



**Maasai International
Solidarity Alliance**

NEWSLETTER MAY - JULY 2025



KEY UPDATES

Volkswagen continues supporting soil carbon project despite environmental and human rights concerns

Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania link up to oppose carbon projects

President Samia announces plans for Ngorongoro that prioritize tourism profits over human rights

MISA denounces Tanzanian government repression at World Heritage Committee, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Will opposition leader Tundu Lissu get a fair trial?



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Photo: Livestock grazing in Maasai land. Credit: MISA.

Will Volkswagen Stop Its Soil Carbon Projects in Northern Tanzania?

Volkswagen is contributing to human rights violations through its investment in a controversial carbon offset project in Northern Tanzania. The project, managed by Soils for the Future Tanzania (SftFTZ), involves locking Maasai pastoralist communities into 40-year contracts under a soil carbon credit scheme that lacks scientific credibility and restricts traditional land use without proper consent.

Despite MISA's March 2025 report detailing environmental and human rights concerns, Volkswagen has continued its support for the project. MISA claims it violates Indigenous rights and imposes harmful grazing policies without Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). MISA therefore demands that Volkswagen respects a five-year moratorium on soil carbon projects in pastoralist areas, immediately withdraws funding from the Longido and Monduli project and cut ties with SftFTZ.

Volkswagen is using the project to greenwash its climate image at the expense of Maasai communities. For this reason, MISA published a detailed rebuttal to Volkswagen's public statements, criticizing the project's lack of transparency, flawed science, and unfair benefit-sharing.



READ: [MISA's Rebuttal to Volkswagen's arguments](#)



READ: [MISA Report on Soil Carbon Credits \(March 2025\)](#)



READ: [SOMO Report "Manufactured crisis: Europe's car industry hoards funds and delays climate action"](#)



READ: [TMG Report "Net Zero and Land Rights: How climate action is pushing land grabbing"](#)



READ: [Corporate Accountability Report "Built to Fail"](#)



READ: ["The Scramble for African Carbon Credits: Is it Recolonization of Africa?"](#)



Photo: Protest against a carbon project in Oldonyonyokie Group Ranch, Kajiado county, Kenya. Credit: Community member.

Maasai of Kenya Oppose Carbon Projects

In Kajiado County (Kenya), Maasai communities are facing threats from a carbon credit project similar to the one being developed in Tanzania. The proposed Kajiado Rangelands Carbon Project (Verra project #4714) has triggered widespread concern among Maasai communities, echoing the warnings raised in MISA's research in Northern Tanzania about the Longido and Monduli Rangelands Carbon Project (Verra project #4924). Both projects are developed by Soils for the Future (including its affiliates Soils for the Future Africa and Soils for the Future

Tanzania) and follow the Verra methodology VM00032, also developed by Soils for the Future. As in Longido and Monduli, the project in Kajiado is being developed without the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the communities.

Meetings were held by the project proponent with only a handful of Group Ranch officials, while most community members were excluded. Soils for the Future is reported to be tricking people into signing agreements which they don't understand and putting pressure on the leadership of Group Ranches to join the project. With both projects, the process is characterized by opaque deals, rushed and inappropriate "consultations," and dubious "advance payments" of \$2 per hectare.



In Oldonyonyokie Group Ranch, large groups of people, especially the youth, have repeatedly organized protests against the carbon project in recent months, in order to prevent the agreement from being signed, as Soils for the Future did not obtain the consent of the community.



WATCH: Lynn Ngugi's episode on the carbon credit scheme sweeping across Kenya/repackaging of colonial practices as "green" development Exposed: [How Carbon Credit Deals Are Forcing Kenyans Off Their Land for Just \\$2 And 40 Year Lease](#)



WATCH: NTV Kenya, Community clash over carbon deal at Oldonyonyokie, Kajiado County. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuCZiDv0o9c&ab_channel=NTVKenya



WATCH: DW, Carbon credit deals leave Kenyan landowners confused. <https://www.dw.com/en/carbon-credit-deals-leave-kenyan-landowners-confused/video-73404122>



READ: [From carbon to biodiversity: Kajiado pastoralists navigate new conservation markets \(26 June, 2025\)](#)



READ: "Carbon credits on Maasai land", [Blood Carbon](#), Survival International

The same proponent pushing for carbon projects in Kajiado and Northern Tanzania has been engaged in the very contested NRT project in Northern Kenya. This project is now on hold as Verra reviews the program for a second time, after a long-running dispute between the conservationists who created the rangelands project and local herders, who say the project disrupts grazing patterns built over the course of centuries.



