



FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2025

Tanzania

35
/100

NOT FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	11 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	24 /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

36 /100 **Partly Free**

A country or territory's Freedom in the World status depends on its aggregate Political Rights score, on a scale of 0–40, and its aggregate Civil Liberties score, on a scale of 0–60. See the methodology.



Status Change

Tanzania’s status declined from Partly Free to Not Free because the authorities altered the voter registrations of ethnic Maasai citizens as part of a repressive campaign to expel their communities from a planned game reserve.

Overview

Tanzania has held regular multiparty elections since its transition from a one-party state in the early 1990s, but the opposition remains weak. The ruling Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) has retained power for over 60 years. Samia Suluhu Hassan became president in 2021 upon the death of President John Magufuli, who had cracked down on critics in the opposition, media, and civil society. After a period of some liberalization, President Hassan has begun to resort to similarly repressive tactics.

Key Developments in 2024

- A wave of violent, enforced disappearances of political activists took place during the year. President Hassan rejected calls for an independent inquiry into the disappearances.
- The government continued efforts to forcibly evict Indigenous Maasai communities living in Ngorongoro, cutting off access to public services altering people’s voter registrations. Resistance was violently repressed. After thousands of Maasai held a sit-in to block important tourist roads, the government pledged to restore their rights to vote and access services.
- While large-scale protests were tolerated at the start of the year, protests and rallies later on were met with mass arrests and repression.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?	1 / 4
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The president is elected by direct popular vote for up to two five-year terms. In the event of the president's death, the vice president assumes the post and completes their predecessor's term. Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan became president in March 2021 after President John Magufuli died. In September 2021, she announced plans to run in 2025.

Magufuli had won the 2020 presidential election with 84.5 percent of the vote in a contest marred by widespread fraud, threats of violence against opposition figures, the use of police force against opposition demonstrators, and the exclusion of international and local election observers. Opposition parties rejected the results and called for protests but organizers were arrested, and a widespread protest movement never emerged.

The semiautonomous region of Zanzibar elects its own president, who serves no more than two five-year terms. The 2020 Zanzibar presidential poll was also marked by controversy. Before polls opened, Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT–Wazalendo) candidate Seif Sharif Hamad was detained and remained in custody during the election period. The army and police were accused of firing into a crowd days before the election, killing several people. Reports of further detentions, killings, and torture emerged after the election. That November, ACT–Wazalendo agreed to form a unity government with the CCM, whose candidate, Hussein Mwinyi, had handily won according to the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC). Hamad served as vice president, prompting co-optation accusations.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

1 / 4

Legislative authority lies with a unicameral, 393-seat National Assembly (the Bunge) whose members serve five-year terms. There are 264 seats filled through direct elections in single-member constituencies, while 113 are reserved for women elected by political parties, 10 are filled by presidential appointment, and 5 members are elected by the Zanzibar legislature. The attorney general holds an ex officio seat.

The 2020 legislative election was marred by extensive fraud and intimidation allegations. Widespread interference in nomination processes, both bureaucratic and physical, led to around 30 opposition candidates being kept off the ballot. Numerous legislative and local government candidates were detained during the campaign period. On election day, opposition politicians complained of election interference and fraud; 97 percent of the directly elected seats went to the CCM, substantially increasing its majority.

Members of Zanzibar’s 85-seat House of Representatives serve five-year terms and are installed through a mix of direct elections and appointments. The 2020 legislative elections in Zanzibar were also marred by allegations of fraud.

The 2024 local elections, in which the CCM won more than 98 percent of contested seats, were marred by irregularities and violence. Opposition figures were arrested ahead of the polls, and many opposition candidates were disqualified from running. Opposition parties publicized details of incidents of ballot stuffing and seizures, and reported violence against their candidates and supporters.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?	1/4
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The National Electoral Commission (NEC), which was responsible for overseeing countrywide elections, was criticized for poor administration of voter-registration processes ahead of the 2020 elections, and it oversaw the rejection of dozens of legislative and local candidates on technicalities. Opposition parties accused the NEC of complicity in widespread ballot stuffing and the use of “ghost voters” to benefit the CCM. The NEC did not release the full results of local or legislative elections in 2020.

