na-tatizo-la-afya-ya-akili-2025-08-21-113311>; 'Wanawake waongoza kuugua tatizo afya ya akili' Zanzibaleo Online, 11 March 2026, at <https://www.instagram.com/p/DVu9D7VAp7s/>.

229 Ibid.

services, and greater awareness to protect both maternal wellbeing and child health outcome. Earlier, in January 2025, the Zanzibar Mental Health Support Organization (ZAMHSO) identified low awareness about mental health as a key challenge among students, affecting their learning and academic performance.²³⁰

Governance and Service Delivery Challenges

The health sector also faces challenges related to governance and service delivery. Reports indicate issues with patient management, including failure to adhere to hospital procedures and tensions between patients and healthcare providers.²³¹ These challenges affect the efficiency of service delivery and may undermine trust in the health system. Strengthening administrative systems and improving patient-provider relations remain key areas for reform.

Affordability and Health Financing

Financial barriers continue to limit access to healthcare services. Although the Government has made efforts to strengthen the Zanzibar Health Services Fund (ZHSF), gaps remain in ensuring universal and equitable access to affordable care. Many households continue to face out-of-pocket costs that can deter them from seeking timely medical attention. Strengthening financial protection mechanisms is therefore essential to improving access to healthcare.

Government Response and Ongoing Reforms

The Government of Zanzibar has taken steps to address these challenges, including plans to recruit approximately 1,300 additional health workers, expand infrastructure, and improve working conditions for health personnel.²³² These efforts signal a commitment to strengthening the health sector. However, the scale of existing challenges indicates that sustained investment and comprehensive reforms are required to achieve meaningful improvements.

3.11. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

3.11.1. Overview

Freedom of religion or worship has traditionally been one of the most respected civil liberties in Tanzania. Religious institutions across faith traditions have historically operated freely, conducted worship, and participated in social and moral discourse with limited direct state interference. Tanzania's long-standing interfaith coexistence has generally contributed to social stability,

230 'ZAMHSO: Uelewa Mdogo Kuhusu Afya ya Akili Unaathiri Wanafunzi' JamiiForums, 25 January 2025, at <https://www.facebook.com/JamiiForums/posts/zanzibar-imeelezwa-hali-ya-afya-ya-akili-kwenye-shule-bado-ni-changamoto-kubwa-a/948126474130675/>.

231 ZAFAYCO Human Rights Monitoring 2025.

232 Jesse Mikofu 'Ajira 1,300 za kada ya afya zanukia Zanzibar' Mwananchi Newspaper, 18 March 2026.

and reported violations relating specifically to religious practice have been relatively rare compared to other civil and political rights concerns. However, developments in 2025 involving the deregistration and closure of the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church (Kanisa la Ufufuo na Uzima) marked one of the most significant recent tests of religious freedom protections in the country. The incident generated nationwide debate regarding the limits of state regulatory authority over religious organizations, particularly where religious leaders engage in commentary on public governance and human rights concerns.

3.11.2. Legal and Human Rights Framework

Freedom of religion in Tanzania is protected under Article 19 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, which guarantees every person the right to freedom of thought, conscience, belief, and worship. This protection includes the freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs individually or collectively through teaching, practice, worship, and observance.

Tanzania is also bound by international and regional human rights obligations, notably:

- Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and
- Article 8 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

Under international human rights law, any limitation on religious practice must satisfy three cumulative tests:

- 1. Legality** – restrictions must be clearly provided by law;
- 2. Necessity** – measures must respond to a legitimate public interest such as public safety or order; and
- 3. Proportionality** – restrictions must be the least intrusive means available and must not unnecessarily impair collective worship rights.

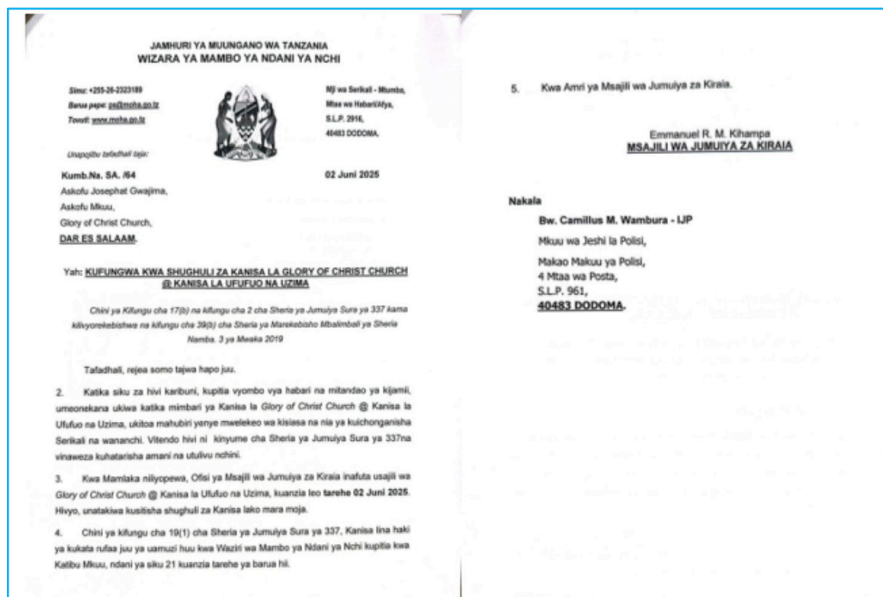
The events surrounding the Ufufuo na Uzima Church in 2025 therefore raised important questions regarding whether administrative regulation of a religious institution resulted in disproportionate interference with the worship rights of congregants.

3.11.3. Deregistration and Closure of the Ufufuo na Uzima Church

On 2nd June 2025, government authorities announced the deregistration of the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church under the Societies Act (Cap. 337)²³³.

²³³ 'Tanzanian Lawmaker's Church Shut Down After He Accuses Government of Human Rights Abuses' ICTJ, 3 June 2025, at <https://www.ictj.org/latest-news/tanzanian-lawmaker%E2%80%99s-church-shut-down-after-he-accuses-government-human-rights-abuses>; 'Gwajima's Church Deregistration Saga Turns into a 'Herod and Pilate Circus' with Police in the Middle: Members Call for Freedom of Worship' The Chanzo, 16 June 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/06/16/gwajimas-church-deregistration-saga-turns-into-a-herod-and-pilate-circus-with-police-in-the-middle-members-call-for-freedom-of-worship/#:~:text=Police%20began%20enforcing%20the%20church's,day%20fasting%20prayer%20against%20abductions>.

Authorities stated that sermons delivered by the church's founder, Bishop Josephat Gwajima, who also serves as a Member of Parliament (CCM), contained political messaging alleged to incite division between citizens and the government.



Picture 3.14: Deregistration notice issued for the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church in 2025

Following the deregistration decision, law enforcement agencies moved to enforce the order immediately. Police sealed the church's main premises in Ubungo, Dar es Salaam, restricting access and preventing congregational gatherings.²³⁴ Media reports and official police communications indicated that worship activities were suspended pending compliance with the deregistration directive.

Evidence from multiple reports further indicates that enforcement extended beyond a single location. Police later announced the closure of several affiliated churches in regions including Mbeya, indicating that the measure affected the broader religious network associated with the institution rather than only its headquarters.

The closure had direct practical consequences for believers. Church leadership announced suspension or postponement of religious rites including marriages and baptisms, while congregants were instructed to conduct prayers privately in homes.

²³⁴ LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, November 2025.

3.11.4. Police Enforcement Measures and Clashes with Worshippers



Picture 3.15: Church members protesting in front of the police in June 2025

The enforcement phase of the closure resulted in several confrontations between police and congregants attempting to access church premises or gather for worship.²³⁵ Shortly after deregistration, large numbers of worshippers assembled outside the Ubungo church compound. Reports indicate tensions escalated when police sought to locate Bishop Gwajima, leading to crowd dispersal operations. Subsequent incidents included the use of force to disperse gatherings and the arrest of 52 worshippers, whom police accused of unlawful assembly and disruption of public order near a major roadway. Video and media documentation reviewed for this report show significant police deployment, including riot-control units guarding church premises and restricting access to worship spaces.

From a human rights perspective, the central concern is whether policing measures intended to enforce an administrative decision resulted in excessive interference with peaceful religious assembly. International standards require that public-order enforcement should not effectively criminalize worshippers exercising constitutionally protected religious practices.

3.11.5. Bishop Gwajima's Position and Legal Challenge

Bishop Josephat Gwajima publicly rejected the government's justification for deregistration, maintaining that the closure followed his criticism of increasing incidents of abductions and enforced disappearances in the country. According to his statements, sermons addressing public fear and security concerns were part of moral and pastoral responsibility rather than partisan political activity.

²³⁵ 'Tanzania police seal off Gwajima church after deregistration' The East African (online), 3 June 2025, at <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/police-seal-off-gwajima-church-after-deregistration-5067390>.

The church pursued legal remedies to challenge the government's decision. Court proceedings were initiated seeking interim relief to allow reopening of worship services while substantive legal questions were determined. Parallel legal action was also filed by 52 church members, who petitioned the High Court arguing that police closure orders violated their constitutional right to freedom of worship.

The church pursued both legal and administrative pathways:

- **Court action by the church (Registered trustees):** The church sought urgent court relief, including temporary orders to lift suspension and allow worship while legal processes continued. Proceedings were reported at the High Court (Dodoma Zone), including Civil Case No. 13189 of 2025.²³⁶
- **Constitutional/civil action by worshippers:** Separately, a group of 52 members filed proceedings against the Attorney General and the Inspector General of Police, explicitly to defend the constitutional right to freedom of worship (Civil Application No. 16408/2025).²³⁷

Court proceedings encountered procedural complications, including disputes relating to the legal identification of the registered entity referenced in deregistration documents. As litigation continued, the church remained largely unable to resume normal operations, creating what observers described as a prolonged period of uncertainty affecting thousands of congregants.

3.11.6. Government Response

Government authorities consistently maintained that the deregistration was lawful and administrative rather than religious persecution. Officials argued that religious organizations must comply with registration laws and avoid activities deemed political or capable of undermining public order. Public statements emphasized that enforcement actions targeted regulatory non-compliance rather than religious belief itself. Authorities also indicated that legal avenues existed for appeal or reinstatement under applicable laws.

At the political level, senior government figures cautioned against religious platforms being used in ways perceived as politicizing worship spaces. Subsequent developments later suggested efforts within government to de-escalate tensions, including discussions surrounding reopening of the church after prolonged public controversy.

²³⁶ Registered Trustees of the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church v Registrar of Societies & Others, Misc. Civil Application No. 13189 of 2025, High Court of Tanzania, 6 June 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Registered-Trustees-of-Glory-of-Christ-Tanzania-Church-vs-Attorney-General-and-Others-Miscellaneous-Civil-Application-No-13189-of-2025-2025-TZHC-2809-6-June-2'025.pdf>; Paul Mabeja 'Gwajima's Church battles government ban in court as 500 Bishops watch' The Guardian (online), 13 June 2025, at <https://www.ippmedia.com/the-guardian/news/local-news/read/gwajimas-church-battles-government-ban-in-court-as-500-bishops-watch-2025-06-13-150535>.

²³⁷ '52 Members of Ufufuo na Uzima Church File Civil Suit to Defend Freedom of Worship' The Chanzo, 11 July 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/07/11/52-members-of-ufufuo-na-uzima-church-file-civil-suit-to-defend-freedom-of-worship/>.

Eventually, the Government formally lifted the six-month suspension imposed on the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church (Kanisa la Ufufuo na Uzima) in November 2025, following a directive issued by Prime Minister Mwigulu Nchemba, effectively overturning the June 2025 deregistration order.²³⁸ The decision allowed the church to immediately resume worship activities, although it was placed under six months of official government supervision. In announcing the reversal, the Prime Minister emphasized that worship is a constitutional and personal right and criticized measures that punished large numbers of believers for the alleged political actions of their religious leader, framing the reopening as part of broader efforts to ease political and religious tensions following a prolonged dispute between authorities and the church.

3.11.7. Human Rights Implications

The **Ufufuo na Uzima** Church case represents a rare and consequential episode concerning religious freedom in Tanzania. While states retain authority to regulate registered organizations, international human rights standards require careful balancing between administrative enforcement and protection of core freedoms.

The closure demonstrated how regulatory action against a religious institution could quickly evolve into broader rights concerns involving freedom of assembly, expression, and belief. The suspension of worship services, postponement of religious ceremonies, arrests of congregants, and heavy police presence collectively created a perception among sections of the public that religious practice itself had become restricted.

More broadly, the incident illustrates the potential chilling effect that may arise when religious leaders commenting on governance or human rights issues face institutional sanctions. In a society where faith institutions play a central social role, perceived interference with worship risks undermining public confidence in both regulatory institutions and protections guaranteed under the Constitution.

Concerns regarding the safety and protection of religious leaders were further deepened by a separate incident involving Father Charles Kitima, a prominent Catholic priest known for publicly expressing views on governance issues. On the night of 30th April 2025, unidentified assailants attacked Father Kitima at a conference centre in Dar es Salaam, striking him on the head only hours after a video circulated in which he called for reforms ahead of national elections.²³⁹

238 'Tanzanian Government Lifts Ban on Glory of Christ Tanzania Church After Six Months' The Chanzo, 25 November 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/11/25/tanzanian-government-lifts-ban-on-glory-of-christ-tanzania-church-after-six-months/>; 'PM orders Ufufuo na Uzima church to resume service' DAILY NEWS (online), 24 November 2025, at <https://dailynews.co.tz/pm-orders-ufufuo-na-uzima-church-to-resume-service/>.

239 Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Statement In Solidarity with Fr. Charles Kitima: Defending Voices

Continued judicial oversight and transparent administrative processes therefore remain essential to ensuring that regulation of religious organizations does not unintentionally erode Tanzania's long-standing tradition of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

3.11.8. LHRC's View

Consistent with broader civil society concerns observed during the incident, the LHRC emphasizes that regulation of religious institutions must strictly comply with constitutional safeguards protecting freedom of worship.

From a human rights standpoint, the key issues raised include:

- whether an administrative dispute involving religious leadership justified restricting collective worship by congregants;
- whether enforcement measures disproportionately affected believers who were not accused of wrongdoing; and
- whether arrests and dispersal of worshippers risked creating a chilling effect on religious expression and public moral discourse.

LHRC maintains that even where regulatory violations occur, remedies should avoid collective punishment that interferes with fundamental freedoms guaranteed under national and international law.

ZANZIBAR

Unlike Mainland Tanzania, freedom of worship or religious freedom was not an issue of human rights concern in Zanzibar in 2025. Zanzibaris continued to enjoy their constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom without any interference.