READ: Netflix and Meta's Carbon Credits Snared in Dispute With Maasai Herders. https://www.wsj.com/us-news/climate-environment/netflix-and-metas-carbon-credits-snared-in-dispute-with-maasai-herders-4f01a59f?st=NrPMbv&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink



READ: "Controversial carbon credits scheme used by Netflix and Meta suspended AGAIN", May 13, 2025, Survival International. <https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/14211>



Source: [President Samia Announces Vision 2050 Launch, Youth Startup Policy, and Major Infrastructure Developments in Government Performance Speech | TanzaniaInvest](#)

The Evil Plan of President Samia Suluhu for Ngorongoro

On June 28, President Samia Suluhu delivered a speech that revealed a troubling prioritization of tourism profits over human rights in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. In her remarks, she framed Ngorongoro primarily as a lucrative asset for Tanzania, lamenting the visible presence of livestock and local communities, which she claimed undermines the international image of the region. According to her, tourists should be greeted by lions, giraffes, and elephants — not by cows, sheep, or people. This perspective reduces the Indigenous residents to a nuisance, rather than recognizing them as communities with legitimate rights and histories tied to the land. More alarmingly, President Suluhu openly encouraged the elimination of activists who oppose her administration's plans for Ngorongoro, referring to them as "thorns" and offering her assistance in removing them. Such rhetoric is deeply concerning, as it signals not only a disregard for dissent but also a dangerous willingness to suppress critical voices through intimidation or worse. Her comments reflect a broader lack of political will to address the well-documented human rights violations faced by Indigenous communities in the area. The President also highlighted the surge in tourism and the lack of sufficient

accommodation, directing officials to build more hotels and lodges. However, this push for expanded tourism infrastructure comes at the expense of local populations, whose displacement and marginalization appear to be an acceptable cost for economic gain in her eyes. In sum, President Suluhu's speech underscores a troubling shift toward profit-driven policies that ignore fundamental rights and environmental justice. The president statement is not only an open preemption to her two Commissions which are now investigating the situation in Ngorongoro but also a blank cheque for state machineries to deal with people the way it pleases them. Only a few days after President Samia's Statement, NCAA game wardens started operations in different places in Ngorongoro by arresting and detaining people, demolishing peoples' newly renovated settlements and demolishing a Church at Oldupai area.



WATCH: RAIS SAMIA -
"NGORONGORO ni PASUA KICHWA -
UKIINGIA UNAANZA KUONA MBUZI
na KONDOO - HUONI SIMBA"...



Photo: This small church at Masaantare, Oldupai, Ngorongoro has been demolished by NCAA rangers on 19th July 2025. Credit: Community member.



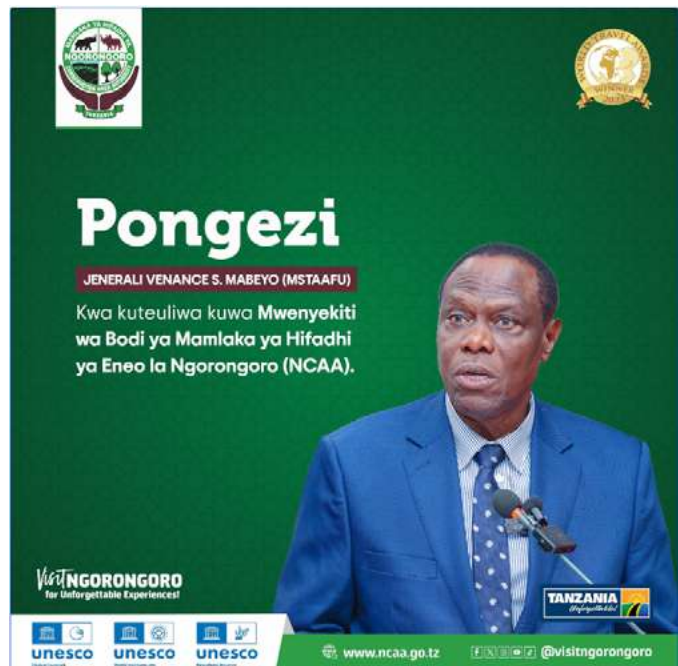
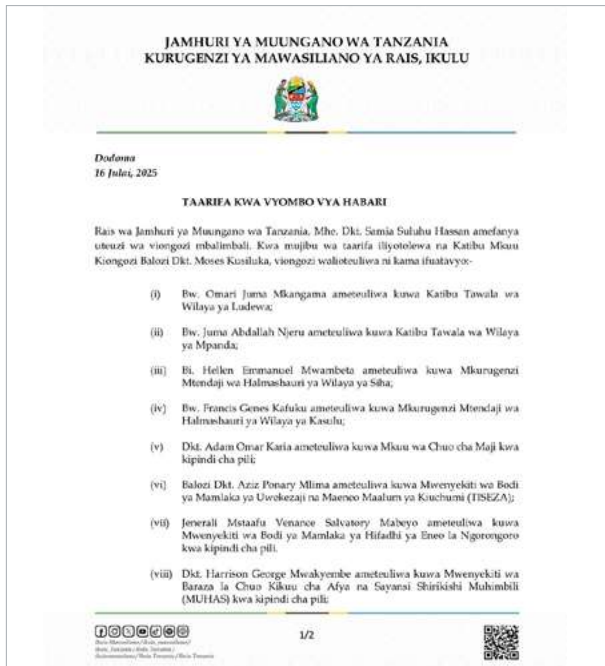
Source: NCAA Sets Strategic Plan to Improve Infrastructure After Winning 2025 Africa's Leading Tourist Attraction Award | Habari Tanzania

Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) Commissioner Praises Financial Success but Omits Role of Local Communities

Newly appointed Commissioner from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA), Mr. Abdul-razaq Badru, appointed by Samia Suluhu, has been the 4th Commissioner in less than two years. In his first public address after being sworn in on June 9, 2025, he addressed staff in Karatu, Arusha Region, highlighting the Authority's impressive financial performance in the 2024/2025 fiscal year. According to Badru, the NCAA surpassed its revenue target of TSh 230 billion by collecting TSh 269.9 billion. Tourism accounted for the vast majority, bringing in TSh 262.74 billion, with additional income from the Pololeti Game Reserve (TSh 3.7 billion). Tourist numbers also rose significantly from 908,000 in 2023/2024 to 1,061,620 in 2024/2025. The Commissioner praised staff for their role in promoting Ngorongoro on the international stage, culminating in its recognition as Africa's

Leading Tourist Attraction at the 2025 World Travel Awards. He also announced that the Authority is preparing a new five-year strategy focused on sustainable conservation, tourism infrastructure, and community development within the conservation area. Badru emphasized the importance of discipline, efficiency, and ethical conduct in reaching these goals.

However, despite this celebratory tone, Commissioner Badru's remarks notably omitted any recognition of the role played by the local communities, particularly the Maasai, who live within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. This silence is striking, given that community well-being and participation are among the three foundational pillars of the NCAA's establishment. Furthermore, the Commissioner offered no clear plan for addressing the pressing needs of the Maasai or ensuring their meaningful involvement in future conservation and tourism initiatives. In light of ongoing tensions surrounding land rights, displacement, and restricted livelihoods, such omissions are deeply concerning. They raise serious questions about whether the NCAA's future vision aligns with principles of equity, inclusion, and the authority's original mandate to balance conservation, tourism, and the rights of Indigenous communities.



President Samia Reappoints Former Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Mabeyo as Chairman of Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA)

On 16th July 2025, President Samia Suluhu officially reappointed General (Retired) Venance Mabeyo as the Chairman of NCAA for a second term.

Mabeyo was first appointed as NCAA chairman in 2022.

Venance Mabeyo was Chief of Defense Forces when the Samia government deployed the army to undertake a violent operation leading to the establishment of the Pololeti Game Controlled Area.

Mabeyo was also presiding over the NCAA Board in July 2022, during which a social service deadlock was used as a strategy to displace Maasai from Ngorongoro without impacting tourism through actual violence.



Source: <https://www.alleastafrica.com/tanzanian-president-names-new-chief-justice-signaling-legal-reform/>

Member of Presidential Land Commissions on Ngorongoro Sworn in as Chief Justice

In July 2025, President Samia appointed George Masaju as the new Chief Justice of the United Republic of Tanzania. His appointment comes at a time when the judiciary faces increasing demands for independence, transparency, and public trust especially in cases involving land rights, human rights, and the rule of law. Masaju will inherit the compromised judiciary under Ibrahim Juma. All eyes will be on the courts to see whether justice will be served with independence and integrity, especially for marginalized communities like the Maasai and lawfare against political opponents and activists.