Parliament passed reforms in February 2024 to make NEC independent from the executive, renaming it the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Instead of being selected by the president, appointees are now chosen by a panel chaired by the chief justice of mainland Tanzania; the chief justice of Zanzibar serves as vice chair. However, all appointees are subject to executive approval, and

analysts and regime opponents maintain that the INEC appointment process is susceptible to politicization.

The ZEC conducts elections for Zanzibar’s governing institutions.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	1/4
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Tanzanians have the right to organize into political parties, but the ruling CCM enjoys considerable incumbency advantages that stifle competition. Opposition party members face arrests and the obstruction of political rallies and other events.

The system of state funding for parties under the Political Parties Act (PPA) of 2015 disproportionately benefits the CCM. Political parties are regulated by a presidentially appointed Registrar of Political Parties (RPP) that the opposition criticizes for partisan bias. PPA amendments enacted in 2019 empower a government minister, who enjoys legal immunity, to regulate party coalition formation, ban internationally sourced political fundraising, and prohibit parties from “activism.” In 2024 two new opposition parties, the Independent People’s Party and Action for Human Justice (AHJ Wajamaa), which are led by Magufuli-era CCM hardliners, reported that the RPP has stalled their registration amid fears of a split in the CCM vote.

In January 2023, Hassan repealed a Magufuli-era ban on political rallies and demonstrations outside election periods, but in 2024, Hassan characterized opposition demonstrations as endangering law and order; police dispersed a number of events and by year’s end had announced that political rallies would no longer be allowed.

Opposition activists and politicians were subject to enforced disappearances and torture ahead of the 2024 and 2025 elections. Several Chadema youth activists involved in planning protests against the government, including Deusdedith Soka and Dioniz Kipanya, disappeared after being arrested by police. Ally Kibao, senior member of the Chadema secretariat, was abducted by men who identified themselves as soldiers in September and found dead a day later with severe acid burns to his face and other signs of torture. President Hassan rejected calls for an independent inquiry into the disappearances.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

1/4

The CCM has governed without interruption for over 60 years. The fragmented opposition's electoral prospects are limited due to interference, harassment, co-optation, deadly violence against activists, and criminal prosecutions.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?

1/4

Tanzanian voters and politicians are subject to significant undue influence from unaccountable entities using antidemocratic tactics. Local administrative officials are technically nonpartisan, but most are CCM loyalists or former security personnel. They have significant power within their jurisdictions and have been especially repressive when overseeing opposition-oriented areas. Hassan has appointed more hardliners to these roles, mostly notably Paul Makonda in Arusha. Increasing violence against opposition figures discourages unfettered political expression by citizens.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

1/4

The constitution guarantees citizens the right to vote, but the political participation of some groups is limited in practice.

Women hold 36.8 percent of legislative seats; the constitution requires that 30 percent of seats are held by women. However, women are underrepresented in directly elected seats. Hassan, Tanzania’s first female president, has promoted women’s representation in her own government and has significantly increased the number of women appointed to positions in local administration. However, misogynistic behavior has persisted in politics. LGBT+ people, who face the risk of arrest and harsh discrimination, cannot openly advance their political interests.

In August 2024, the government disenfranchised large swathes of the Maasai community—reportedly around 100,000 people—in the Ngorongoro crater as a reprisal for resistance to forced eviction and related cuts to basic services. Authorities had stated plans to establish a game preserve in the area. After large-scale protests in September, the government pledged to restore these rights.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the authorities altered the voter registrations of ethnic Maasai citizens as part of a repressive campaign to expel their communities from a planned game reserve.