3.12. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 2025

3.12.1. Overview

In 2025, Tanzania conducted the General Elections on 29th October 2025 in fulfilment of constitutional requirements providing for periodic democratic elections every five years. The process involved the election of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Members of Parliament, and Councillors. On

for Justice and Peace, 2 May 2025, at <https://maryknollogc.org/2025/05/06/maryknoll-ogc-joins-statement-of-solidarity-with-fr-charles-kitma-of-tanzania/>; Alfred Lasteck 'Tanzanian priest - and government critic - brutally attacked' BBC News, 2 May 2025, at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgqvdy119po>.

the side of Zanzibar the electoral process involved election of the President of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, House of Representatives and Councillors. This was the seventh multiparty general election since 1995, were conducted against a highly contested political environment shaped by demands for electoral reforms, heightened tensions around opposition participation, and intensified debate over the credibility and independence of electoral management body “The Independent National Election Commission: - INEC. The electoral system maintained a combination of both First Past the Post (FPTP) and proportional representation systems.

As consistently observed by LHRC, elections represent a central mechanism through which citizens exercise sovereignty and participate in the management of public affairs. The credibility of elections therefore extends beyond polling day procedures and depends on the broader political, legal, institutional, and civic environment within which electoral processes unfold.

The 2025 electoral cycle developed within an atmosphere of increasing political debate concerning electoral reforms, institutional independence, and public confidence in election management systems. Throughout the year, national media outlets extensively reported discussions relating to the preparedness of electoral institutions, participation conditions for political actors, and expectations surrounding democratic accountability.

Opposition political parties advanced calls for reforms aimed at strengthening transparency and independence within electoral governance structures. These discussions gradually evolved into a broader national conversation involving civil society organisations, faith-based institutions, academics, and governance stakeholders who emphasised the importance of elections that are not only peaceful but also widely perceived as credible and inclusive.

3.12.2. Legal and Institutional Frameworks Governing the Elections

The 2025 elections were governed primarily by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, the Constitution of Zanzibar (1984), together with recent election-related legislation, including the Presidential, Parliamentary and Councillors’ Elections Act (2024), the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Act (2024), Election Expenses Act (2024), and other related laws and regulations. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was responsible for organising and supervising the electoral process in Mainland Tanzania, while the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC), played a similar role in Zanzibar.

Although the legal framework guarantees citizens the right to vote and participate

in governance, several longstanding structural gaps continued to generate concern among political stakeholders and observers. Some provisions remain inconsistent with regional, continental, and international democratic standards, particularly those that restrict effective legal remedy and political competition, as also observed by the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM).²⁴⁰

One of the most significant limitations relates to the constitutional provision preventing presidential election results from being challenged in court.²⁴¹

Unlike parliamentary or councillor elections, presidential outcomes remain final once declared by the electoral commission. This limitation restricts access to judicial remedy and has repeatedly been identified as a source of political contestation following elections. Another institutional gap concerns the prohibition of independent or private candidates.²⁴² Electoral participation remains restricted to individuals nominated through registered political parties, thereby limiting political participation for citizens wishing to contest elections outside party structures. These provisions violate the core principles of the right to a fair hearing before a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal as outlined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Article 7) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 2(3)).²⁴³

3.12.3. Pre-Election Period

3.12.3.1. Political Environment and Reform Debate

The political environment was notably shaped by the position of the main opposition party, CHADEMA, which declined to sign the Electoral Code of Conduct and subsequently boycotted the General Elections. The party justified its stance on the Government's failure to implement proposed electoral reforms, which it considered essential for ensuring a credible and inclusive electoral process.²⁴⁴ The campaign position advanced under the slogan "No Reforms, No Election" reflected broader dissatisfaction among sections of the main opposition regarding participation conditions. Some of the key constitutional reforms that were not implemented before the elections included (a) appointing Commissioners for the INEC through an independent body, (b) amending Article 41(7) of the Constitution to enable presidential election results to be challenged in court, and (c) revising Article 67(1)(b) of

240 African Union, Preliminary Statement of the African Union Election Observation Mission to the October 2025 General Elections in The United Republic of Tanzania: The African Union Election Observation Mission calls for urgent constitutional reforms and inclusive politics in the United Republic of Tanzania, 5 November 2025, at <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/preliminary-statement-of-the-african-union-election-observation-mission-to-the-october-2025-general-elections-in-the-united-republic-of-tanzania-the-african-union-election-observation-mission-calls-for-urgent-constitutional-reforms-and-inclusive-politic>.

241 Article 41(7) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.

242 Ibid, Article 39(1).

243 AUEOM Preliminary Statement (supra).

244 AUEOM Preliminary Statement (supra).

the Constitution to allow independent candidates to contest in elections.²⁴⁵

CHADEMA was also incapacitated by the arrest and prosecution of the Chairperson, Tundu Lissu, who was still facing treason charges by the time of writing this report, while the party was also banned from conducting political activities. Additionally, the disqualification of presidential candidate of another opposition political party, ACT-Wazalendo, Luhaga Mpina, further characterized the political climate. While authorities maintained that electoral preparations were progressing in accordance with national law, the divergence of views contributed to an atmosphere of political tension as the country moved toward polling day.

In consideration of these developments, the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) concluded that the events leading up to the 2025 General Elections conflicted with the African Union principles on the right to and freedom of participation in elections, as outlined in Article 4(1)(2) of the ACDEG and Article 13(1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), including the decision of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

3.12.3.2. Voter Education and Registration

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conducted nationwide voter verification and updating exercises aimed at improving the accuracy and credibility of the Permanent Voters Register in preparation for the 2025 General Elections. The process was implemented primarily through phased Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) operations carried out across Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar as part of the broader electoral cycle.

Through public announcements, media campaigns, and community outreach initiatives, citizens were encouraged to verify their registration details, update personal information, and ensure eligibility to participate in the elections. As part of measures intended to minimise voter disenfranchisement, electoral authorities announced that voters who had lost their voter identification cards would be permitted to vote using alternative identification documents, including National Identification Authority (NIDA) cards, passports, and driving licences. Electoral authorities presented these arrangements as administrative safeguards designed to expand participation and prevent exclusion of eligible voters from the electoral process. Notably, efforts to enhance inclusion in the election included registering voters in 130 prisons across Mainland Tanzania and 10 correctional institutions in Zanzibar.

²⁴⁵ See Application 011/2011 - Rev. Christopher Mtikila vs United Republic of Tanzania; Application 018/2018 - Jebra Kambole vs United Republic of Tanzania.

37,647,235 voters were reportedly registered, of whom 50.3% were women and 49.7% were men.²⁴⁶ In addition, the deployment of technology to enhance efficiency were used. For instance, establishing online platforms for voters to verify their details in pursuant to section 166 of the INEC Act.²⁴⁷

Despite these preparations, public commentary emerging in national media increasingly reflected declining confidence among sections of the electorate, particularly young voters. Discussions reported across media platforms suggested growing scepticism regarding the perceived impact of electoral participation, raising concerns about potential voter disengagement even before the commencement of polling. Another significant challenge during the voter registration phase was the prevalence of multiple registrations. The National Electoral Commission reported that over 52,000 individuals were identified as having registered more than once ranging from two to seven times during the biometric voter registration (BVR) process. This raised serious concerns regarding the integrity and accuracy of the voters' register.²⁴⁸

In addition, instances were reported where eligible voters, particularly elderly individuals seeking to update their details, were instead registered as new voters, further contributing to duplication in the system. The Commission subsequently issued a directive requiring individuals found to have registered irregularly, including non-citizens, to surrender their voter identification cards within seven days, failing which their details would be forwarded to immigration authorities for legal action.²⁴⁹ Observation conducted by LHRC during the voter registration phase identified several structural and operational challenges that indirectly affected inclusive participation²⁵⁰. Technical malfunctions involving biometric registration equipment were reported in multiple regions, including failures in fingerprint recognition systems, unstable network connectivity, and delays in printing voter cards. In some registration centres, observers recorded that registration of a single voter required between twenty and forty minutes due to equipment breakdowns. These delays resulted in prolonged queues, which disproportionately affected elderly persons, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities who faced difficulties remaining at registration centres for extended periods. The findings demonstrate that administrative inefficiencies can translate into practical barriers to political participation even where inclusive regulatory provisions formally exist.

246 AUEOM Preliminary Statement (supra).

247 Section 166 of the INEC Act.

248 CapitalRadioTanzania's Post, Available here: <https://www.facebook.com/capitalradiotanzania/posts/tume-ya-taifa-ya-uchaguzi-imelipata-jeshi-la-polisi-orodha-ya-zaidi-ya-watu-5200/684062581694866/>

249 Elizabeth Edward 'Kibano kinachowasubiri waliojiandikisha mara mbili kupiga kura' Mwananchi Newspaper, 27 July 2025, at <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/siasa/kibano-kinachowasubiri-waliojiandikisha-mara-mbili-kupiga-kura-5133760>.

250 LHRC Report on BVR Observation in Dodoma, Arusha, Iringa, Mbeya, Singida, Mara and Simiyu, January 2025.

Accessibility concerns were further observed in relation to the physical location of certain registration centres. In several districts, centres were located considerably long distances from residential communities, requiring citizens to travel long distances to access registration services. LHRC observers noted that such logistical barriers discouraged participation among women with caregiving responsibilities, elderly citizens, and persons with mobility limitations. Limited dissemination of voter education information in remote and rural areas compounded these challenges, contributing to uneven participation levels across regions.

INEC accredited only 164 civil society organisations to conduct voter education activities nationwide, signalling formal recognition of the role of non-state actors in promoting electoral participation. The Commission's voter education initiatives were guided by its Strategic Plan (2021/22–2025/26), which prioritised public awareness on electoral processes and technological systems supporting election management. As part of these efforts, INEC introduced awareness programmes explaining the functioning of key electoral technologies, including the Permanent Voter Registration (PVR) system and the Integrated Electoral Management System (IEMS).²⁵¹

Voter education programmes specifically targeted groups considered critical to inclusive electoral participation, including youth aged between 18 and 35 years, estimated at approximately 7.5 million new and young voters, women, persons with disabilities, rural populations, marginalised communities, and security personnel involved in election management processes. While these initiatives reflected an institutional commitment toward broad-based participation, stakeholders and election observers raised concerns regarding limitations that undermined the effectiveness of voter education efforts.

Among the challenges reported were delays and denial in accreditation of civil society organisations and media institutions involved in voter education, restrictions affecting online civic engagement platforms, and uneven geographical coverage of voter education programmes. In particular, limited outreach in remote and rural communities reduced access to timely electoral information for some citizens. These factors collectively constrained the depth and reach of civic education efforts, thereby affecting informed participation and weakening opportunities for meaningful citizen engagement within the electoral process.

Overall, the voter registration and education phase demonstrated important administrative efforts to expand participation while simultaneously revealing

²⁵¹ INEC Strategic Plan (2021/22–2025/26), Available at: <https://www.inec.go.tz/publications/nec-strategic-plan-2021-2022-2025-2026>.

systemic operational, logistical, and information-access challenges that influenced the inclusiveness of the 2025 electoral process.

3.12.3.3. Participation of Women, Youth, and PWDs

During the pre-election period, efforts aimed at voter education and voter registration sought to promote participation among women, youth, and persons with disabilities as part of broader electoral preparations. Electoral authorities conducted public awareness campaigns encouraging eligible citizens to verify their details in the Permanent Voters Register and to participate in the upcoming elections.

Findings from LHRC's observation mission in regions such as Dodoma, Iringa, Mbeya, Singida, Mara, Simiyu, and Arusha, revealed that youth formed the largest proportion of citizens attending registration centres. In many registration stations visited, the majority of registrants were young individuals born between 2000 and 2006, reflecting significant participation by first-time voters entering the electoral roll. While this trend demonstrates growing demographic inclusion within voter registration processes, the observation also highlighted gaps in civic education, as some young citizens demonstrated uncertainty regarding registration procedures and eligibility requirements. In several areas, low turnout was directly linked to limited public awareness about registration schedules, with some citizens mistakenly believing that prior participation in local government registration exercises automatically qualified them for the general elections.

Media reports indicated that voter education messages increasingly targeted groups traditionally facing participation barriers, including women and young voters, with emphasis placed on the importance of early registration and active engagement in the electoral process. Electoral authorities and political stakeholders encouraged young people who had attained voting age to register and confirm their voter information.

Participation patterns among women varied between urban and rural areas. LHRC observers noted that in certain rural wards female registrants outnumbered male participants, whereas urban centres recorded higher participation among men. These variations were largely influenced by livelihood patterns and timing of the registration exercise, particularly where agricultural activities coincided with registration periods, limiting participation opportunities for some women responsible for household and farming activities. The findings suggest that voter education strategies were not always sufficiently adapted to local socio-economic realities affecting women's availability during registration periods.



Picture 3.16: Some of the women who turned up for the BVR exercise in in Mbarali District Council – Mbeya in January 2025

With respect to persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, the BVR regulations required registration officials to prioritise elderly persons, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and persons with disabilities during registration. However, LHRC observation revealed inconsistent implementation of these provisions across registration stations. In many locations, persons with disabilities and other special groups were required to wait in queues alongside other citizens despite existing regulatory guidance requiring priority services. Only some stations demonstrated full compliance with accessibility standards, while others applied a general first-come-first-served approach that unintentionally created barriers for vulnerable registrants.

3.12.3.4. Accreditation for Observers

Election preparations undertaken by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) included accreditation of election observers. Regional and international election observation missions were invited to monitor the electoral process, reflecting formal adherence to regional electoral practice that encourages independent scrutiny of elections. The INEC accredited 164 CSOs to conduct voter education and 76 to observe the 2025 elections, while ZEC accredited only 45 CSOs for voter education and hardly 51 for election observation. It is indeed pity to note that some CSOs in Zanzibar received accreditation only four days before Election Day. Such delays in accreditation hindered CSOs' work in the electoral process i.e resources mobilization, training of observers and deployment of observers.²⁵²

Notably, several key national stakeholders and institutions that have traditionally

²⁵² LHRC Human Rights Monitoring, November 2025.

participated in election observation were not accredited to observe the 2025 General Elections. Despite its long-standing role in election observation and its demonstrated technical capacity and nationwide presence, LHRC was not granted accreditation to deploy observers during the elections. The absence of established domestic observer organisations significantly limited independent national monitoring of polling processes across the country. This situation contributed to perceptions of reduced transparency and weakened public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.

The limited presence of domestic observers further meant that opportunities to independently deter, document, or verify alleged electoral irregularities were substantially constrained. Opposition political parties and various stakeholders raised concerns before and during polling regarding potential procedural violations and unfair practices, arguing that insufficient independent observation created conditions in which complaints could be neither promptly verified nor effectively addressed. In electoral environments, domestic observers often serve as an important accountability mechanism at polling-station level; their restricted participation therefore raised credibility concerns surrounding the overall conduct of the elections.

Overall, CSOs alleged selective treatment in gaining access to electoral processes, with limited information provided on why some groups were not accredited, according to the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM)²⁵³. Despite these challenges and limited resources, CSOs remained active in promoting civil and political rights.²⁵⁴

3.12.4. Election Period

3.12.4.1. Campaign Environment

Election campaigns for the 2025 General Elections were conducted nationwide within an environment characterised by heightened political polarisation and competing narratives regarding the legitimacy of the electoral process. The political debate during the campaign period increasingly centred on calls for electoral and constitutional reforms, alongside traditional campaign messages related to development, governance, and economic priorities. As political tensions grew, religious leaders, scholars, and community actors publicly appealed for peaceful participation, restraint, and national unity, reflecting broader concern about maintaining stability before and during the elections.