Masaju, who previously served as the Attorney General and President's personal legal advisor, was among the members of the presidential commission formed by President Samia to inquire into the land conflict in Ngorongoro District and the displacement of the Maasai community. The commission's establishment followed the domestic and international outcry over forced evictions, land dispossession, and human rights violations in the name of conservation and tourism development. Masaju's dual role both as a commissioner in the controversial inquiry and now as head of the judiciary raises questions about impartiality, particularly in cases related to Indigenous land rights and government accountability. As Chief Justice, he will oversee appeals that may touch directly or indirectly on matters his commission investigated.



Photo: WHC meeting in Paris. Credit: UNESCO. Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/collections/82/&index=145&maxrows=24>

The Three Points Made by MISA Representative at UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Paris

The call to uphold Indigenous rights was powerfully reiterated during the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee on July 10, when a Maasai representative delivered a statement on behalf of the Indigenous communities of Ngorongoro. Ngorongoro Conservation Area has been a World Heritage Site since 1979. She reaffirmed the importance of the Multiple Land Use Model as the most just and sustainable approach to conservation, condemning the so-called “voluntary relocations” as coercive and harmful. The statement also criticized the lack of community consultation during the 2024 UNESCO mission and expressed serious concerns about the ongoing development of the new General Management Plan without meaningful Indigenous participation. The Maasai representative urged UNESCO to ensure that conservation respects and empowers Indigenous Peoples rather than erasing their cultures and rights.

Despite this important statement, Indigenous participation in the 47th session remained tightly restricted. Contributions were only allowed after decisions were made, and even then, statements were subject to censorship. Official side events were also controlled by UNESCO, including the selection of speakers and topics. The International Indigenous Peoples’ Forum on World Heritage (IIPFWH) has been criticized for being too closely aligned with UNESCO and failing to represent the broader Indigenous community. After sustained efforts during the session, a new leadership and steering committee for the IIPFWH were established and officially communicated to the secretariat. A global Indigenous outcome document, developed in early 2024, was also submitted, calling for stronger inclusion of Indigenous principles. While these are promising developments, it remains to be seen whether they will lead to meaningful change in how Indigenous voices are included in future World Heritage processes.



READ: [Statement at the 47th Session
World Heritage Committee](#)



Credit: Used with Permission of MISA Collaborator.

UNESCO Stands With Multiple Land Use Model in Decision on Ngorongoro World Heritage Site

The Decision on Ngorongoro adopted at the recent World Heritage Committee Meeting in Paris is useful in three ways:

- a. It supports the Multiple Land Use Model and calls for a human-rights based approach to its implementation;
- b. It insists that rights-holders be involved in the development of the General Management Plan and in the MLUM implementation strategy, including “those opposed to relocation”; and
- c. It requests that an invitation be extended for a reactive monitoring mission to visit NCA “at the earliest opportunity”.



READ: Final Decision on Ngorongoro (p.169) <https://whc.unesco.org/document/222383>



READ: Tanzanian government [response to the decision](#) of the World Heritage Committee in 2024. (It is listed as the 2025 State of Conservation Report by the State Party.”).



READ: UNESCO’s [State of Conservation report](#) for NCA. The report calls for the continued multiple land use approach with a clear human rights-based approach. However, the report does not include any mention of Indigenous Peoples nor the reactive monitoring mission. Additionally, MISA flags that the use of MLUM “with some adjustments” could serve as a vehicle for implementing zoning and restrictions in key areas, ultimately eliminating pastoralism.



READ: Agenda of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee - 6-16 July, 2025. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/47com>



Credit: FreePik

Tanzanian Government Not Respecting UNESCO Moratorium on Hotel Development in Ngorongoro

MISA submitted a letter to the World Heritage Committee ahead of its July 2025 meeting in Paris, expressing concerns about the management of the Ngorongoro World Heritage Site. MISA challenges the Tanzanian government's official report, claiming it misrepresents the situation and excludes the voices of the affected Maasai communities. In contrast to the Tanzanian government, which claims that the Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) has more negative effects than positive, MISA emphasises the importance of coexistence as the most suitable approach to nature conservation.

MISA criticizes the lack of community consultation during UNESCO's 2024 mission and urges a more inclusive approach going forward. Despite claims of limited resources, the government has generated substantial tourism revenue but has failed to carry out required environmental impact assessments. MISA also reports that hotel developments continue in violation of a UNESCO moratorium, without informing or involving local communities. We denounce recent statements by the Tanzanian President that portray Maasai presence as a problem and highlight the exclusion of Indigenous voices from the new General Management Plan. MISA calls on UNESCO to uphold Indigenous rights and ensure conservation efforts respect the people who have sustainably lived in Ngorongoro for generations.



