



## Maasai International Solidarity Alliance

### MISA STATEMENT ON THE TWO PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSIONS REPORTS.

#### Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) Rejects Presidential Commission Recommendations and Reaffirms Maasai Right to Remain on Ancestral Lands

18 March 2026

We, the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance, a platform that defends the rights of the Maasai in Tanzania and internationally, issue this statement in response to the reports of the two Presidential Commissions presented on **12 March 2026**, concerning land use and relocation policies in our homeland.

After careful consideration, we **categorically reject the recommendations of these commissions.**

#### *A Flawed Process*

The formation of the two Commissions in December 2024 was a direct response to the large protests of August 2024. When we, the Maasai, stood up to demand our rights, it was to send a clear message to state authorities that repression should stop. The establishment of two Commissions has created hope among our communities that their concerns, experiences and proposals would be heard and reflected in the reports. Our people came out in large numbers to testify, hoping that the process would help resolve existing land-use disputes. From the outset, however, **the Terms of Reference (ToR) were designed to rubber-stamp decisions that had already been made.** Both Commissions focused on how relocation out of the Ngorongoro Division could be carried out successfully, rather than on how to address the issues raised by its residents.

#### *Non-Credible Reports*

The Commission reports are neither independent nor credible assessments of the factual realities of the people living in Ngorongoro, Loliondo, Sale and Msomera. They rely heavily on previously contested policy documents such as the 2019 Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) Report (revised 2024) and reproduce the same narratives that have long been used to justify the **displacement of Maasai pastoralists from our ancestral lands.** The conclusions presented are based on **inflated population projections, selective and incorrect use of human, wildlife and livestock data, and serious institutional conflicts of interest,** while ignoring scientific evidence that contradicts the state narrative. We are deeply concerned that the Commissions' recommendations completely ignored residents' opinions. If implemented, such recommendations will increase existing land use disputes instead of resolving them.

### *False Narratives*

For generations, we Maasai have lived in Ngorongoro in a system of **co-existence with wildlife**. Our pastoral livelihood is not and will not be a threat to conservation. On the contrary, our traditional knowledge and communal land management practices have **sustained this ecosystem for centuries**. The two Commissions attempt to portray our presence as the primary source of environmental pressure, which is not true. At the same time, the Commissions are completely **ignoring the rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure, luxury lodges, roads, hunting and safari traffic**, which have a negative impact on wildlife and the environment. These omissions reveal a clear bias: pastoralist communities are blamed, while commercial interests are treated as environmentally neutral.

### *Some Admissions but No Accountability*

We welcome the admission by one of the two Commissions that relocation policies implemented since 2021 have not been voluntary. We have repeatedly stated that our communities have experienced unacceptable restrictions on basic services, land access, and social infrastructure that have effectively **coerced our people to leave their homes through deprivation rather than choice**. We denounce the fact that the Commissions are silent on the implication of government officials in the mistreatment and repression of the Maasai, a silence that reflects potential bias. The two Commissions failed to hold the government accountable for the removal of social services, including the grounding of the Flying Medical Service, which has had devastating consequences on our people's health. We categorically reject the recommendation that relocation should continue.

We welcome the admission that residents from Loliondo want land in Pololeti back, but condemn the Commissions for **failing to address the legality of the creation of Pololeti Game Reserve**. We disagree with the fact that the Commissions made recommendations about Lake Natron, which was not part of the Commissions' mandate and whose people did not speak with the Commissions. We **reject the Commissions' statement that Lake Natron is a Game Controlled Area (GCA)**. The area counts 26 villages and more than 70,000 people. According to Tanzanian law, no GCA can be established or continued in village lands.

### *Continued Harassment*

We are equally troubled by developments that have taken place since the reports were submitted to the President. The Tanzanian Broadcast Corporation (TBC) produced a documentary that mirrors the Land Commission's executive summary and amplifies the state propaganda we have witnessed since 2021. It promotes degrading narratives about Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) residents that we consider racist and discriminatory. Now, these narratives are not only aired by media houses but by the State House itself. We are also concerned that, on 15 March, NCAA rangers arrested three Ngorongoro residents in the Ndotu area, ordering them to vacate their land to allow for the expansion of tourism activities.

*We therefore state clearly:*

- **We reject the recommendations of the Presidential Commissions and urge the State not to implement them. People's voices must be heard.**
- **We will not accept any relocation from our ancestral lands.**

- We reaffirm our right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and our legitimate right to remain in Ngorongoro District and continue our pastoral way of life.
- We reaffirm that Lake Natron is not a Game Controlled Area (GCA) and is village land under the law. We reject the statement proposing the upgrading of Lake Natron into a Game Reserve as Lake Natron Game Reserve does not exist in law.
- We reaffirm our legitimate right to manage and access the 1,500 square kilometres of land in Loliondo. Our village lands were illegally and violently converted to the Pololeti Game Reserve in 2022. Livestock confiscations, harassment and arbitrary arrests of herders must stop.
- We will not accept any amendments to the NCA Act to legalise the eviction of our people in any way. We will resort to mass peaceful action to resist any attempt to take away the legal protections that were given to our people after being evicted from Serengeti.
- We call on the government to stop the ongoing harassment of herders across Pololet, Ndotu, Oldupai and other places in the name of conservation.
- We reject the Commission's view that the Multiple Land Use Model has failed. We reaffirm our right to coexist with wildlife and demand that NCA management be placed in the hands of Indigenous Peoples.

We are **not enemies of conservation**. We are **its custodians**. Our communities have managed and protected wildlife and landscapes for centuries, through systems rooted in culture, strategic mobility, and communal land use. We have a right to stay and should be allowed to live as free Peoples. As Tanzania's first President, Nyerere said:

*"You can't turn round and say we no longer want you, you are no longer citizens of our country. What are you going to do? To return them alone or return them with a piece of land? You can't say go home, home where? We couldn't in Tanzania, fed up with Maasai and tell Maasai to go back to Kenya. Kenya is not their home. These are Maasai of Tanzania."*

The future of Ngorongoro, Loliondo, Pololeti, Lake Natron and Serengeti lies in recognising **and strengthening the role of the Indigenous Peoples as historical stewards of this land**.

We call upon the Government of Tanzania to exercise its primary obligation under Article 8 of our Constitution to protect the welfare of its citizens. The government must recognise **and protect our rights**. We call on the international donor community, conservation organisations, IUCN and UNESCO to **support the Maasai Conservation Vision and stop promoting conservation models that do not respect Indigenous Peoples and their territories**.

Our position is firm: **We will remain on our land. We want genuine dialogue, not oppression.**

Signed,

MISA.

Email: [maasaiinternationalsolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:maasaiinternationalsolidarity@gmail.com)