²⁵³ AUEOM Preliminary Statement (supra).

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

The official campaign period ran from 26th August to 27th October 2025. Compared to previous electoral cycles, observers and stakeholders widely described the elections as less competitive. This situation was largely attributed to the political standing announced by the opposition party, CHADEMA, under its **“No Reforms, No Election”** position, as well as the disqualification of the ACT-Wazalendo presidential candidate, which significantly reduced contestation at the presidential level. As a result, campaign activities across many regions were predominantly led by the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), whose rallies, campaign convoys, billboards, and posters were highly visible throughout the country.

Legal reforms introduced through the Political Parties Affairs Laws (Amendment) Act of 2024 refers to legislative changes in Tanzania passed in March 2024, aiming to amend laws governing political party affairs.²⁵⁵ sought to regulate campaign financing, limit illicit funding, and promote fairness among competing political parties. These laws were intended to strengthen transparency and accountability in the use of campaign resources. However, stakeholders and observer missions reported concerns regarding uneven implementation and weak enforcement of these regulatory frameworks. In particular, concerns were raised that the ruling party appeared to benefit from comparatively greater access to state-owned media platforms and public resources during the campaign period, creating perceptions of an uneven campaign playing field.

3.12.4.2. Nominations, Qualifications, and Disqualifications

The nomination of political parties and candidates for the 2025 General Elections was conducted between 9th and 15th August 2025 in accordance with the Elections Act, 2024. The process marked a key stage in the electoral cycle, determining the range of political actors eligible to participate in the elections. Nomination fees on Mainland Tanzania were set at Tanzania Shillings 1,000,000 (approximately USD 400) for presidential candidates and Tanzania Shillings 50,000 (approximately USD 20) for parliamentary candidates. In Zanzibar, nomination fees were slightly higher, amounting to Tanzania Shillings 2,000,000 (approximately USD 800) for presidential candidates and Tanzania Shillings 100,000 (approximately USD 40) for candidates contesting seats in the House of Representatives. In comparative terms, observer missions considered these fees relatively affordable and unlikely, on their own, to constitute a major financial barrier to candidate participation.

According to observer findings, seventeen presidential candidates contested

²⁵⁵ The Political Parties Affairs Laws (Amendment) Act, 2024, Act No 3 of 2024. Available at: <https://oagmis.oag.go.tz/portal/acts/257>.

the Union presidency, comprising three women and fourteen men. Parliamentary elections attracted 1,735 candidates, including 1,177 men and 558 women, while 7,289 candidates competed for Local Council positions, of whom 700 were women and 6,589 were men. In Zanzibar, eleven presidential candidates were nominated, including three women. These figures indicated continued participation by multiple political parties and reflected gradual improvement in women's representation among candidates, particularly at parliamentary level.²⁵⁶

However, the nomination process was also marked by developments that affected the competitiveness of the elections. Observer missions noted the disqualification of the ACT-Wazalendo presidential candidate on grounds of failure to comply with nomination requirements prescribed under electoral regulations. The disqualification became a significant political issue during the pre-election period, with stakeholders raising concerns regarding its implications for electoral competition and voter choice. Together with the position announced by the opposition party, CHADEMA, these developments contributed to a political environment widely perceived as less competitive compared to previous electoral cycles.

3.12.4.3. Election Day Events

Voting in Tanzania took place nationwide on 29th October 2025 amid rising political tension in the pre-election environment. Media coverage from various outlets documented that polling commenced in an orderly manner in many parts of the country, with voters arriving early at polling stations and election officials facilitating participation for elderly citizens and individuals requiring assistance. These observations suggested that, at an administrative level, polling arrangements such as station setup, voter identification procedures, and deployment of election officials functioned effectively in several locations during the early hours of voting. Party agents were also reported to be present at many polling stations, contributing to procedural oversight during the voting process.

International and regional observer missions similarly noted that the polling environment at the opening of voting was generally calm. The Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-SADC), in its Preliminary Statement of 6th November 2025, observed that voting began peacefully in polling stations visited by its mission teams.²⁵⁷ However, the situation evolved during the course of the day as protests and security incidents disrupted voting operations in parts of the Mainland, particularly in Dar es Salaam, Dodoma,

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ See: Preliminary Statement of the ECF-SADC on the General Election of The United Republic of Tanzania, Available at: <https://www.ecfsadc.org/preliminary-statement-of-the-ecf-sadc-on-the-general-election-of-the-united-republic-of-tanzania/>

Mwanza, Arusha, Mbeya, Songwe, Tunduma, Kahama and other regions. These disruptions significantly affected observation activities, with some observer teams unable to continue monitoring electoral processes from as early as mid-morning.

According to the AUEOM Preliminary Statement, observers deployed across 17 regions covering 176 constituencies reported that voters generally arrived early at polling stations, although queues were relatively short in many locations. Essential voting materials were available in most polling stations visited, and electoral officials made efforts to facilitate voter participation, including allowing voters whose names appeared in the register to vote using alternative identification documents such as national identity cards, passports, or driving licences. Assistance was provided to elderly voters and persons requiring support, reflecting some positive administrative practices during voting.

Nonetheless, observer missions documented several operational shortcomings. A number of polling stations opened late, with delays ranging from fifteen minutes to one hour due to late arrival of election materials, slow station preparation, or delayed deployment of polling officials. Accessibility challenges also persisted despite legal protections under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2010. While approximately seventy percent of polling stations visited by AUEOM had some accessibility arrangements, others were located on uneven terrain, upstairs premises, or lacked accessible voting materials such as tactile ballot folders, sign language interpretation, or large-print instructions.

A major development affecting both electoral transparency and observation was the imposition of a nationwide internet shutdown beginning around 11:00 a.m. on polling day, alongside restrictions previously reported in Zanzibar during early voting. Observer missions reported that the shutdown occurred without prior notification and severely disrupted communication between deployed observer teams and mission coordination centres. The interruption limited real-time reporting, verification of incidents, and transmission of observation data. Both ECF-SADC and the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) indicated that the communication blackout significantly constrained their operational capacity and undermined effective observation of polling developments.

Security measures introduced during the day further affected the electoral environment. A curfew declared on Mainland Tanzania between 18:00 and 06:00 hours was reportedly not formally communicated to observer missions despite existing coordination channels with national authorities. As a result,

some observers became stranded in deployment areas and were unable to observe critical stages of the electoral process, particularly the closing of polls and vote counting procedures. These developments had a direct impact on the comprehensiveness of independent election observation.

A notable pattern emerging from observer findings was low voter turnout across many polling stations visited, which missions interpreted as possible evidence of voter apathy and declining public engagement in the electoral process. Although secrecy of the ballot was generally respected where polling station layouts allowed adequate privacy, inconsistencies were reported in the application of procedural safeguards.

Observer reports further documented incidents raising concerns regarding electoral integrity. In some polling stations, particularly those handling presidential ballots, observers noted the absence of political party agents and independent monitors. In certain instances, voters were reportedly allowed to cast ballots without proper verification against the voters' register, while others were issued multiple ballot papers in view of observers. These incidents raised concerns regarding ballot control and compliance with established voting procedures.

The conduct of observation itself was also constrained in several locations. Some observers reported being permitted to remain at polling stations for only brief periods, while others were requested to leave stations before completion of vote counting. Such restrictions were not consistent with established electoral procedures and limited transparency during one of the most critical stages of the electoral process. During counting, observer missions additionally recorded cases where ballot reconciliation figures did not tally and instances suggestive of ballot stuffing, particularly in polling stations lacking party agent presence.

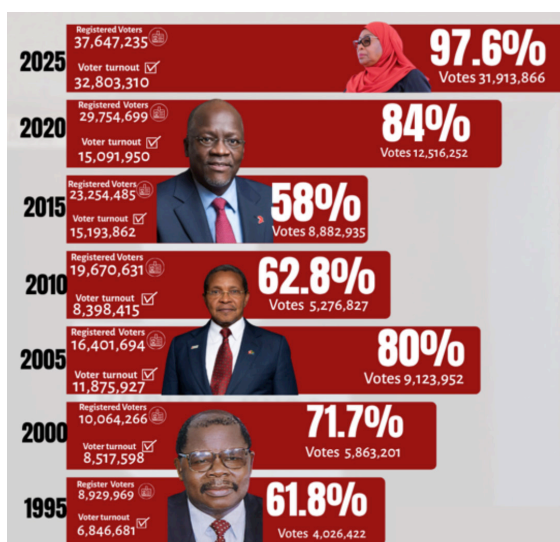
Although police presence was observed at all polling stations visited and was generally described by observers as professional, cooperative, and non-intrusive, outbreaks of protests, road blockages, tyre burning, and reported gunfire in several regions, including Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, Mwanza, Kagera, Dodoma, Kigoma, Tabora, and Singida, altered the overall electoral environment as the day progressed. In some areas, these security developments prevented observers from completing deployment schedules and curtailed continued monitoring of polling activities.

Taken together, election day observations reveal a mixed picture in which administrative polling procedures functioned effectively in many stations during

early voting hours, while broader security developments, communication shutdowns, restrictions on observation, and reported procedural irregularities raised significant concerns regarding transparency, inclusiveness, and the overall integrity of the electoral process.

3.12.4.4. Voter Turnout and Political Participation

The 2025 General Elections presented a mixed feeling regarding overall voter participation and the inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in Tanzania’s electoral process. INEC reported voter turnout of approximately 87%, representing a substantial increase compared to the disputed 2020 elections, where turnout had been officially recorded at about 50%. However, observer findings and media reports indicated varying levels of voter engagement across the country, due to demonstration demanding electoral reforms.



Picture 3.17: Voter turnout trends in Tanzania general elections, 1995-2025, Source: The CHANZO, November 2025

Observer missions noted that, despite adequate logistical preparations in many polling stations, voter turnout appeared comparatively low in several areas during voting hours. The SADC Election Observation Mission reported that essential election materials were available in about 96% of polling stations visited before polling began, suggesting that administrative arrangements were largely in place. However, the Mission also observed very low voter turnout across polling stations monitored, with some centres recording few or no voters at certain times of the day.²⁵⁸ In its preliminary statement, AUEOM

²⁵⁸ Preliminary Statement by the Right Honourable Richard Mswoya Former Speaker of Parliament of The Republic of Malawi and Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2025 General Election of the United Republic

also noted that ‘All polling stations observed exhibited low voter turnout, indicating voter apathy and disengagement from the electoral process.’²⁵⁹

These observations heightened concerns raised by analysts and media outlets regarding voter apathy, political boycott campaigns, and declining public confidence among sections of the electorate.

General voter participation was further affected by developments that occurred during polling day, including protests in some regions and a nationwide internet shutdown. Observer missions reported that the communication blackout disrupted information flow and limited real-time reporting by observers, which reduced transparency and affected public confidence in the electoral process. In addition, reports from some polling stations indicating irregular voting patterns, including unusually stacked ballots in ballot boxes, contributed to perceptions of procedural weaknesses and raised concerns regarding the integrity of the voting process.

Women’s engagement in the electoral process showed gradual progress but continued to have structural limitations. Tanzania’s Constitution provides mechanisms to promote women’s representation, particularly through Special Seats in Parliament. Following the 2025 elections, women hold approximately 39.3% of parliamentary seats, reflecting sustained improvement in numerical representation. However, observer assessments indicated that most women continue to enter Parliament through the Special Seats system rather than through direct constituency competition. While the number of women candidates increased to about 32.2% of all parliamentary contestants, participation at grassroots political levels remained significantly lower, indicating that social, financial, and political barriers still affect women’s full participation in competitive politics.

Youth participation remained significant in terms of voter presence within the electorate, as young people constituted a large share of registered and first-time voters. Constitutional provisions guarantee citizens aged eighteen years and above the right to vote and participate in governance. Nevertheless, observer reports suggested that youth engagement was uneven, with signs of reduced enthusiasm in some polling stations. Limited representation of young candidates in elected positions continued to be linked to campaign financing challenges, political party structures favouring established leaders, and limited institutional mechanisms promoting youth leadership within electoral politics.

of Tanzania, at <https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2025-11/Tanzania%20SEOM%202025%20-%20Preliminary%20Statement%20-%20Final%203%20November%202025%20%28002%29.pdf>.
259 AUEOM Preliminary Statement (supra).

Participation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) also reflected partial progress alongside continuing accessibility challenges. Legal protections under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2010 require accessible polling arrangements and support mechanisms for voters requiring assistance. Observers noted efforts by election officials to assist elderly voters and PWDs in several polling stations. However, accessibility conditions were inconsistent, as some polling centres were located in areas difficult to access or lacked adequate assistive voting materials. These barriers may have affected the ability of some PWDs to participate fully in the voting process.

Overall, the 2025 elections demonstrated that while administrative preparations enabled voting to take place nationwide, voter turnout patterns and participation levels revealed underlying challenges affecting public engagement. Women, youth, and PWDs continued to participate in the electoral process, but structural, accessibility, and confidence-related factors affected or limited their participation translated into fully inclusive and representative democratic engagement.

3.12.4.5. Electoral Irregularities

As noted above, observers as well as opposition political parties, including ACT-Wazalendo and CHADEMA, raised concerns regarding a number of electoral irregularities reported during polling and counting processes. The Southern African Development Community Election Observation Mission (SADC SEOM), in its Preliminary Statement of 3rd November 2025, reported irregular voting patterns in certain polling stations where multiple ballots appeared to be orderly stacked inside ballot boxes during voting hours, creating perceptions of possible ballot stuffing and raising concerns that some individuals may have cast more than one vote.²⁶⁰

In addition, the nationwide internet shutdown significantly affected the transparency of the electoral process, as observer missions were unable to generate or transmit polling, closing, and counting statistics through their observation systems. This limitation reduced independent verification of electoral procedures and constrained comprehensive assessment of election outcomes. Videos of electoral irregularities, including ballot stuffing, were also widely circulated on social media after the elections when the internet was restored. These findings, together with concerns raised by political stakeholders, contributed to broader public debate regarding the credibility, transparency, and integrity of the 2025 General Elections.

²⁶⁰ (SADC SEOM) Preliminary Statement of 3 November 2025.

3.12.4.6. Anti-Election Protests

Following the announcement of the 29th October 2025 General Election results, Tanzania experienced widespread post-election unrest in several parts of the country.²⁶¹ Reports compiled by international democracy monitoring organisations indicated that protests erupted in major urban centres, including Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Mbeya, as sections of the population expressed dissatisfaction with the electoral process and announced results. Demonstrations were accompanied by clashes between protesters and security forces, making it one of the most tense post-election periods in Tanzania's recent political history.

Security forces reportedly responded to the protests using crowd-control measures including tear gas and, in some instances, live ammunition. During the unrest, some protesters reportedly set fire to polling stations and government property, further escalating tensions in affected areas. In response to the deteriorating security situation, the government imposed a nationwide internet shutdown and introduced curfew measures aimed at restoring public order. These restrictions significantly limited access to information and constrained communication during a critical post-election period.