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?	1 / 4
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The CCM government actively manages the activities of its legislators and has threatened those who are frequently absent. Lawmakers who criticize government ministers or policy in parliament are subject to punishment via parliamentary ethics rules. Speaker Tulia Ackson, a close ally of President Hassan, prevents discussions of sensitive issues on the parliament floor. In 2024, she blocked questions regarding the wave of forced disappearances on multiple occasions.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?	2 / 4
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Corruption remains a problem in Tanzania, and reform efforts have yielded mixed results. The Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau has been accused of focusing on low-level corruption and doing little to address graft committed by senior officials. Recent audits have revealed that public funds were misappropriated or unaccounted for.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?	1 / 4
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A weak access to information act was adopted in 2016. The law imposes prison terms on officials who improperly release information but assigns no clear penalties for those who improperly withhold information. The government continues to resist transparency efforts and punish journalists and civil society groups that attempted to expose official wrongdoing.

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?	1 / 4
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Independent journalists and media outlets are subject to harsh repression in Tanzania. The 2016 Media Services Act grants the government broad authority over media content and the licensing of outlets and journalists. It also prescribes severe penalties, including prison terms, for publication of defamatory, seditious, or other illegal content. Sustained legal and regulatory pressure on journalists and

other public figures has contributed to self-censorship and other suppression of news coverage.

After taking power in 2021, Hassan lifted a ban on some online media outlets and restored the licenses of several newspapers banned under Magufuli, leading to an increase in qualified criticism of the government. However, self-censorship remains prevalent, especially around the forced evictions of Maasai people and enforced disappearances. The English-language paper *The Citizen* and its sister Swahili-language paper *Mwananchi* had their online publishing licenses suspended for 30 days in October 2024 after *The Citizen*'s social media accounts posted an animation portraying President Hassan wrestling with guilt while watching fictionalized interviews of parents of disappeared activists.

Authorities have also continued to target journalists under Hassan. Five journalists were detained for covering the banned Chadema youth conference in Mbeya in August. After publishing police reports and sexual assault allegations against the Simiyu regional commissioner on her blog, journalist Dinna Maningo was held without bail or access to a lawyer for several weeks. Several journalists were arrested covering protests against forced disappearances in Dar es Salaam in September. Musicians and artists who criticize the government in their work faced arrests and censorship in 2024. A number of LGBT+ websites are blocked in Tanzania.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?	3/4
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Freedom of religion is generally respected and interfaith relations are largely peaceful, though sectarian violence has periodically occurred. Muslims are believed to be a minority nationwide, but almost all Zanzibaris practice Islam. Political tensions between mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar often play out along religious lines. The government occasionally raises the specter of interreligious conflict as an excuse to detain political rivals, contributing to a sense that Muslims are sometimes treated unfairly by authorities.

In September 2024, police created an encampment inside of the perimeter of a Roman Catholic church to force the arrest of an opposition politician, John

Mnyika, who was taking refuge inside. The move stood in contrast to the deference to religious authorities that has long characterized Tanzanian politics.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?	2/4
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Tanzanian academics engage in self-censorship, though scholars sometimes release reports critical of the government.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?	1/4
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The government historically monitored the population through a neighborhood-level CCM cell structure and has policed personal expression on social media in recent years. Under laws including the 2015 Cybercrimes Act and the 2018 Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, social media users have been prosecuted for insulting the president. Vague prohibitions on communication that “causes annoyance” or “leads to public disorder” have empowered authorities to suppress speech at their discretion. The Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations 2020 prohibits “spreading rumors” or insulting the nation online.

Internet shutdowns and blocks on social media are common at times of increased political tension. In 2024, the government banned unauthorized use of virtual private networks (VPNs), an important tool allowing people to use the internet anonymously and access blocked content.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?	1 / 4
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The constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, but the government limits this right through legal mechanisms, restrictions on social media platforms used to organize, and outright violence. Organizers must notify the police 48 hours in advance of any demonstration, and police have broad discretion to prohibit gatherings deemed to threaten public safety or order.