READ: MISA's [submission](#) to WHC - 2 July



Photo: Indigenous Peoples' delegation at Permanent Forum, May 2025. Credit: Rosa Lux.

Will Tanzania Recognize Maasai Indigenous Rights?

On 29 April 2025, Anne Samante gave a statement at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in which she condemned the Tanzanian Government's denial of Indigenous Peoples in Tanzania. The Tanzanian government argues that "all citizens are equal" but equality is not about homogeneity; equality demands the recognition of rights. The Government's claim contradicts binding international standards, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It perpetuates historic injustices and deepens systemic discrimination against Maasai, Barabaig, Akie, Hadzabe and other Indigenous communities in Tanzania. The Maasai meet all internationally accepted criteria for recognition as an Indigenous People, and this status has been affirmed by multiple UN bodies, African regional human rights institutions and global civil society.

Tanzania's continued denial is not just rhetorical. It is being used to legitimize human rights abuses, particularly in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Samante called upon the Forum and the international community to reject the Government's denial of Indigenous Peoples' existence, reaffirm the recognition of Indigenous Peoples and their rights, and to insist on reforms to formally recognize this.

"The Indigenous Peoples of Tanzania — the Maasai, the Barabaig, the Akie, the Hadzabe — exist. We exist with dignity, with history, and with rights. We will not be erased by denial. We will not be silenced by injustice" she insisted.



READ: The [statement](#) presented by a delegation of Indigenous women from Kenya, Sudan, and Tanzania. The delegation highlighted pressing situations concerning their respective peoples and called for urgent actions to uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples in their countries.



Photo: MISA representative speaking at EMRIP in Geneva. Credit: MISA.

MISA Delegate Speaks Out Against Carbon Credits In Geneva

On 15 July 2025, a Maasai woman representing MISA made a statement before the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP). The following is a summary of her statement:

Maasai denounce carbon offset projects as a new form of land dispossession that threatens the Maasai way of life and excludes Maasai from benefit-sharing and decision making. Soils for the Future Tanzania (SftFTZ) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are attempting to secure lengthy contracts in Longido, Simanjiro, and Monduli for control over grazing practices. SftFTZ and TNC have been moving forward with their projects without ensuring Free, Prior, and Informed

Consent (FPIC). These actions violate Articles 10, 26, 28, and 32 of UNDRIP, and breach Tanzania's obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Maasai representative recommends that the Tanzanian government suspends all carbon offset projects in Northern Tanzania until full FPIC is obtained, that Indigenous Peoples co-develop climate resilience strategies, and that an independent investigation is made into the legal, economic, and social impacts of these carbon projects in Indigenous territories.

Addressing the chair, she said, "Land is not merely an asset to us; it is the foundation of our identity, economy, and future. Any climate solution that ignores this bond cannot claim to deliver justice or true progress."



Credit: With permission of MISA Collaborator

Five Constitutional Amendments to Recognize Indigenous Peoples in Tanzania

In an advocacy brief, dated May 22, 2025, the PINGOs Forum calls for urgent constitutional reforms in Tanzania to formally recognize Indigenous Peoples, specifically the Maasai, Barbaig, Akie (Amie), Hadzabe, and Sandawe. Currently, Tanzania's Constitution fails to acknowledge these groups as distinct communities with collective rights, leaving them legally invisible and vulnerable to land dispossession, forced displacement, and cultural erasure.

The proposal outlines amendments that would align the Constitution with international human rights standards,

such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), ILO Convention 169, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. These reforms include the official recognition of Indigenous Peoples in the preamble and bill of rights, protection of ancestral land through legal recognition of customary tenure, and safeguards for cultural heritage, languages, and traditional governance.

The brief also urges targeted advocacy towards Parliament, the judiciary, civil society, and international development partners to support these reforms. It emphasizes the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as essential in all decisions affecting Indigenous lands and livelihoods.



READ: [Advocacy Brief and Constitutional Reforms Proposal](#)



Credit: Used with Permission of MISA Collaborator.