Observers and country analysts described the protests as unprecedented in scale compared to previous electoral cycles in Tanzania. The unrest was widely interpreted as reflecting growing public frustration related to political restrictions, limited electoral competition, and declining confidence among segments of the electorate regarding the credibility of democratic processes. The post-election developments therefore highlighted the broader political tensions that had emerged throughout the electoral cycle and highlighted the importance of strengthening public trust, accountability mechanisms, and inclusive political dialogue following contested elections.

3.12.4.7. Announcement of Election Results

After the completion of voting and tallying processes, INEC announced the final presidential and parliamentary results, declaring a decisive victory for the incumbent President, Samia Suluhu Hassan, representing the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). According to officially released results, President Hassan secured approximately 97.7% of the presidential vote, thereby winning a second term in office following the 29th October 2025 General Elections.²⁶²

²⁶¹ 'Widespread unrest follows Tanzania's general election' IDEA, at <https://www.idea.int/democracytracker/country/tanzania>.

²⁶² 'President Samia Suluhu Hassan wins second term as CCM dominated general elections' IDEA, at <https://www.idea.int/democracytracker/country/tanzania>.

**98%**

Percentage of votes won by CCM's presidential candidate in the 2025 General Elections

The presidential contest involved 17 candidates, including three women, although the electoral race took place in a political environment shaped by the earlier exclusion or withdrawal of major opposition actors, notably CHADEMA and the disqualification of the ACT-

Wazalendo presidential candidate. As a result, the election was widely characterised by observers and analysts as having limited political competition despite the participation of smaller political parties.

Parallel elections for the National Assembly resulted in an overwhelming parliamentary majority for CCM, which won 270 out of the 272 directly elected constituency seats, while ACT-Wazalendo secured the remaining two seats.²⁶³ The outcome consolidated CCM's continued dominance within Tanzania's legislative institutions.

Table 34: Parliamentary seats secured by political parties during the 2025 GE

Political Party	Directly Elected	Special Seats	Total
Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM)	270	113	270
ACT-Wazalendo	2	0	2
CHAUMMA	0	2	2
	272	115	274

Source: IPU Parline

In terms of representation outcomes, women's participation in Parliament recorded incremental improvement. Women are projected to hold approximately 39.3% of seats in the National Assembly, compared to 36.9% following the previous electoral cycle. This representation includes both directly elected female Members of Parliament and those appointed through constitutionally established party-list Special Seats mechanisms.

Overall, the election results produced what was widely described as a historic electoral victory for the ruling party and its presidential candidate. At the same time, the scale of the victory, combined with the broader political context

²⁶³ IPU Parline, United Republic of Tanzania: Election results, at <https://data.ipu.org/parliament/TZ/TZ-LC01/election/TZ-LC01-E20251029/>.

surrounding the elections, continued to generate national and international discussion regarding electoral competitiveness, voter participation patterns, and public confidence in democratic processes in Tanzania.

3.12.4.8. Media Coverage

The media environment during the 2025 General Elections remained formally diverse, comprising both state-owned and private television, radio, print, and online outlets. However, observer missions reported concerns regarding unequal access to media platforms during the campaign and election period. Media monitoring findings indicated that traditional public media, particularly state-owned broadcasters and some private media provided significantly greater coverage to the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), while opposition parties and alternative political actors received comparatively limited visibility. In addition, several media outlets reportedly faced deregistration or operational restrictions, and journalists operated under reporting conditions that limited critical political coverage, thereby reducing the diversity of information available to voters. Some journalist were arrested while doing live coverage for instance, Godfrey Thomas a reporter from Ayo TV was arrested in Arusha during a post-election crackdown protest and later charged with treason before being released in a mass *nole* prosecution entered by Director of Public Prosecution as directives from the President.²⁶⁴

Access to digital platforms was also restricted during the election period. Authorities limited or blocked access to certain social media platforms under existing regulatory frameworks, citing cybersecurity concerns following alleged cyberattacks on government accounts. These restrictions affected online political engagement, public debate, and dissemination of election-related information. Observer missions and democracy monitoring organisations noted that such measures constrained citizens' ability to freely access, share information during a crucial phase of the electoral process, and raised concerns regarding compliance with regional democratic standards requiring equitable media access for all political actors.

Observer missions further expressed concern over a nationwide internet shutdown imposed during polling and the immediate post-election period, which persisted until early November 2025. The communication blackout significantly hindered citizens' access to information and disrupted the work of election observers who relied on digital systems to transmit reports and monitor voting, closing, and counting processes. International observers concluded that restrictions affecting both traditional and online media

²⁶⁴ Godfrey Thomas Ng'omba Ayo TV | Arusha, Tanzania | CPJ, November 7, 2025, at: <https://cpj.org/data/people/godfrey-thomas-ngomba/>.

environments limited transparency and independent scrutiny of the elections, ultimately affecting public confidence in the credibility of the electoral process.

3.12.4.9. Observation Conditions

Observer missions reported several challenges affecting the independence and operational environment of election observation during the 2025 General Elections. According to the Preliminary Statement of the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-SADC), the observation guidelines issued by INEC required observer missions to submit their preliminary statements to the Commission for acknowledgment before such statements could be publicly released. This requirement was contained under the “Obligations of Observers” section of the official guidelines governing election observation.²⁶⁵

The Mission noted that this procedural requirement had the effect of limiting the ability of observer groups to independently communicate their findings in a timely manner. International election observation practice generally allows observer missions to issue independent preliminary assessments without prior approval or acknowledgment from electoral management bodies in order to preserve impartiality and credibility. As such, the requirement raised concerns regarding the operational independence of observer missions and the transparency of the observation process.

Observer missions further indicated that such restrictions were inconsistent with internationally accepted principles governing election observation, which emphasise freedom of assessment, independence of reporting, and unrestricted communication of findings. These conditions, combined with challenges experienced during polling day, including security disruptions and communication limitations caused by the internet shutdown, affected the ability of observers to comprehensively monitor all stages of the electoral process, particularly closing and vote-counting procedures.

3.12.5. Post-Election Period: Reaction

Observers from the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) indicated that the 2025 General Elections did not fully meet democratic standards, particularly in relation to political inclusiveness, competitiveness, and the broader electoral environment. Following the announcement of results, the post-election period was marked by sustained political contestation and intensified national debate regarding the legitimacy of the electoral outcome. Some opposition political parties openly rejected the results, alleging that irregularities and procedural violations had occurred at different stages of the electoral cycle, including nomination, campaigning, voting, and counting processes.

²⁶⁵ Election Observation Guidelines, para 12.0 (I), p. 13.

One of the opposition parties, CHADEMA, publicly declined to recognise the election results and maintained that the electoral process failed to provide a level playing field for political competition. Party leaders reiterated earlier concerns relating to electoral reforms, restrictions affecting opposition participation, and reported irregularities during polling and tallying stages. Similarly, ACT-Wazalendo challenged aspects of the election outcome and pursued legal remedies. Media reports indicated that ACT-Wazalendo filed a total of 83 election petitions across Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, contesting results in parliamentary, local government, and Zanzibar House of Representatives elections, seeking to overturn or review election results.²⁶⁶

At the same time, other political parties and stakeholders expressed support for the announced results and recognised the victory of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and its presidential candidate. Statements from pro-government actors emphasised the peaceful conduct of voting in many areas and called for acceptance of the results in the interest of national stability and continuity of governance. These differing political responses reflected deep divisions within the political landscape following the elections.

Regional and international actors, including the European Union and other diplomatic partners, issued statements urging restraint, peaceful dialogue, and respect for fundamental freedoms in the aftermath of election-related tensions. However, internet disruptions reported during and immediately after the elections complicated independent verification of incidents and limited access to timely information, contributing to uncertainty surrounding reported events.

3.12.6. LHRC's View

LHRC observes that the 2025 General Elections demonstrated both progress and setback in the realisation of the right to political participation in Tanzania. The electoral cycle revealed structural legal limitations affecting access to effective remedy, disputes arising from candidate disqualification processes, reported electoral irregularities, declining voter confidence, and tensions during the post-election period.

²⁶⁶ Bakari Kiango & James Magai 'ACT-Wazalendo inavyojaribu kupindua matokeo ya uchaguzi mkuu kupitia mahakama' Mwananchi Newspaper (online), 20 December 2025, at <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/act-wazalendo-inavyojaribu-kupindua-matokeo-ya-uchaguzi-mkuu-kupitia-mahakama-5303954>; Jesse Mikofu 'ACT-Wazalendo yafungua kesi kupinga matokeo ya uchaguzi majimbo 25 Zanzibar' Mwananchi Newspaper (online), 17 November 2025, at <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/zanzibar/act-wazalendo-yafungua-kesi-kupinga-matokeo-ya-uchaguzi-majimbo-25-zanzibar-5267706>.

LHRC maintains that strengthening future elections requires continued reforms aimed at enhancing judicial oversight of electoral outcomes, improving transparency and independence of electoral management institutions, safeguarding participation rights of all political actors, and ensuring credible investigation of election-related complaints. LHRC further believes that sustainable democratic governance depends on elections that are not only conducted peacefully but are also widely perceived by citizens as credible, inclusive, and accountable.

ZANZIBAR

Like Mainland Tanzania, the main political participation issue in Zanzibar in 2025 was the General Elections, held in October 2025. The elections were coordinated by the Zanzibar Election Commission (ZEC) and governed by the Constitution of the United Republic of Zanzibar of 1977, the Constitution of Zanzibar of 1984, and other electoral laws and regulations.

Electoral Environment and Political Participation

The electoral environment in Zanzibar in 2025 was characterized by both institutional preparedness and persistent political tensions, raising concerns about the extent to which citizens were able to fully exercise their political rights. The Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) reported that 717,557 voters were approved to participate in the general election held on 29th October 2025, following the verification of the permanent voters' register.²⁶⁷ Women constituted 53% of registered voters, while youth aged 18 to 35 accounted for 45%,²⁶⁸ reflecting a relatively inclusive demographic composition of the electorate. ZEC cleared 11 candidates for the presidential election²⁶⁹ and provided each candidate with a campaign vehicle, driver, and security guard, while covering all fuel and maintenance costs.²⁷⁰

Despite these developments, the electoral process remained contested. The introduction and retention of early voting for security personnel and election officials continued to generate significant political tension.²⁷¹ The decision to retain the early voting system signifies a major setback for the efforts of opposition parties and other democracy stakeholders on the island, who have been vocally advocating for the removal of this system from Zanzibar's

267 "Wapiga kura Z'bar hawa hapa, 8,325 wakosa sifa" Mwananchi Newspaper, 1 Oct 2025.

268 Ibid.

269 Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi from the ruling Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), Othman Masoud Othman from Change and Transparency-Wazalendo (ACT-Wazalendo), Juma Ali Khatib (ADA Tadea), Hamad Ibrahim Mohamed (UPDP), Ameer Hassan Ameer (Chama cha Makini), Said Soud (AAFP), and Ms Lela Rajab Khamis (NCCR-Mageuzi), alongside Hassan Juma Salum (TLP), Khamis Faki Mgau (NRA), Hamad Rashid (ADC), and Mfaume Khamis Hassan (NLD).

270 'ZEC Clears 11 Candidates for 2025 Zanzibar Presidential Race' The Chanzo, 12 September 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/09/12/zec-clears-11-candidates-for-2025-zanzibar-presidential-race/>.

271 'Zanzibar Sets October 29 Election Date, Keeps Disputed Two-Tier Voting System Despite Opposition Outcry' The Chanzo, 18 August 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/08/18/zanzibar-sets-october-29-election-date-keeps-disputed-two-tier-voting-system-despite-opposition-outcry/>.

election laws.²⁷² Opposition actors, particularly ACT-Wazalendo, raised concerns regarding the transparency and integrity of the process, alleging risks of manipulation and lack of accountability²⁷³. Although agreements were reached to review voter lists and ensure limited transparency in counting early votes, the broader concerns about fairness and credibility of the electoral process persisted.

The pre-election period also reflected structural challenges affecting political participation. Reports indicated that some voters were excluded from the register during the verification process, raising concerns about the inclusiveness of voter registration. In addition, financial constraints affected political parties' ability to effectively conduct campaigns, with several parties reportedly struggling to launch or sustain campaign activities due to limited resources.²⁷⁴ These challenges point to inequalities in political competition and raise questions about the level playing field required for democratic elections.

The President of Zanzibar, H.E Hussein Ali Mwinyi, won a second term in office. According to ZEC, Mwinyi, the candidate of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, won 74.8% of the vote in Wednesday's elections, beating 10 contenders from opposition parties.²⁷⁵ ACT-Wazalendo's Othman Masoud came in second with 23.2% of the vote.

Post-election developments further highlighted tensions within the political environment. The filing of 25 petitions before the High Court by ACT-Wazalendo challenging the election results²⁷⁶ reflects ongoing disputes regarding electoral outcomes and the functioning of democratic institutions. While the availability of judicial mechanisms to challenge election results is an important aspect of democratic governance, the volume of petitions underscores broader concerns about trust in electoral processes.

Overall, the 2025 electoral context in Zanzibar illustrates a mixed picture in which formal democratic processes are maintained, but substantive challenges persist in ensuring transparency, inclusiveness, and public confidence. These dynamics have implications for the enjoyment of political rights, including the right to participate in public affairs, and highlight the need for continued reforms to strengthen electoral integrity and democratic governance.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ 'Early Voting Underway as Zanzibar Opens 2025 General Election' The Chanzo, 28 October 2025, at <https://thechanzo.com/2025/10/28/early-voting-underway-as-zanzibar-opens-2025-general-election/>.

²⁷⁴ "Ni kilio cha ukata" Mwananchi Newspaper, 24 Sept 2025.

²⁷⁵

²⁷⁶ "ACT Wazalendo files 25 petitions to challenge Zanzibar Poll results" The Citizen Newspaper, 18 Nov 2025.

3.13. SPECIFIC ISSUES AFFECTING RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, WOMEN, AND PWDS

3.13.1. Children

3.13.1.1. Overview

Tanzania is obligated to take all appropriate measures to ensure children do not suffer discrimination and protect them from all forms of abuse such as torture; violence; inhuman or degrading treatment; and especially sexual abuse and exploitation²⁷⁷. It is also obligated to ensure children's best interests are considered in decision-making, safeguard their right to survival and development, and facilitate their participation in decision-making (consider and respect children's views). In 2025, children in Tanzania generally continued to face various and sometimes intersecting challenges, particularly in relation to violence, harmful traditional practices, exploitation, and barriers to accessing inclusive and quality education. Reports and documented incidents demonstrate persistent protection gaps affecting children both within homes, schools, communities, and online spaces. These concerns engage Tanzania's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and constitutional guarantees relating to dignity, protection from abuse, and access to education.

3.13.1.2. Violence against Children

Many children and adolescents in both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar experience violence, exploitation, and abuse. Sexual violence is the most common form of violence, especially targeting and affecting girls. Physical violence, particularly in home and school settings, is also prevalent.