In January 2023, the government repealed a 2016 ban on political rallies and public meetings, and a number of opposition and political gatherings took place in the subsequent months. By the end of 2024, permission for political protests and rallies was routinely denied, with police eventually announcing a moratorium on rallies. This shift followed a period of high political tension marked by violence towards demonstrators from both opposition parties and from the Maasai community. Over 500 people were arrested during a Youth Day demonstration in Mbeya organized by Chadema in August. In September, around 60 people were arrested ahead of planned protests in the capital against the wave of unexplained disappearances of political activists.

Tanzanian authorities have used excessive force against Maasai protesters. Ongoing protests against the government’s forced evictions have been met with violence and arbitrary arrests. In August 2024, members of the Maasai community blocked important tourist roads into the Ngorongoro crater over several days to protest mass evictions and suspension of public services in the area. Dozens of protest leaders and participants were arrested; graphic footage circulated on social media alongside claims that the person depicted in the video had been shot and killed by police.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?	2 / 4
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Tanzania has a diverse and active civil society sector, but NGOs are subject to laws that give the government broad authority to deregister them. Human rights organizations and activists have been subject to restrictions, deregistration, legal

harassment, and unlawful arrests. NGOs are prohibited from filing public-interest litigation and are subject to onerous financial reporting requirements.

In 2024, civil society leaders were outspoken about the government’s abuses of power and the year’s wave of abductions. However, NGOs have not restarted election-related work, which was a particular target under Magufuli.

Edgar Mwakabela, a rights activist better known as Sativa, in July 2024 said he was abducted from Dar es Salaam and recounted being tortured and interrogated at police stations across Tanzania over several days.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?	2 / 4
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Trade unions are nominally independent of the government and are coordinated by the Trade Union Congress of Tanzania and the Zanzibar Trade Union Congress. The government has significant discretion to deny union registration, and many private employers engage in antiunion activities.

Strikes are infrequent on both the mainland and Zanzibar. A short strike by market traders in Dar es Salaam took place in June 2024, with services resuming after striking workers and authorities reached an agreement.

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?	1 / 4
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Judges are political appointees. The underfunded judiciary does not have an independent budget, making it vulnerable to political pressure. The results of such pressure have been evident in cases involving opposition figures and government critics. Lower-level courts are especially affected by political influence and corruption. Lawyers and judges critical of the government sometimes face harassment and professional censure.

Lawyers involved in human rights cases around LGBT+ rights, pastoralist rights, and political opposition risk surveillance and intimidation. Rights lawyer Alphonse Lusako said he was subject to an attempted abduction by unknown assailants in December 2024.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?	1 / 4
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Due process guarantees are poorly upheld in civil and criminal matters. Policies and rules governing arrest and pretrial detention are often ignored, and pretrial detention commonly lasts years due to case backlogs and inadequate funding for prosecutors. Legal activists have been known to suffer repercussions for seeking justice through courts. Arbitrary and often violent arrests of opposition politicians, journalists, and civil society leaders have been commonplace. Dissidents and are often detained by unknown assailants and returned to police custody without explanation. The summer of 2024 saw a wave of irregular arrests and forced disappearances.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?	1 / 4
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Reports of abuse and torture of suspects in police custody are common, and police have been accused of extrajudicial killings and other violence in recent years. In 2024, documented instances of extreme violence, torture, and deaths of opposition activists reached Magufuli-era highs.

Rights organizations have reported on alleged human rights abuses against Tanzania’s pastoralist communities by security forces, including the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA); TANAPA rangers have been accused of engaging in extreme violence against members of these communities, including torture, sexual assault, and murder. Rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) report ill-treatment, excessive use of force including gunfire, sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and forced evictions by authorities against Maasai communities. Several individuals who faced

arbitrary arrests for their opposition to forced evictions have reported being tortured while in the custody of the security services. The government has repeatedly called in the military to suppress dissent and organized resistance to forced evictions.

Police use extreme force to deal with theft and dissent around foreign commercial interests including minerals and gas deposits. In 2024, the Tanzanian police were implicated in several deaths around mines in Mara.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	1 / 4
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Women’s rights are constitutionally guaranteed but not uniformly protected. Women face de facto discrimination in employment, including sexual harassment, which is rarely addressed through formal legal channels. Women’s socioeconomic disadvantages are more pronounced in rural areas and in the informal economy.