UN Committee Urges Tanzania to End Rights Violations Against the Maasai

On May 12, 2025, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) issued an urgent communication to the Tanzanian government, expressing deep concern over escalating human rights violations against the Maasai Indigenous Peoples in the Ngorongoro and Loliondo regions. This action falls under CERD's early warning and urgent action procedure. The Committee cited new reports revealing multiple violations, including: the removal of Maasai-populated areas from the 2025 voter register without consent, effectively disenfranchising them; forced evictions near Kilimanjaro International Airport in early 2024, linked to an expansion project carried out without consultation or Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC); disproportionate impacts on Maasai districts in land-use changes tied to game reserve development, again without meaningful consultation;

instances of racially motivated police violence and profiling between August and October 2024; continued underprovision of basic services in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, seemingly used as coercion to push the Maasai out.

While the Committee acknowledged recent meetings between government officials and Maasai leaders, as well as the formation of two special commissions in 2025, it emphasized that these steps fall short of Tanzania's international obligations. CERD reiterated its demand that Tanzania uphold the collective land, cultural, and participation rights of the Maasai, ensure full access to justice and compensation, and cease any policies or practices that discriminate against or forcibly displace Indigenous communities. The Committee also urged the government to consult the Maasai on all relevant legislation or development initiatives and to protect them from violence, arbitrary detention, and hate speech.



READ: [CERD early warning](#)



Photo: Protest against seizure of sacred area in Arusha.

Maasai Protest Against Land Grab of a Sacred Area (Elerai) in Arusha

On 20 June, the Maasai (Waarusha) community organized [a protest](#) against the seizure and subdivision of their sacred area (Elerai), situated near Sakina in Arusha. For time immemorial, this land has served as the Waarusha subsection's exclusive venue for initiation rituals where all boys preparing to enter warriorhood (Moran) undergo teaching and traditional rites there. No other site can accommodate this culturally vital practice.

Sadly, the area was subdivided into land plots. It appears that a large area has been demarcated and fenced off without involving the local community. According to reports, former Arusha Regional Commissioner Paul Makonda is alleged to have been responsible for facilitating this land grab.

In response, some Maasai people went and [uprooted](#) several of the boundary markers.



READ: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/192mMBBqAP/>

“

MISA is an apolitical movement and does not stand with any political party. However, we report below on human rights violations in Tanzania and attacks on the opposition and the Church because actors criticizing the government are being silenced like we are. Our goal is to contribute to a free, democratic and safe country for everyone.

Villagers Murdered by TANAPA Rangers in Southern Tanzania

In April and May, two villagers were killed by TANAPA (Tanzania National Park) rangers within the disputed boundaries of Ruaha National Park. On April 26, six fishermen were approached by rangers near Mwanjurwa in the Ihefu Basin. As they attempted to flee, 27-year-old Hamprey Mhaki was shot in the back. He is presumed dead, as the search team later found only a large pool of blood at the site where he was last seen.

Her remains missing. Another incident occurred on May 7 in the village of Udunguzi, where a TANAPA helicopter reportedly opened fire with live ammunition on a group of herders and their cattle. According to eyewitnesses, 20-year-old Sukuma herder Kulwa Igembe was shot in the chest by a ranger on the ground. He died at the scene. The family of the deceased refused to bury the body until further investigation. Tanzanian media report that four TANAPA rangers have been detained by the Mbeya Regional Police Force in connection with Igembe's death. Local sources state that more than 1,000 cattle belonging to various herders were confiscated and taken to the Madundasi ranger post following the incident. Approximately 500 cattle have since been recovered after fines of TSh 100,000 [approximately US\$37] per head were paid.



Photo: Hamprey Mhaki, a young fisherman shot by TANAPA rangers in April 2025. Source: [World Bank-Funded TANAPA Rangers Murder Two Villagers in Ruaha National Park](#) | [The Oakland Institute](#)

The district commissioner confirmed that the National Park collected over 700 billion shillings from the previous month's livestock seizure.



WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tULmBHAIbLA>



READ: Oakland Institute Press Release <https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/press-release/world-bank-funded-tanapa-rangers-murder-two-villagers-ruaha-national-park>



READ: Article prioritizing TANAPA narrative on the issue: <https://tranquilitynews.com/tanzania-refutes-foreign-ngos-misleading-claims-on-ruaha-national-park-saga/>

Will Opposition Leader Tundu Lissu Get A Fair Trial?