Official statistics

In June 2025, the Minister for Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, Dr. Dorothy Gwajima, reported that findings from the 2024 National Survey on Violence Against Children and Youth indicate a significant decline in violence against children and youth (13-24 years) in Tanzania compared to the 2009 survey.²⁷⁸ The results show substantial reductions in sexual, physical, and emotional violence affecting both girls and boys, with sexual violence against girls decreasing from 33% to 11% and against boys from 21% to 5%, while physical violence dropped from over 70% to about one quarter of children.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Articles 5 & 6 of Maputo Protocol; Articles 6, 19& 34 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Article 16 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

²⁷⁸ 'Ukatili Dhidi ya Watoto na Vijana Wapungua: Waziri Dkt. Gwajima' Wizara ya Maendeleo ya Jamii, Jinsia, Wanawake na Makundi Maalum, 10 June 2025, at <https://www.jamii.go.tz/news/ukatili-dhidi-ya-watoto-na-vijana-wapungua-waziri-dkt-gwajima>.

²⁷⁹ Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, Utafiti wa Kitaifa wa Ukaitli Dhidi ya Vijana na Watoto wa Mwaka 2024, at

The government attributed this progress to strengthened national child protection systems, awareness campaigns, and coordinated interventions implemented over the past decade. However, the Minister emphasized that violence against children remains a serious social and human rights concern due to its long-term impacts on mental health, wellbeing, and development, noting that the survey findings will guide future policy reforms and prevention strategies aimed at further strengthening child protection in the country.

However, police crime and traffic incidents statistics for the year 2024, released in April 2025, show that violence against children (VAC) remains a significant concern despite ongoing prevention efforts. A total of 15,474 child victims were reported at police stations in 2024, compared to 15,301 victims in 2023,²⁸⁰ reflecting an increase of 173 cases (1.1%). Although the increase appears modest, it suggests that VAC has not yet declined and may also reflect improved reporting mechanisms linked to strengthened police gender desks and public awareness initiatives.

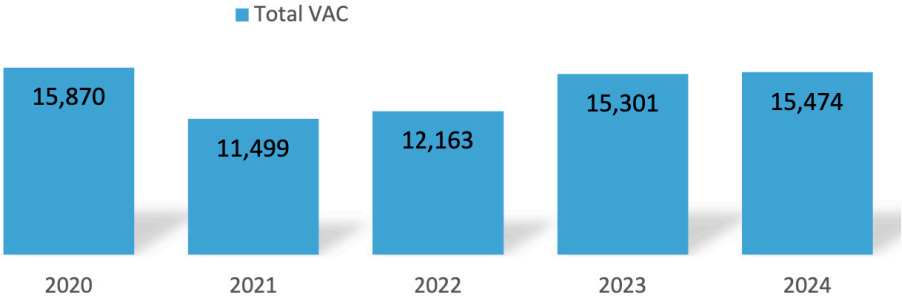


Figure 3.12: #VAC incidents recorded by the police – 2020 to 2024, Source: TPF & NBS

The statistics further show clear geographical concentration patterns. Police regions recording the highest number of reported victims were Tanga (993 cases), Arusha (991), Dodoma (842), Kinondoni (738), and Morogoro (728), indicating that urbanisation, population density, and reporting accessibility may influence case numbers. In contrast, relatively lower figures were reported in Kaskazini Pemba (101), Kaskazini Unguja (102), Kusini Pemba (106), Kusini Unguja (108), and Katavi (218), which may reflect smaller populations but could also suggest underreporting challenges, particularly in rural or island contexts.

<https://www.nbs.go.tz/uploads/statistics/documents/en-1751442213-Utafiti%20wa%20Kitaifa%20wa%20Ukatili%20Dhidi%20ya%20%20Vijana%20na%20Watoto%202024.pdf>.
 280 Tanzania Police Force (TPF) & National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2025). Crime and traffic incidents statistics: January–December 2024



8 out of 10

Victims/Survivors of Rape
in Tanzania are girls

In terms of types of offences, sexual violence overwhelmingly dominates reported VAC. Rape accounted for 7,670 victims, constituting nearly half of all reported VAC cases, making it the most prevalent offence. This was followed by unnatural offences (1,930 cases), impregnation of students (1,624 cases), impeding students' education (945 cases), and indecent assault (728 cases). The prominence of sexual offences highlights persistent risks faced by children, especially girls, within family and community environments, as noted in the report.

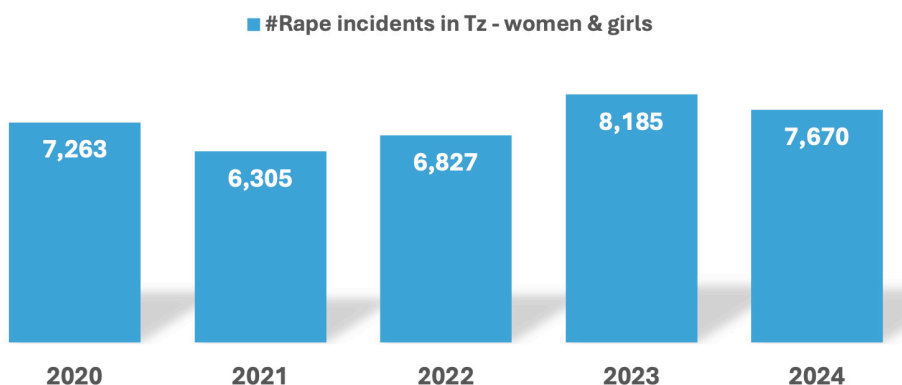


Figure 3.13: #Rape incidents recorded by the police – 2020 to 2024

Source: TPF & NBS

On average, rape accounts for half (50%) of all reported incidents of violence against children

The statistics further reveal clear gender disparities. Girls account for the vast majority of victims in sexual offences, including rape, indecent assault, genital mutilation (13 cases), and student-related sexual violations. In contrast, offences such as beating, common assault, and assault causing harm show victims of both sexes, suggesting that boys are comparatively more exposed to physical

violence, while girls disproportionately experience sexual and gender-based violence. Murder cases involving children were relatively low in comparison, with 65 child homicide victims recorded (24 boys and 41 girls), yet these cases represent severe protection failures requiring targeted intervention.

Regionally, the distribution of cases indicates that urban and highly populated police regions report higher numbers of child victims, including Dar es Salaam regions (Ilala, Temeke, Kinondoni), Arusha, Mbeya, Tanga, and Morogoro. Higher reporting in these areas may reflect population concentration, improved access to police gender desks, and greater reporting awareness. Conversely, several regions, particularly parts of Zanzibar and less populated mainland regions, record significantly lower numbers, which may partly signal underreporting rather than lower prevalence.

The 2024 crime and traffic incidents reports also documented 158 cases of family desertion, 211 cases of child abandonment, and 61 incidents involving child trafficking, reflecting vulnerabilities within household structures and economic pressures affecting child care and protection. In addition, 114 cases of child abduction were reported, underscoring risks linked to exploitation, custody disputes, or criminal activities affecting minors.

Although less frequent, harmful traditional and social practices remain present. The data shows 22 cases of child marriage, confirming that early marriage continues to occur despite legal prohibitions. Other offences such as incest (5 cases), abusive language (34 cases), and abortion-related offences (32 cases) further illustrate the diverse forms of violence and abuse experienced by children within domestic and social settings.

The Crime and Traffic Incidents Statistics Report (January–December 2024) also highlights emerging child protection concerns within Tanzania's digital environment, showing that although overall cybercrime cases declined by 6.4%, offences affecting children remain significant and increasingly complex. The report records a sharp rise in child pornography offences, increasing from one reported case in 2023 to 38 cases in 2024, signaling growing risks of online sexual exploitation of children as internet access and social media usage continue to expand. In addition, cyberbullying remained the most frequently reported cyber offence, with 453 cases recorded in 2024, indicating persistent exposure of children and adolescents to online harassment, psychological harm, and intimidation. While some cyber offences such as publication of false information and unsolicited electronic messages declined, the continued prevalence of cyberbullying alongside the rapid increase in child sexual exploitation offences demonstrates that digital platforms are increasingly becoming spaces where violence against children occurs.

Overall, the findings suggest that VAC in Tanzania is largely community- and family-based, driven by structural protection gaps, social norms, and

insufficient early prevention mechanisms. While increased awareness campaigns and institutional responses by the Tanzania Police Force may be improving reporting, the continued high number of sexual violence cases highlights the need for stronger child protection systems, preventive community interventions, accountability mechanisms, and survivor-centered support services. The findings also show the need for strengthened online child protection frameworks, improved cyber investigation capacity, digital safety education for children and parents, and closer collaboration between law enforcement authorities, schools, communities, and technology platforms to effectively prevent and respond to technology-facilitated violence against children.

Incidents documented by LHRC

For the period of January to December 2025, LHRC documented 485 incidents of VAC, slightly decreasing from 602 documented in 2024. Nearly two thirds (61%) of the reported incidents were sexual VAC, followed by physical & psychological VAC (34%), and economic VAC (5%). The percentage of reported incidents of sexual violence slightly decreased from 69% in 2024 to 61% in 2025, while those of physical violence increased from 30% to 34%, and economic violence increased by 4%.

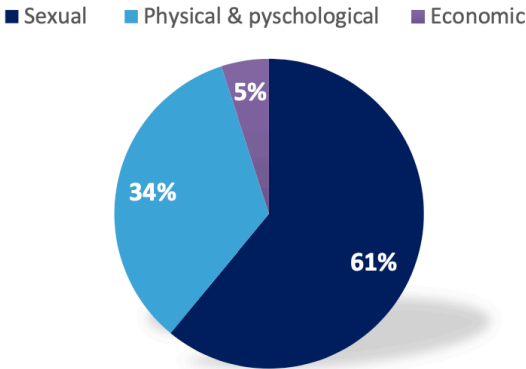


Figure 3.14: Incidents of VAC documented by LHRC in 2025 by form

The data show that physical violence and sexual violence together account for nearly three-quarters of all reported violations against children, confirming that violence remains the dominant children’s rights concern. Sexual violence emerged as the single most recurring violation affecting children, particularly girls. Sexual violence commonly occurred in schools, homes, religious learning environments, and childcare institutions. Perpetrators were frequently

individuals trusted by children, reinforcing risks linked to authority imbalance and weak safeguarding systems.

In extreme cases, physical violence resulted into death. A significant proportion of killings occurred within family or domestic environments, suggesting that children face serious protection risks even within spaces expected to provide safety. Corporal punishment, which is recognized by law, also remains a key concern.

Some of the reported incidents

As highlighted above, sexual violence constituted a significant proportion of reported violations and largely affected girls. Several incidents involved individuals entrusted with children's care and education. In Kibaha, Pwani Region, police arrested the operator of a centre caring for vulnerable children following allegations that he had sexually abused five children at different times while they were under institutional protection. The incident raised serious concerns regarding oversight and safeguarding standards within child care facilities. Similarly, multiple reports documented teachers accused of sexually abusing students within school environments. In one widely circulated case, a teacher allegedly lured a student into an office where sexual assault occurred, illustrating how learning environments intended to protect children may instead become sites of abuse when accountability systems fail. Social media monitoring further recorded repeated arrests linked to rape, defilement, and sodomy cases involving minors across several regions, confirming the persistence of sexual violence against children nationwide.

Physical violence against children also remained prevalent. Incidents ranged from severe corporal punishment to extreme acts resulting in death. In Dar es Salaam, a madrasa teacher appeared before court after a video showed him violently beating a young female student with a stick, causing serious injuries. The circulation of the footage sparked public debate regarding continued acceptance of corporal punishment in educational and religious institutions.

Other reported incidents reflected violence occurring within domestic settings. In Songwe Region, authorities arrested a mother accused of killing her two children, while separate cases documented children subjected to strangulation, burning, or fatal assaults by relatives or community members. These incidents demonstrate that children face risks not only in public environments but also within households where protection mechanisms are weakest.

Child abduction cases also featured in 2025. In Kibaha, unidentified attackers

invaded a residence, restrained the parents, and abducted a seven-month-old infant before fleeing the scene. Additional incidents documented police rescue operations involving kidnapped children, highlighting growing concerns related to trafficking, custody disputes, and organized criminal activity targeting minors.

Beyond physical and sexual harm, psychological violence and neglect were also evident. Reports indicated that fear, stigma, and family pressure often discouraged reporting of abuse, particularly where perpetrators were relatives. Economic vulnerability further exposed children to exploitation and unsafe living conditions.

3.13.1.3. Child Marriage and Pregnancy

Child marriage remains legally enabled under the Law of Marriage Act, allowing marriage of girls below 18 years, contrary to regional obligations. It directly contributes to school dropout, adolescent or teenage pregnancy, economic dependency, and exposure to violence. Six years on from the Court of Appeal judgement in the Rebecca Gyumi case, the Parliament of Tanzania is yet to amend the Law of Marriage Act of 1971 to outlaw child marriage.

Teenage pregnancy also remains a key concern for girls in Tanzania, with 22% of girls aged 15–19 reported to have ever been pregnant nationally. Sexual violence, lack of comprehensive sexuality education, economic hardship, and weak family protection systems are among the contributing factors.

Cultural practices, witchcraft, poverty, and gender inequality remain key drivers of child marriage and teenage pregnancy, pushing girls out of school and into early unions. Reports from Katavi Region highlighted the persistence of the chagulaga practice, whereby adolescent girls are pressured to select male partners from groups of young men, often resulting in forced relationships and early marriage. Such practices frequently lead to school dropout and early pregnancy, limiting girls' long-term social and economic opportunities.

3.13.1.4. Female Genital Mutilation

Although national prevalence has declined, FGM continues to occur secretly in several regions, sustained by cultural norms and weak enforcement mechanisms. It remains strongly linked with early marriage, school dropout, long-term health complications, gender discrimination, and death due to loss blood. Official statistics show that the rate of FGM/C has declined from 18% in 1996 to 8% in 2022, equivalent to a 10% decline (currently less than half that of 1996).²⁸¹

²⁸¹ Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey and Malaria Indicator Survey 2022: Final Report.

3.13.1.5. Access to Quality Education

Access to quality education for children continued to be affected by various barriers, including proximity of schools, especially for children in rural areas; budgetary constraints; shortages of school facilities and teachers; violence against children; and household poverty. There are also challenges which affect girls disproportionately, such as availability of menstrual hygiene facilities; child marriage; and child pregnancy. Access to quality education for children with disabilities was reported to be limited by challenges such as stigma, discrimination, shortage of special education teachers, and non-availability of disability friendly infrastructure. Additionally, pregnant girls continued to face key barriers in accessing education such as stigma and discrimination, rejection by school authorities, lack of childcare and psychosocial support, pressure to join alternative education pathways rather than returning to mainstream schooling, and continued informal expulsions, despite the Government introducing the Re-entry Guidelines (2022), which allow teenage mothers to return to school.

3.13.1.6. LHRC's View

LHRC observes that the continued occurrence of violence, harmful practices, and exploitation affecting children reflects persistent gaps between Tanzania's legal commitments and actual protection outcomes on the ground. While the country maintains an established legal and policy framework for child protection, legal gaps, inconsistent enforcement, social norms tolerating violence, and limited institutional capacity continue to undermine effective realization of children's rights.