Same-sex sexual relations are punishable by lengthy prison terms, and LGBT+ people face discrimination and police abuse, leading most to hide aspects of their identities. Men who are suspected of same-sex sexual activity have been arrested and forced to undergo anal examinations. Authorities regularly suspend social media accounts of people advocating for LGBT+ rights. In 2024, Tanzania’s information minister threatened to arrest people who sent online messages deemed to promote homosexuality.

About 103,000 Burundian refugees resided in Tanzania as of December 2024, according to UN statistics. There continue to be reports of Burundian refugees being forcibly repatriated. In recent years, the authorities have arbitrarily arrested and deported some Kenyans, many of whom had been granted Tanzanian citizenship.

Pastoralist ethnic groups do not enjoy equal treatment. These groups often live near lucrative national parks, and the government has engaged in heavy-handed treatment of those who refuse to comply with government directives to move. In 2024, the government continued its attempts to forcibly evict Maasai people living in Ngorongoro, including by seizing livestock and cutting off the communities’

access to water and to public services like schools and health care clinics. After large-scale protests, the government provisionally agreed to restore public services and voting rights.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?	2 / 4
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Residents enjoy some basic freedoms pertaining to travel and changes of residence, employment, and education. The government has wide discretion in enforcing laws that can limit movement, particularly in Zanzibar, where the approval of local government appointees is often required for changes in employment, personal banking, and residency.

The government imposes travel restrictions on activists, human rights researchers, opposition figures, and other prominent individuals. In September 2024, opposition politician Godbless Lema was arrested and removed from a state-owned Air Tanzania airplane while trying to leave the country.

The government’s forced removals of pastoralist communities has reportedly resulted in the displacement of thousands. Officials and politicians from both the CCM and opposition parties face arrest for participating in protests objecting to the mass evictions of Maasai and public service closures in Ngorongoro.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?	2 / 4
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Tanzanians have the right to establish private businesses but are often required to pay bribes to license and operate them. The state owns all land and leases it to individuals and private entities, leading to clashes over land rights between citizens

and companies engaged in extractive industries. These laws have been used to expropriate the resources and lands of opposition politicians.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?	2 / 4
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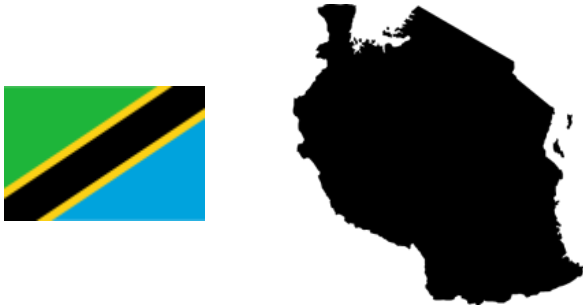
Rape, domestic violence, and female genital mutilation (FGM) are common but rarely prosecuted. In 2024, a high-profile case of gang rape caused public outcry; among those convicted were a military member and a prison officer. Laws and practices regarding marriage, divorce, and other personal status issues favor men over women, particularly in Zanzibar.

The Health Ministry in 2024 cited family planning as a priority, saying it was a means of easing the strains of a quickly growing population and empowering women to plan their lives. Authorities are increasing related funding through 2030.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?	2 / 4
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Sexual and labor exploitation remain problems, especially for children living in poor rural areas who are drawn into domestic service, agricultural labor, mining, and other activities. Child labor in gold mines, where working conditions are often dangerous, is common. Most Tanzanians do not benefit from the country’s extensive natural-resource wealth.



On Tanzania

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Country Facts

Population

65,500,000

Global Freedom Score

35/100 **Not Free**

Other Years

2024

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1850 M St. NW Floor 11
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-5101

GENERAL INQUIRIES

info@freedomhouse.org

PRESS & MEDIA

press@freedomhouse.org

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