The treason trial of the leader of Tanzania's largest opposition party, Tundu Lissu, has marked its hundredth day this week. Arrested April 10th, 2025, this is an overt attempt by the government to stifle dissent and intimidate critics as the government did with Maasai political leaders in 2022. Lissu, a prominent outspoken critic of government human rights violations, is known to be one of the supporters of the Maasai struggle for land rights. From the start, the legal proceedings against Lissu were marred by irregularities. The authorities arrested him without a proper warrant, denied him bail, and no concrete evidence has been presented by the prosecutor to link his criticism of Tanzania's electoral process to any alleged incitement of violence or actual threat to national security. The judiciary's handling of the case raised serious concerns about its independence, as the court seemed to function more as an arm of the executive than an impartial institution. In the last hundred days, every adjournment request by the prosecutor responsible for gathering more evidence to put Lissu on trial has been accepted by the Magistrate without question. Every request made by Tundu Lissu to ensure a fair trial has been blindly rejected by the Magistrate. Tundu Lissu was not allowed to meet his lawyers nor his family. From Friday, April 18th, 2025 (Good Friday), Tundu Lissu was transferred to a death row cell set for those awaiting execution despite the lack of a single piece of evidence presented to commence his sham treason trial.

The government persecution of Tundu Lissu is meant to give incumbent President Samia Suluhu Hassan leeway to win the Presidency against her own shadow.



Photo: Tundu Lissu (Mwanzo TV news)

Lissu's trial must also be understood in the broader context of shrinking political space in Tanzania under the current administration. The ruling party, CCM, had increasingly used legal and extralegal tools to harass, detain, and silence opposition voices. Lissu had already survived an assassination attempt in 2017, which was widely suspected to be politically motivated, making the treason charges appear as yet another way to eliminate him. Despite the threats to his life and liberty, Tundu Lissu has remained defiant, continuing to advocate for democratic reforms and the rule of law. His resilience in the face of oppression has turned him into a symbol of resistance for many Tanzanians. The sham treason trial, while meant to weaken him, ultimately exposed the lengths to which the government would go to maintain power. It also galvanized domestic and international support for greater political freedoms in Tanzania, reminding the world that true democracy requires not just elections, but the protection of dissenting voices.



WATCH: Tundu Lissu case on 1st July 2025 at Kisutu Magistrate Court in DAR ES SALAAM [here](#)



WATCH: Tundu Lissu case on 15th July 2025 at Kisutu Magistrate Court in DAR ES SALAAM [here](#)



Photo: Amani Golugwa. Source: <https://www.ipmedia.com/nipashe/habari/kitaifa/read/golugwa-adaiwa-kukamatwa-uwanja-wa-ndege-dar-2025-05-13-120607>

CHADEMA Officials Barred from Traveling out of Country

In two recent incidents, senior officials of Tanzania's main opposition party, CHADEMA, were prevented from traveling abroad. This is widely seen as part of a broader campaign to restrict the party's international engagement ahead of the general elections in October.

On May 13, Amani Golugwa, CHADEMA's Deputy Secretary General, was detained at Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam. He was en route to Brussels to attend the International Democracy Union (IDU) conference. Police later stated that Golugwa had a "trend of leaving and returning to the country without following legal procedures." He was released on bail, according to his party. The IDU strongly condemned the incident, calling it an "unlawful arrest and assault" and urged international pressure on Tanzania to respect democratic rights.

On June 6, Godbless Lema, another senior CHADEMA official, was barred from crossing the Namanga border into Kenya.

Lema was heading to Nairobi for a medical check-up when immigration officers informed him that "CHADEMA officials have been banned from leaving Tanzania." His passport was confiscated and he was ordered to report to the Immigration Headquarters in Dodoma. CHADEMA described the action as "unlawful, unjust, and politically motivated," suggesting it reflects a wider government strategy to limit the party's influence abroad.

These incidents reflect growing pressure on the opposition in Tanzania. In April 2025, CHADEMA chairman Tundu Lissu was arrested on treason charges after calling for electoral reforms. The party has since been barred from participating in the October elections. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Tanzanian authorities are using politically motivated charges to sideline the opposition.



READ: [Deutsche Welle article](#)

READ: [Reuters article](#)

READ: [The Chanzo article](#)

READ: [The Daily Nation article](#)

Crackdown on Dissent Now Impacting Religious Denominations

In a most bizarre move on 3rd June, the Government of Tanzania officially deregistered the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church, a popular Pentecostal denomination founded by Bishop and Member of Parliament Josephat Gwajima on claims of “non-compliance with registration regulations.” It appears that the deregistration is politically motivated.