LHRC maintains that VAC, particularly sexual violence and abuse occurring within homes, schools, and care institutions, requires strengthened prevention mechanisms, improved investigation processes, and survivor-centred justice responses. The organization further emphasizes that eliminating child marriage, harmful practices such as FGM, and discriminatory barriers affecting pregnant schoolgirls remain essential for safeguarding children's dignity and future opportunities.

LHRC therefore calls for strengthened community awareness initiatives, effective implementation of child protection laws, enhanced accountability for perpetrators, expansion of child-friendly reporting mechanisms, and sustained investment in inclusive and safe education systems to ensure that all children in Tanzania grow, learn, and develop in environments free from violence and discrimination.

3.13.2. Women

3.13.2.1. Overview

Women's rights in Tanzania continued to be shaped by persistent structural inequalities, widespread gender-based violence (GBV), and uneven participation of women in political and decision-making processes in 2025. While Tanzania maintains constitutional guarantees of equality and has ratified key international human rights instruments protecting women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Maputo Protocol, implementation gaps remain evident in practice. Patterns observed during 2024 and 2025 demonstrate that women continue to face physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence largely occurring within intimate or familiar relationships, alongside barriers to justice, protection, and meaningful political participation.

3.13.2.2. Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) remained widespread in Tanzania, affecting women across age groups and regions. Reported cases illustrate that violence frequently occurs in domestic environments, intimate partnerships, workplaces, and increasingly within digital spaces. Police and national statistics confirm a continuing rise in reported victims, while LHRC monitoring shows that many incidents involve severe brutality, femicide-like killings, and sexual violence.

Official statistics

Police statistics contained in the Crime and Traffic Incidents Statistics Report (January–December 2024), released in April 2025, indicate that 23,782 victims of GBV were reported at police stations in 2024, compared to 22,147 victims recorded in 2023, reflecting an increase of 7.4 percent. The data further show that urban police regions recorded the highest number of cases, particularly Arusha, Kinondoni, Tanga, Temeke, and Ilala, reflecting both population concentration and increased reporting trends. **Nearly two-thirds of all adult GBV survivors in Tanzania in 2024 were women, confirming the disproportionate impact of gender-based violence on women.**

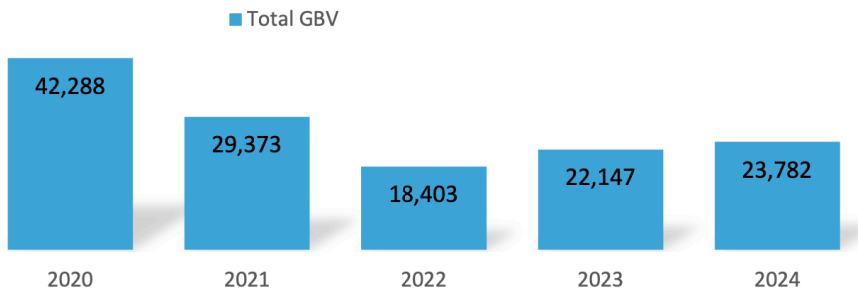


Figure 3.15: #GBV incidents recorded by the police – 2020 to 2024

Source: TPF & NBS

LHRC notes that while urban areas record higher reported cases, this does not necessarily imply lower violence in rural regions. Instead, women in regions reporting very low numbers, such as Kusini Pemba, Kusini Unguja, Kaskazini Unguja, Mjini Magharibi, and Njombe, may face significant barriers to reporting, including stigma, limited police access, fear of retaliation, and cultural pressures discouraging disclosure of domestic violence.

The most frequently reported offences were common assault, assault causing bodily harm, injury, abusive language, and indecent assault. LHRC notes that these offences largely reflect violence occurring within family or intimate partner settings, highlighting continuing risks faced by women within private spheres. The presence of indecent assault cases further highlights continued threats to women’s bodily autonomy and sexual integrity. Such violence frequently occurs within relationships of trust or dependency, making reporting and prosecution especially difficult.

The crime report also recorded increasing concerns relating to technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Cybercrime statistics indicate 453 reported cases of cyberbullying in 2024, reflecting the growing use of online platforms to harass, threaten, or humiliate women, including young women and women in leadership, journalism, activism, and politics. Online harassment commonly includes threats, humiliation, sexualized insults, and dissemination of false narratives.

From a women’s rights perspective, the statistics illustrate ongoing violations of fundamental rights guaranteed under national and international law, including the right to life, the right to liberty and personal security, the right to

dignity and bodily integrity, and the right to equality and non-discrimination. LHRC emphasizes that GBV against women is not only a criminal justice issue but also a key human rights concern rooted in unequal gender relations, economic dependency, and social norms that tolerate or minimize violence against women.

Incidents documented by LHRC

In 2025, LHRC documented 268 incidents of violence against women (VAW), 49 less than those documented in 2024. Nearly two thirds (over 62%) of the documented incidents involved physical or psychological violence, confirming that assault and coercive control remain the dominant forms of violence experienced by women. Sexual violence accounted for nearly one-third of cases, highlighting ongoing risks to women’s bodily autonomy. Economic violence, while smaller in number, remains significant given its strong link to dependency and vulnerability. Physical and psychological violence slightly decreased from 63% in 2024 to 62% in 2025, while sexual violence increased from 25% to 31% and economic violence decreased from 12% to 7%. Most of the incidents were reported in Among these, Mwanza, Arusha, Morogoro, and Dar es Salaam, while others were reported in regions such as Geita, Mbeya, Tanga, Pwani, Mara, Katavi, and Rukwa.

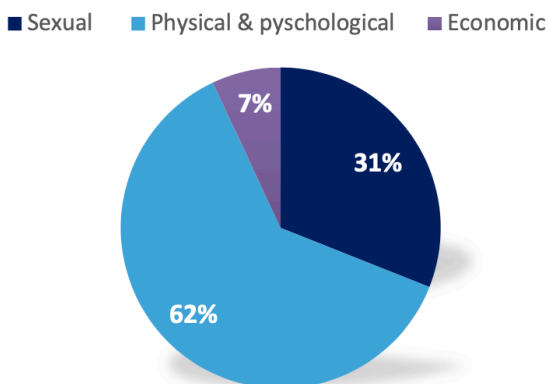


Figure 3.16: Incidents of VAW documented by LHRC in 2024 by form

It is important to note that this figure reflects only documented and publicly reported cases monitored by LHRC and does not represent the total incidents

of VAW nationally, which are typically higher, as reflected in the national statistics discussed above. Nevertheless, the actual number of incidents is likely significantly higher due to underreporting, particularly in rural areas and in cases involving intimate partner violence (IPV).

LHRC observes that IPV continues to present serious threats to women's safety and, in extreme cases, results in loss of life. Many incidents recorded in 2025 involved women assaulted or killed by spouses or intimate partners following domestic disputes, jealousy-related conflicts, or separation disagreements.

In 2025, LHRC documented 25 incidents of IPV through media survey, social media monitoring, and overall human rights monitoring, bringing the total number documented from 2021 to 184. A total of 18 of these incidents (72%), resulted in intimate partners homicide (IPH), decreasing from 41 in 2024. Women constituted the majority of victims (72%), while men accounted for most alleged perpetrators, with the incidents occurring across multiple regions. Although financial disputes and separation issues were also reported, jealousy-related conflict was the most frequently cited trigger, highlighting patterns of control and mistrust within intimate relationships.

LHRC emphasizes that IPV remains significantly underreported due to fear of retaliation, economic dependence, social stigma, and community pressure discouraging survivors from pursuing legal remedies.

LHRC further observes that economic and psychological violence remain pervasive but under-recognized forms of abuse affecting women. Documented cases included denial of financial support, coercive control, intimidation, and emotional abuse within intimate and family relationships. Such forms of violence often restrict women's autonomy, limit their ability to leave abusive environments, and perpetuate cycles of dependency and vulnerability. LHRC maintains that addressing GBV requires recognition of these non-physical forms of violence within prevention and justice responses.

Some of the Reported Incidents

In January 2025, a 36-year-old woman in Geita Region identified as Adventina Nikolaus was reportedly killed after being attacked with a sharp object. According to reports, she was assaulted at night and later taken to hospital, where she was pronounced dead. The suspect, alleged to be her partner, reportedly informed relatives of her death after the incident. The case reflects patterns of intimate partner violence escalating into femicide.

On 19th February 2025, in Pwani Region (Kisarawe District), a man was arrested for allegedly killing his wife and their two-year-old child. Police indicated that the suspect was apprehended shortly after the incident occurred in Marui Ward. The case demonstrates the devastating consequences of domestic violence within family settings.

In February 2025, a woman (a health worker) in Mara Region (Bunda District) was reportedly stabbed more than ten times by her partner following a domestic dispute. After the attack and her death, the suspect allegedly attempted suicide. The incident illustrates the severity of intimate partner violence and the continuing risk of femicide arising from relationship conflicts. On 9th May 2025, in Mara Region (Ukerewe District), a 20-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing Josephina Magani (52), reportedly after accusing her of infecting him with HIV. Police stated that the suspect assaulted her with a blunt object, leading to her death. The incident highlights the intersection between stigma, misinformation, and intimate partner violence.

On 4th June 2025, in Dodoma Region, a woman who had reportedly been abducted by four men later withdrew her case due to fear. According to the report, she fled her residence after experiencing intimidation linked to the case. The incident highlights the vulnerability of survivors to threats and the challenges women face in accessing justice when adequate protection is lacking.

On 5th October 2025, in Dodoma City, police rescued a group of young men accused of luring and sexually assaulting women during night hours. Residents had surrounded the house where the suspects were staying before armed police intervened. The case reflects concerns over organized sexual violence and community-level risks facing women.

On 1st December 2025, the District Medical Officer and two other health workers in Tabora Region (Urambo District) were suspended following allegations of rape and misconduct linked to a pregnant patient. Authorities initiated investigations into abuse of office and professional misconduct. The case raises concerns about institutional accountability and the protection of women within health facilities.

On 8th December 2025, a 22-year-old man was arrested in Songwe Region (Mbozi District) for allegedly raping and injuring his 80-year-old grandmother in Nanyala village. The incident highlights the vulnerability of elderly women to sexual and other forms of violence within domestic environments.

Collectively, these incidents, spanning January to December 2025, demonstrate the persistent and geographically widespread nature of violence against women in Tanzania, including intimate partner killings, sexual violence, institutional abuse, and survivor intimidation.

3.13.2.3. Political Participation

During the 2025 General Elections, Special Seats continued to serve as the primary pathway for women's representation in Parliament, rather than women securing seats through direct competitive constituency contests. This pattern indicates that while Tanzania is advancing toward compliance with African Union gender equality commitments, substantive equality, where women compete on equal footing and win in open electoral races, remains only partially realized. The continued dominance of Special Seats reflects structural barriers within the political system, including financial constraints, patriarchal norms, and party nomination dynamics that limit women's competitiveness in constituency-based elections. The First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral model further compounds these challenges, as it typically favours established political actors and incumbents, thereby narrowing opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities to succeed in highly competitive races.

Despite these structural constraints, the 2025 elections also demonstrated measurable progress in women's political visibility. According to figures from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), women constituted 32.2 percent of parliamentary candidates (558 out of 1,735), a substantial increase from 23.3 percent in 2020 and 4.4 percent in 1995. At the presidential level, three out of 17 candidates (18 percent) were women, while nine of the 17 vice-presidential running mates (53 percent) were women, reflecting growing inclusion at the highest levels of political contestation.

However, this upward trajectory was not uniform across all governance tiers. Women's participation in Local Council elections remained significantly low, with only 9.6 percent (700 out of 7,289 candidates) being women, compared to approximately 90 percent men. This disparity highlights persistent grassroots-level barriers, including limited financial resources, community-level gender bias, and lower political party support for women in local competitive spaces. The data therefore present a mixed picture: while national-level candidacy figures reflect gradual improvement in women's political participation, structural and systemic obstacles continue to impede full and equal representation across all levels of governance.

In 2025, women’s rights stakeholders also continued to raise alarm over violence against women in elections and politics (VAWEP) ahead of the general elections, although LHRC did not document any reported incident of VAWEP. This form of violence includes sextortion and technology-facilitated cyberbullying, smear campaigns, and gendered disinformation.

3.13.2.4.LHRC’s View

LHRC believes that the persistence of gender-based violence demonstrates continuing gaps between legal protections and lived realities faced by women in Tanzania. While increased reporting may partly reflect improved awareness, the rising number of victims indicates that prevention, protection, and accountability mechanisms remain insufficient.

LHRC emphasizes that advancing women’s rights remains essential to safeguarding human dignity, strengthening democratic governance, and achieving equitable social development in Tanzania. LHRC therefore calls upon the Government to strengthen coordinated national responses to GBV, including effective investigation and prosecution of offenders, expansion of survivor support services, enhanced protection mechanisms, and sustained public education aimed at addressing harmful gender norms.

Regarding women’s participation in democratic processes and decision-making, LHRC observes that although numerical representation has shown improvement, genuine inclusion goes beyond numbers. It requires equal opportunities in electoral competition, protection from political violence, and a civic environment that is free from discrimination and conducive to active engagement.

3.13.3. PWDs

3.13.3.1.Overview

The situation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Tanzania during the 2025 reporting period reflects both incremental progress in policy commitments and persistent structural human rights challenges. Tanzania is a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which obliges the State to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of PWDs, including equality before the law, non-discrimination, access to education, employment, and protection from violence. While initiatives promoting inclusion have been introduced in collaboration with partners such as the International Labour Organization and United Nations Tanzania, serious concerns remain regarding

violence against persons with albinism, discrimination in education, economic exclusion, and harmful cultural practices affecting children with disabilities.

3.13.3.2. Violence against PWDs

In October 2025, the media reported the killing of a woman with albinism who was attacked with a machete to the head following a dispute over land that had belonged to her deceased husband. This incident highlights the heightened vulnerability of PWDs, particularly women, to violence and insecurity. Although the reported motive involved a land conflict, PWDs in Tanzania continue to face targeted attacks influenced by superstition and harmful beliefs. Such acts constitute grave violations of the right to life, security of the person, and human dignity.

Reports also indicate ongoing violence against persons with albinism (PWAs) linked to witchcraft-related myths. These patterns demonstrate that stigma and entrenched discriminatory beliefs continue to expose PWDs to life-threatening risks. The State's obligation under both domestic law and international human rights standards requires effective prevention measures, prompt investigations, prosecution of perpetrators, and adequate protection mechanisms for at-risk individuals.

3.13.3.3. Discrimination and Social Exclusion

Discrimination against PWDs remains widespread across social and community settings. Public messaging by the United Nations system in Tanzania highlights persistent stigma, including violence rooted in superstition and the practice of confining children with disabilities indoors due to shame or fear. Such practices violate the rights to equality, dignity, freedom of movement, and participation in society.

Negative societal perceptions often result in exclusion from decision-making processes within families and communities, as well as limited access to healthcare, social protection, and public services. Children with disabilities are disproportionately affected by neglect and isolation, undermining their development and social integration. These forms of discrimination are inconsistent with Tanzania's constitutional guarantees of equality and its obligations under the CRPD.