The decision comes shortly after Bishop Gwajima publicly condemned a series of enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests that have plagued the country since 2021. In June 2022, for example, Orias Oleng’iyo, a Maasai then 84 years old was arrested with bullet injuries and never seen again. Other notable voices include Mdude Nyagali.

Gwajima simply called for accountability and transparency in the investigation to ensure justice for families affected by the growing trend of enforced disappearances, and other extrajudicial executions connected to the Tanzanian security apparatus.



Photo: Bishop Gwajima. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=988262405997232&set=a.539375024219308>

“People are vanishing without explanation,” Gwajima stated during a widely circulated sermon last month. “As a church leader and as a citizen, I will not remain silent.”

Gwajima is now targeted for this public stance. It’s a clear message to anyone in Tanzania, religious or otherwise, who dares to speak out against state abuses. The deregistration threatens to displace thousands of worshippers across Tanzania who view the Glory of Christ Church not just as a religious institution, but a space for community, healing, and advocacy.

Kenyan and Ugandan Activists Face Repression in Tanzania

In May 2025, a troubling wave of repression against Kenyan and Ugandan human rights activists unfolded in Tanzania, drawing widespread condemnation from civil society groups and international observers. The incidents signal an intensifying crackdown on regional solidarity and dissent, particularly in relation to opposition politics and Indigenous rights. Here are some sad incidents that were reported:

- **18 May:** Prominent Kenyan politician and former justice minister Martha Karua, alongside two others, was detained at Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam. Karua stated her visit was intended to follow up on the treason case of Tanzanian opposition figure Tundu Lissu.
- **18 May:** Kenyan activists Hussein Khalid, former Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, and Hanifa Farsafi were also detained upon arrival in Dar es Salaam, raising alarm over the targeted harassment of human rights defenders.
- **19 May:** Karua was reportedly deported back to Kenya, a move widely criticized as politically motivated and an affront to regional cooperation on democratic accountability.
- **22 May:** Famed Kenyan activist Boniface Mwangi revealed he had been tortured by Tanzanian authorities before being dumped at the Horo Horo border with serious injuries. He was later hospitalized in Kenya.

- **24 May:** A Ugandan activist Agather Atuhaire publicly alleged that she was sexually harassed while in Tanzanian detention, underscoring the gendered violence faced by women defenders under state custody.

These incidents reflect a deeply concerning pattern of transnational repression and human rights violations within the East African region. Civil society groups have called on the Tanzanian government to end arbitrary arrests, protect visiting activists, and uphold its obligations under regional and international human rights law.



WATCH: Maria Sarungi Tsehai, a prominent Tanzanian human rights activist and journalist, give a talk on the Tanzanian government's violent repression of its political opponents and those who do not fall in line, including the Maasai. [Maria Sarungi Tsehai | No Retreat, No Surrender](#)



WATCH: [Karua detained in Tanzania](#)



WATCH: [Boniface Mwangi Tortured And Dumped](#)



READ: [Kenya's ex-justice minister 'deported' from Tanzania](#)



READ: [Kenyan activists Hussein Khalid, former CJ Willy Mutunga, and Hanifa Farsafi detained at Julius Nyerere International Airport](#)



READ: [Ugandan activist raped while in Tanzanian detention](#)

EU Members of Parliament Raise Alarm About Human Rights Situation in Tanzania

On 27 June, EU MEP Michael Gahler issued a statement on the deteriorating political situation in Tanzania and again raised the human rights violations against Tundu Lissu. Gahler presents the politically-motivated arrest of Lissu and the violations of international human rights standards he has endured during his imprisonment. Lissu's situation is set against the backdrop of the systematic repression of the opposition party CHADEMA, as well as Tanzanian and foreign journalists and activists. Despite President Samia Suluhu Hassan's promises of reform, Tanzania is experiencing a return to authoritarian practices. Gahler and his party call on the European Union to demand the immediate release of Tundu Lissu; insist on the restoration of democratic rights and adherence to the rule of law ahead of the elections; and consider targeted sanctions against those responsible for severe human rights abuses.



Photo: Michael Gahler. Source: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/fr/2341/MICHAEL_GAHLER/home



READ: Michael Gahler's [statement](#)



Additional Media Resources

The Cost of Conservation—How Tanzania Is Erasing the Maasai Identity (19 June, 2025)

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2025/06/the-cost-of-conservation-how-tanzania-is-erasing-the-maasai-identity/>

AFSA report on The Threat of Land Grabs in Emboreet Ward, Tanzania

<https://afsafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/maasai-emboreet-en-copy.pdf>