Landmark judgement of the African Court on the rights of PWAs in Tanzania

In a landmark judgment delivered on 5th February 2025 in the case of *Centre for Human Rights, Institute of Human Rights and Development in Africa, and Legal and Human Rights Centre v. United Republic of Tanzania*,²⁸² the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights found Tanzania responsible for widespread human rights violations against persons with albinism, including discrimination, failure to prevent ritual killings, torture and ill-treatment, and inadequate protection of children.

The Court held that the State had violated rights to life, non-discrimination, health, and education due to insufficient preventive, investigative, and protective measures.²⁸³ It ordered Tanzania to implement legal and policy reforms, including amending the Witchcraft Act, improving healthcare, education, and shelter conditions, establishing a compensation fund, enforcing regional action plans, and reporting on progress to ensure accountability and long-term protection of persons with albinism.

3.13.3.4. Access to Quality Education

Access to inclusive and quality education remains a significant challenge. Many children with disabilities face physical inaccessibility of school infrastructure, limited availability of assistive devices, insufficient numbers of trained special needs teachers, and discriminatory attitudes within school environments. Where children are hidden at home or denied enrollment due to stigma, their right to education is directly violated.

The absence of inclusive education not only restricts immediate learning opportunities but also perpetuates long-term socioeconomic exclusion. Without adequate support systems, children with disabilities are more likely to experience reduced educational attainment, limited employment prospects, and dependency in adulthood. Ensuring inclusive education requires sustained investment in infrastructure, teacher training, accessible learning materials, and community sensitization.

3.13.3.5. Economic Inclusion and Employment

Economic participation remains constrained for many persons with disabilities due to discrimination, lack of reasonable accommodation, and limited

²⁸² *Centre for Human Rights and Others v United Republic of Tanzania* (Application No. 019/2018) [2025] AfCHPR 4 (5 February 2025). Available at <https://www.african-court.org/cpmt/storage/app/uploads/public/67a/60b/d08/67a60bd08d5ae236146763.pdf>.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

enforcement of disability employment provisions. However, recent initiatives signal progress. The launch of a National Business and Disability Network in collaboration with the International Labour Organization aims to promote workplace inclusion and encourage private sector engagement in hiring persons with disabilities.

Despite these developments, structural barriers persist, including limited vocational training opportunities, inaccessible workplaces, and societal perceptions that underestimate the capabilities of persons with disabilities. Realizing economic inclusion requires not only policy commitments but also effective implementation, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms to ensure equal access to decent work.

3.13.3.6. Access to Land and Property Rights

The reported killing of a woman with albinism in the context of a land dispute highlights the intersection between disability, gender, and property rights. Persons with disabilities, particularly women, may face compounded discrimination in inheritance and land ownership disputes. Weak legal literacy, social stigma, and power imbalances within families and communities can increase vulnerability to dispossession and violence.

Ensuring equal protection under land and inheritance laws is essential to safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities. Strengthening access to legal aid, community awareness, and dispute resolution mechanisms is necessary to prevent escalation of property-related conflicts into acts of violence.

3.13.3.7. Structural and Policy Gaps

Although Tanzania has enacted disability-related legislation and ratified international instruments, implementation gaps remain evident. Weak enforcement of protections against violence targeting persons with albinism, insufficient investment in inclusive education, limited public awareness to challenge harmful cultural beliefs, and inadequate access to justice for victims of discrimination continue to undermine full realization of rights.

Institutional coordination between law enforcement, social welfare authorities, education providers, and local government structures requires strengthening. Without consistent implementation and monitoring, progressive legal frameworks risk remaining largely aspirational.

3.13.3.8.LHRC's View

LHRC observes that while Tanzania has made important commitments toward advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, persistent violence against persons with albinism, continued discrimination in education, and widespread social exclusion demonstrate that substantive equality has not yet been achieved. LHRC maintains that protecting the right to life and dignity of persons with disabilities requires stronger preventive measures, effective prosecution of perpetrators, and targeted protection mechanisms.

LHRC further emphasizes that inclusive education, economic empowerment, and secure access to property rights are central to breaking cycles of marginalization. The organization calls for strengthened implementation of disability laws, sustained public awareness campaigns to combat harmful beliefs, and enhanced access to justice to ensure that persons with disabilities fully enjoy their constitutional and international human rights.

ZANZIBAR

Gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children (VAC) continued to be a big threat to human rights in Zanzibar in 2025, especially for women and girls. Incidents of different acts of violence were reported and documented in all regions across Zanzibar.

Reported GBV & VAC Cases

In 2025, a total of 1,228 GBV and VAC cases were recorded by police in the period of January to December²⁸⁴, decreasing by 32% in comparison with

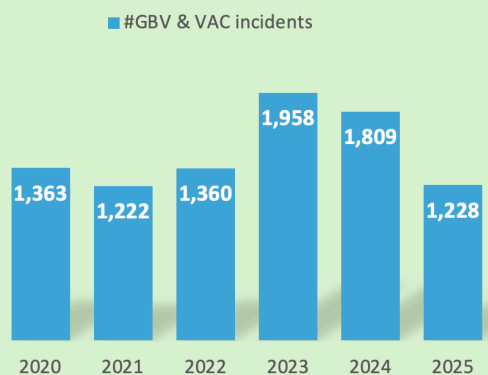


Figure 3.17: Reported GBV & VAC incidents in Zanzibar, 2020-2025

Source: OCGS

²⁸⁴ Office of the Chief Government Statistician Zanzibar GBV & VAC statistics for the year 2025, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qV12JYznLyQ&t=1557s>.

GBV & VAC Victims

Children accounted for 85.3% of all the victims, followed by women (13.2%), and men (1.5%).

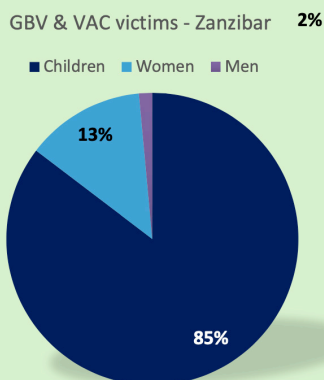


Figure 3.18: GBV & VAC victims in Zanzibar in 2025

Source: OCGS 2025

Forms and Acts

Analysis of GBV & VAC cases in Zanzibar for the year 2025 reveals that sexual violence remains the dominant form of abuse. Rape accounted for 660 cases (53.7%), making it the single most prevalent offence. This was followed by sexual assault (13.5%), abduction (11.9%), and sodomy (7.0%). Collectively, these categories constitute over 85% of all reported GBV incidents.

The data further indicates that offences commonly associated with children, including sodomy, abduction, and unnatural sexual acts, form a significant proportion of reported cases. This aligns with broader statistics showing that children represent over 85% of GBV victims in Zanzibar, indicating the systemic nature of child-targeted violence.



Girls

Account for over 80% of Rape Victims in Zanzibar

In addition to sexual offences, cases of physical assault (3.8%) and GBV-related killings (0.8%) were also recorded, highlighting the presence of severe and life-threatening forms of violence.

Meanwhile, offences such as incest and attempted sexual crimes appear underreported, suggesting the influence of stigma, fear, and weak reporting mechanisms.

Overall, the pattern of GBV and VAC in Zanzibar reflects a deeply entrenched problem of sexual violence, particularly against children, compounded by gaps in prevention, protection, and reporting systems.

Settings

Data for the year 2025 indicates that GBV and VAC in Zanzibar predominantly occur within private and familiar environments. The majority of cases (574) were reported to have taken place in victims' homes, making the domestic sphere the most common setting for GBV incidents. Additional cases were reported in neighbourhood settings (164) and in neighbours' homes (104), further suggesting the role of close social and family networks in the occurrence of violence.

Public and semi-public spaces also account for a significant proportion of incidents, including public places (163 cases) and in the bush (152 cases). This demonstrates that GBV extends beyond the household into broader community environments.

In contrast, relatively few cases were reported in workplaces (10), transport settings (3), beaches (3), and religious schools (2). These low figures may not necessarily indicate lower incidence, but rather reflect underreporting, stigma, and limited institutional reporting mechanisms in such settings.

The predominance of GBV and AC within homes and neighbourhood settings confirms that violence in Zanzibar is largely perpetrated by individuals known to victims, highlighting the urgent need for strengthened family-based prevention, community awareness, and survivor protection mechanisms.

Geographical Distribution of Reported Cases

The data shows that sexual violence remains the most prevalent category across all regions. Rape accounted for the highest number of cases (154), followed by sodomy (61), sexual assault (35), and abduction (33). A Mjini Magharibi Region recorded the highest number of cases across nearly all categories of offences, including rape, sexual assault, and abduction. This reinforces the concentration of GBV in urban and peri-urban areas. In contrast, regions in Pemba reported significantly lower numbers across all offence categories.

Data from 2025 also shows that GBV and VAC cases in Zanzibar are unevenly distributed across districts, with a clear concentration in urban and peri-urban areas. Magharibi A recorded the highest number of cases at 247 (20.1%), followed by Magharibi B with 191 cases (15.5%). In contrast, Kusini District reported the lowest number of cases at 49 (4.0%).

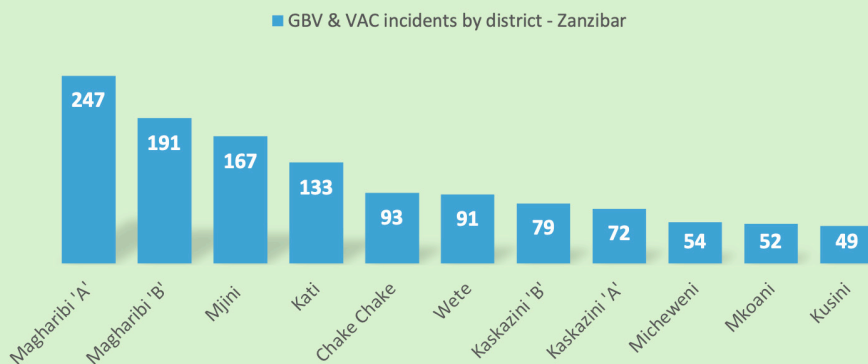


Figure 3.19: Incidents of GBV and VAC recorded in Zanzibar in 2025 by district, Source: OCGS 2025

This distribution suggests that GBV and VAC is more visible and frequently reported in urbanized districts, likely due to higher population density, greater awareness, and better access to reporting mechanisms. Conversely, the lower figures in districts such as Kusini may not necessarily indicate lower prevalence, but rather reflect underreporting driven by limited access to services, social stigma, and weaker institutional presence.

The geographic disparities highlight the need for differentiated interventions, including targeted prevention and response strategies in high-incidence districts, alongside efforts to strengthen reporting systems and community awareness in underserved and rural areas.

The concentration of GBV cases in urban districts, alongside significantly lower reporting in rural areas, points to both a spatial inequality in incidence and a persistent gap in access to justice and reporting mechanisms across Zanzibar.

Disaggregated data on GBV and VAC offences across regions in Zanzibar for 2025 shows that sexual violence remains the most prevalent category across all regions. Rape accounted for the highest number of cases (154), followed by offences related to unnatural sexual acts (61), sexual assault (35), and abduction (33). A consistent pattern emerges in which Mjini Magharibi records the highest number of cases across nearly all categories of offences, including rape (80), sodomy (50), and sexual assault (24). This reinforces the concentration of GBV in urban and peri-urban areas. In contrast, regions in Pemba reported significantly lower numbers across all offence categories. While this may suggest lower incidence, it is likely to be indicative of underreporting, limited institutional reach, and barriers to accessing justice.

The consistent dominance of sexual offences across all regions, coupled with the concentration of cases in urban areas and low reporting in rural regions, highlights both the systemic nature of GBV in Zanzibar and persistent inequalities in access to justice and reporting mechanisms.

Actions Taken: Investigation and Prosecution

Analysis of GBV and VAC case outcomes in Zanzibar for 2025 reveals significant challenges in the justice system. Out of 1,228 reported cases, 44.0% (540 cases) remained under police investigation, indicating substantial delays at the initial stage of the justice process. A further 32.2% (396 cases) were at the court stage, while only 7.7% (95 cases) resulted in convictions. Additional cases were either formally charged (7.0%), referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions (4.6%), or closed by the police (2.9%). A small proportion of cases (approximately 1.5%) resulted in acquittals.

The data demonstrates a high level of attrition within the justice system, with only a small fraction of reported cases leading to successful prosecution and conviction. The large number of cases remaining under investigation or at intermediary stages points to systemic inefficiencies, including delays in investigations, limited prosecutorial capacity, and challenges in evidence collection and case management. The low conviction rate of 7.7% and the high proportion of cases stalled at the investigation stage highlight a significant justice gap in Zanzibar, raising concerns about accountability, deterrence, and survivors' access to effective remedies.

Rehabilitation and Training of Offenders

Data on individuals received in training institutions in 2025 indicates a strong imbalance between punitive and rehabilitative responses to gender-based violence in Zanzibar. Across all districts, the number of detainees significantly exceeds the number of trainees. For instance, Mjini Magharibi recorded approximately 200 detainees compared to about 81 trainees, with similar patterns observed across other districts.

This disparity suggests that the current response framework is largely punitive, with limited emphasis on rehabilitation, behavioural change, and preventive education. The relatively low number of trainees indicates insufficient investment in programmes aimed at addressing the root causes of GBV and VAC, including harmful social norms and attitudes.

As with other aspects of the GBV and VAC response system, regional disparities

are evident. Urban districts dominate in both detainee and trainee numbers, while districts in Pemba report significantly lower figures, reflecting potential gaps in access to rehabilitation and training services.

The significant imbalance between detainees and trainees highlights a predominantly punitive approach to GBV and VAC in Zanzibar, with insufficient investment in prevention, rehabilitation, and long-term behavioural change interventions.

Key Challenges in Addressing GBV and VAC in Zanzibar

Inadequate Financing and Resource Allocation

One of the central challenges emerging from Zanzibar's budgeting processes is the insufficient and uneven allocation of resources for GBV and VAC prevention, response, and child protection services. While efforts have been made to introduce gender-responsive budgeting, stakeholders have acknowledged that translating budget commitments into effective service delivery remains a challenge, particularly in sectors such as social welfare, legal aid, and protection services for children and women.

Weak Institutional Coordination

A major systemic challenge is the fragmented coordination between institutions responsible for GBV and VAC response, including police, prosecution, social welfare, health services, and regulatory bodies. Existing analyses highlight that coordination frameworks are often unclear or insufficiently operationalized, leading to delays, duplication, and gaps in case management.

Gaps in Service Delivery and Survivor Support

Although Zanzibar has established mechanisms such as Gender and Children's Desks, legal aid services, and One-Stop Centres, these services face significant limitations. They are often unevenly distributed, with stronger presence in urban areas than in Pemba; under-resourced, affecting quality and responsiveness; and not fully adapted to emerging forms of violence, such as technology-facilitated GBV and VAC. Additionally, referral systems remain fragmented, and survivors face challenges in accessing integrated, survivor-centred care, including medical, legal, and psychosocial services.

Limited Capacity of Frontline Institutions

Budget and system reviews point to limited technical and operational capacity among frontline actors, including police officers, social welfare officers, and judicial personnel. These capacity gaps directly contribute to delays in investigation; poor case preparation; and low conviction rates.

Underreporting and Social Barriers, including Muhali

Despite increased reporting in recent years, GBV and VAC remain significantly underreported, particularly in rural and island regions such as Pemba. Social and cultural factors continue to play a major role, including stigma and shame associated with reporting; family pressure to resolve cases informally, primarily due to the Muhali culture (code of silence); and fear of retaliation. Studies show that violence is often normalized within social structures, particularly in domestic settings, and many incidents are resolved outside formal systems.

In Zanzibar, *Muhali* (a deep-rooted cultural norm of silence, leniency, and hesitation to report wrongdoing when the perpetrator is a family member, neighbour, or a friend) remains a significant barrier to combating GBV and VAC, allowing perpetrators to act with impunity.

Zanzibar

Discrimination is a key concern for special groups in Zanzibar, including women and persons with disabilities (PWDs). Despite these advancements, PWDs in Zanzibar continued to face several challenges in 2025, including stigma and discrimination, which hinder their full participation in society. Limited access to quality education also continued to be a challenge, especially for children with disabilities, partly contributed to inadequate facilities and resources tailored to their needs, limiting their academic and professional prospects. Additionally, most public spaces and transportation systems continued to lack disability-friendly designs, restricting PWDs' mobility and access to essential services. Another key challenge that remains to be an issue of human rights concern is inadequate enforcement of laws and policies. While progressive policies were in place in 2025, their effective implementation and enforcement remained inconsistent, limiting their impact on improving PWDs' lives.

CHAPTER FOUR: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. GENERAL CONCLUSION

Overall, the situation of human rights in Tanzania significantly deteriorated in 2025 in comparison with previous years, including 2024. Developments documented in this report, including concerns relating to civic space, the conduct of law enforcement operations, increased enforced disappearances, prolonged detention, digital rights restrictions, internet shutdown during politically sensitive periods, and limitations affecting freedom of expression and media freedom, highlight the need for stronger safeguards to ensure accountability, transparency and adherence to the rule of law. These issues highlight the importance of ensuring that state institutions responsible for enforcing the law consistently operate in line with constitutional principles and international human rights standards.

Additionally, persistent structural inequalities continue to affect vulnerable groups, particularly women, children and persons with disabilities. Gender-based violence, harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, and discrimination against persons with disabilities remain significant concerns requiring stronger prevention, protection and accountability measures. Addressing these challenges will require sustained political will, strengthened institutional oversight, community involvement, and constructive engagement between government institutions, oversight bodies and civil society. Strengthening these efforts will be essential to ensuring that Tanzania's constitutional guarantees translate into meaningful protection of human rights and dignity for all.

ZANZIBAR

The human rights situation in Zanzibar in 2025 reflects a combination of relative stability and persistent structural challenges, particularly in areas such as access to justice, gender-based violence, health services, civic space, and land governance. While institutional frameworks remain in place and some progress has been observed, gaps in implementation, accountability, and resource allocation continue to limit the effective realization of rights, especially for women, children, and other special groups.

4.2. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The developments documented during the year of 2025 suggest the need for comprehensive institutional reforms to strengthen the protection of human rights, enhance accountability, and restore public confidence in democratic institutions. The following recommendations are directed to key state institutions and other stakeholders and are informed by national constitutional obligations as well as Tanzania's regional and international human rights commitments.

1. Strengthening Constitutional Governance, Accountability and Rule of Law

- 1.1. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania should reaffirm its commitment to constitutional governance by ensuring that all law enforcement actions strictly comply with national and international human rights standards, including legality, necessity, proportionality, and non-discrimination.
- 1.2. The Government should ensure that all persons arrested are promptly informed of the reasons for their arrest, granted access to legal counsel and family members, and presented before competent courts within legally prescribed timelines.
- 1.3. The Government should establish independent, transparent and time-bound investigations into all credible allegations of torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearances, excessive use of force and unlawful killings, and ensure that those responsible are held accountable through criminal or disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. The Government should establish an independent commission of inquiry, with the participation of international experts where necessary, to investigate allegations of human rights violations that occurred during and after the 2025 election period, including unlawful killings, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances and digital shutdowns.
- 1.5. The Government should establish an independent, victim-centred national healing process, including truth-seeking, accountability, reparations, and accessible psychosocial support, for individuals and communities affected by the October 2025 unrest, with a view to promoting reconciliation and preventing recurrence.
- 1.6. The Government should implement the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Criminal Justice Reforms (2023), including reforms addressing arbitrary arrests, prolonged pre-trial detention and institutional accountability within the criminal justice system.
- 1.7. The Government should enact legislation regulating private investigation services in order to provide lawful and regulated

mechanisms through which families and stakeholders may pursue information concerning missing persons and other serious crimes.

2. Policing, Security Sector Accountability and Protection of Civic Freedoms

- 2.1. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Tanzania Police Force should strengthen oversight and accountability mechanisms governing law enforcement operations to ensure compliance with national and international human rights standards.
- 2.2. The Tanzania Police Force should conduct prompt and effective investigations into all reported disappearances and provide regular updates to the public and to families of missing persons, including information on investigative progress and outcomes.
- 2.3. The Police Force should ensure that all arrests, detention locations and transfers are properly recorded and accessible for oversight in order to prevent incommunicado detention and strengthen transparency in custody procedures.
- 2.4. Operational guidelines governing arrest procedures, interrogation practices and crowd management should be strengthened and fully aligned with international standards on the use of force.
- 2.5. Police officers should receive continuous training on the proportional use of force, prevention of torture and ill-treatment, and the protection of detainees' rights.
- 2.6. The Police Force should promptly investigate allegations of police misconduct and ensure that disciplinary or criminal actions taken against responsible officers are communicated publicly.
- 2.7. Law enforcement authorities should refrain from restricting peaceful assemblies without lawful justification and should ensure that any limitations on assemblies comply with constitutional protections and international human rights standards.
- 2.8. The Police Force should also strengthen investigative and protective measures to prevent witchcraft-related killings and attacks against persons with albinism and other persons with disabilities.

3. Judicial Oversight and Access to Justice

- 3.1. The Judiciary of Tanzania should continue strengthening judicial oversight over detention practices and ensure strict compliance with constitutional timelines governing arraignment and bail determinations.
- 3.2. Courts should prioritise the expeditious handling of cases involving prolonged remand detention in order to prevent unnecessary deprivation of liberty.
- 3.3. The Judiciary should ensure that lawyers are able to perform their

professional duties without intimidation or interference and that confidential access between lawyers and clients is fully respected.

3.4. The Judiciary should also strengthen protections for victims and witnesses in cases involving allegations of abuse by security personnel.

4. Legislative Reforms and Parliamentary Oversight

4.1. The Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania should exercise its oversight mandate by reviewing and reforming laws governing public order, cybercrime, media regulation and national security to ensure full alignment with constitutional guarantees and international human rights obligations.

4.2. The Parliament should amend criminal laws to remove provisions supporting arbitrary use of power as against journalists, activists, political actors and citizens exercising their freedom of expression or participating in civic activities.

4.3. The Media Services Act of 2016 should be amended to bring the law fully in line with international human rights standards and to strengthen protections for media freedom and investigative journalism.

4.4. Parliament should amend the Law of Marriage Act of 1971 to set the minimum age of marriage at 18 years without exception in order to eliminate child marriage.

4.5. Legislative reforms should be made to establish clear safeguards governing internet restrictions and telecommunications regulation in order to prevent arbitrary nationwide digital shutdowns.

5. Protection of Digital Rights, Media Freedom and Access to Information

5.1. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, in collaboration with other relevant institutions, should review digital governance frameworks to ensure that restrictions on online content comply with international human rights standards.

5.2. The Ministry should ensure transparency, clear criteria and independent appeal mechanisms for the removal or blocking of websites, social media accounts and online content.

5.3. The Online Content Regulations of 2020, the Cybercrimes Act of 2015 and the Access to Information Act should be reviewed and amended to ensure that they adequately protect freedom of expression and access to information.

5.4. Legal and regulatory framework governing the media and journalists should be protective of journalists, digital rights defenders and online activists from harassment, surveillance and arbitrary arrest linked to their professional activities.

6. Criminal Justice Reforms and Anti-Corruption Measures

- 6.1. The Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, in collaboration with other criminal justice institutions, should lead reforms addressing prolonged pre-trial detention and strengthening bail safeguards within the criminal justice system.
- 6.2. Legal reforms should ensure that bail is granted for allailable offences when legal conditions are satisfied and that law enforcement authorities respect statutory bail procedures.
- 6.3. The Ministry should collaborate with the Law Reform Commission of Tanzania to review and repeal discriminatory laws inconsistent with constitutional and international human rights standards.
- 6.4. The Ministry should also facilitate ratification of key international instruments, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the United Nations Convention against Torture.
- 6.5. Efforts to combat corruption within the justice sector should be strengthened through closer collaboration between the Judiciary, the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau and other accountability institutions.

7. Protection of Women's Rights and Gender Equality

- 7.1. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, should develop and implement a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- 7.2. Institutional responses to gender-based violence should be strengthened through improved survivor support services, including medical care, legal assistance, shelters and psychosocial support.
- 7.3. Public awareness programmes should be expanded to address harmful practices affecting women and girls, including early marriage, gender-based violence and discrimination.
- 7.4. Measures should also be introduced to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including cyber harassment and online abuse targeting women.
- 7.5. Government institutions should promote women's meaningful participation in political processes and leadership positions across governance structures.

8. Protection of Children's Rights

- 8.1. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should ensure the effective implementation of policies allowing adolescent mothers to

- return to school without discrimination.
- 8.2. School-based protection mechanisms should be strengthened to address violence, harassment and exploitation affecting children within educational institutions.
 - 8.3. Education authorities should improve school infrastructure and learning conditions in order to provide safe, inclusive and quality learning environments for all children.
 - 8.4. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups should strengthen national child protection systems to improve reporting, investigation and response to violence against children.
 - 8.5. Preventive programmes addressing harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage should be strengthened, including community awareness initiatives and enforcement of relevant laws.
 - 8.6. Measures should also be introduced to address emerging risks such as online sexual exploitation and cyberbullying affecting children

9. Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- 9.1. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups should strengthen national programmes addressing violence, discrimination and social exclusion affecting persons with disabilities.
- 9.2. Public awareness campaigns should be expanded to combat stigma, harmful beliefs and discrimination affecting persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism.
- 9.3. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should strengthen inclusive education by improving accessibility in schools, providing assistive learning materials and increasing the number of trained special needs teachers.
- 9.4. The Ministry responsible for Labour and Employment should strengthen enforcement of employment policies promoting inclusion and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

10. Strengthening Health Systems and Social Protection

- 10.1. The Ministry of Health should increase investment in maternal health services, primary health care and mental health services in order to improve access to quality health care for all citizens.
- 10.2. The Ministry should ensure effective implementation of universal health coverage policies in order to expand affordable health services across the country.
- 10.3. The Ministry of Finance and Planning should progressively increase

budgetary allocations for the health sector and ensure the timely disbursement of funds necessary for the effective delivery of health services.

11. Cross-Cutting Institutional Reforms and National Dialogue

- 11.1. The Government and Parliament should revive the constitutional reform process aimed at adopting a people-centred constitution that strengthens checks and balances and protects fundamental rights and freedoms.
- 11.2. The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance should strengthen collaboration with civil society organisations in monitoring human rights practices, particularly in areas relating to arrests, detention and civic freedoms.
- 11.3. Civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and community leaders should continue promoting human rights awareness, dialogue and accountability initiatives aimed at preventing violence, discrimination and abuse of power.

ZANZIBAR-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Right to Life and Security of the Person

1. The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGZ) should ensure prompt, independent, and impartial investigations into all cases of unlawful killings and suspicious deaths, particularly those involving security personnel, and strengthen forensic, oversight, and accountability mechanisms to guarantee justice for victims and prevent impunity.

B. Access to Justice and Rule of Law

2. The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGZ) should implement criminal justice reforms recommended by the Presidential Commission on Criminal Justice Reforms to strengthen due process, safeguard the right to liberty and personal security, and improve accountability within the justice system.
3. The RGZ, in collaboration with justice sector institutions, should strengthen case management systems, enhance prosecution capacity, and improve coordination between police, prosecution, and the judiciary to reduce delays and improve case progression.
4. The RGZ should expand legal aid services across all districts, with particular focus on rural areas and Pemba, and enhance public awareness of available justice mechanisms.

C. Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection

5. The RGZ should strengthen prevention and response mechanisms to address gender-based violence and violence against children, including scaling up community-based programmes, strengthening Gender and Children's Desks, and expanding One-Stop Centres.
6. The RGZ, through the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children, should intensify efforts to prevent and combat violence against children and spearhead legal and policy reforms to address emerging forms of violence, including cyberviolence affecting women and girls.
7. The RGZ should promote male engagement in addressing gender-based violence and violence against children by supporting the recruitment and visibility of male champions to challenge harmful social norms.
8. Civil society organizations, including the Zanzibar Child Rights Forum (ZCRF), should strengthen advocacy initiatives and community awareness programmes on child rights and protection.

D. Right to Health

9. The RGZ should increase investment in the health sector and improve execution of the development budget, with priority given to strengthening infrastructure, availability of medical equipment, and expansion of maternal and mental health services.
10. The Ministry of Health should recruit and deploy additional health workers and implement targeted strategies to strengthen specialist capacity, including in critical areas such as cardiology.
11. The Ministry of Health should ensure adequate funding and resources to support the delivery of quality maternal health services and expand access to mental health care, including for pregnant women.
12. The RGZ should develop and implement a comprehensive national strategy on mental health, including integration of mental health services into primary healthcare systems.

E. Rights of Persons with Disabilities

13. The RGZ, through the First Vice President's Office, should ensure effective enforcement of existing laws and policies related to persons with disabilities and translate these into tangible benefits.
14. The RGZ should invest in disability-friendly infrastructure, ensuring that public spaces, services, and transportation systems are accessible and inclusive.

F. Land Rights and Property

15. The RGZ, through the Ministry of Lands and Housing Development and the Judiciary of Zanzibar, should strengthen land governance systems by improving transparency in land allocation, enhancing dispute resolution mechanisms, and addressing land-related conflicts.

G. Democratic Governance and Political Participation

16. The Union Government and the RGZ should take concrete measures to implement the recommendations of the Presidential Taskforce on Multiparty Democracy in Tanzania to strengthen political participation, tolerance, and democratic governance.
17. The Zanzibar Electoral Commission, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, should review and reform electoral procedures, including early voting systems, and establish transparent mechanisms for voter registration and results management to enhance public trust.

H. Freedom of Expression and Media

18. The RGZ should review and amend outdated media and communication laws, including the Registration of News Agents, Newspapers and Books Act (1988), to align them with international human rights standards and remove arbitrary and restrictive provisions.



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For a Just and Equitable Society









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