

**To the attention of the World Heritage Committee**

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

you will soon be examining the state of conservation of World Heritage properties at your annual meeting in Paris this July 2025. On behalf of the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA), we would like to provide you with relevant information to consider when assessing the situation of the Ngorongoro World Heritage Site. We trust that you will take seriously the information we are providing as a third party, as we represent affected local communities living and experiencing severe challenges in Ngorongoro. Our objective is to rectify some of the fallacious and inaccurate information provided by the Tanzanian government in its state party report.

First, UNESCO decision 46 COM 7B.48 noted that “maintaining a multiple land use model has more advantages economically, socially, culturally, politically and internally than the one that advocates for changing NCA to another protected area category”. To this, the government argues that the Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) has more negative impacts, due to “increased human population and livestock, changes in life forms, transformation in land use patterns and climate change”. **We contest this assessment and insist on the importance of co-existence** as the most valid, viable and desirable approach to conservation. We share our [Maasai conservation vision](#) in annex 1 as a testimony to our approach, which is an important step towards decolonising conservation. It is high time UNESCO and the Tanzanian government move away from a fortress conservation model, which evicts people and separates humans from nature and their ancestral land only to bring other humans (tourists) for business.

Second, the government argues that the “voluntary relocation” program to Msomera is the outcome of community engagement. **We think this is outrageous considering that the government coerced and restricted Maasai traditional pastoralist practices and limited access to social services to induce relocation.** The people of Ngorongoro would not have blocked the Serengeti road in August 2024 and stood bravely for several days if it were not to stand against the injustice of starvation and forced relocation. Evictions have had terrible impacts on people’s livelihoods and human suffering, especially for women and children.

Third, the UNESCO decision recognises that the advisory mission that took place in February 2024 led to many complaints by local communities and stakeholders who were not met by the expert team nor adequately consulted. We appreciate this acknowledgement and **support the call for a more inclusive engagement with all relevant actors involved, especially affected Indigenous Peoples, Maasai and non-Maasai.** The government rejects this. We trust that the upcoming reactive monitoring mission will be as participatory, transparent and inclusive as required to meet human rights standards.

Fourth, the UNESCO decision reiterates its request to receive a full assessment of the environmental impacts of developments in the wider Serengeti ecosystem, especially linked

to tourism, such as increased traffic. The government argues it has lacked resources to conduct this assessment. **We believe using such an argument is scandalous considering the millions generated by tourism revenue.** [According to NCA official statistics](#), from July 2021 to May 2025, 719,940,407,719 billion shillings (approximately 282,329,572 Million USD) have been generated in revenues from tourism at NCA alone. This amounts to roughly 70 million USD a year.

Fifth, the UNESCO decision calls for a moratorium on new developments until the assessment is conducted. **We want to make it very clear that the government has not halted developments and is not respecting the moratorium UNESCO has imposed.** Rather, it is actively constructing and planning the development of new hotels. This will only add pressure to the environment, as it will increase the number of beds beyond the existing list of hotels that are already available in the area (see annex 2). Ngorongoro Indigenous Peoples are not being informed about nor consenting to these massive accommodation and infrastructure developments, in violation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of IPs and your guidance on the matter. While we are waiting for the outcome of the two Presidential Commissions, the President is not. Her intentions to continue developing tourism infrastructure in Ngorongoro are clear, as recently stated in [her speech dated 28 June 2025](#). In this statement, the President stated that tourists want to see wildlife upon arrival in NCA, not people and livestock, which is a clear message that she intends to further intensify the current levels of violence, suffering and family destruction linked to evictions. She also stated that there are “thorns” in Ngorongoro (i.e. activists who are against her) in Ngorongoro, which should be eliminated. Considering the current levels of repression and criminalization against opposition party members, and the fact that Tanzania’s country status has been downgraded to [NOT FREE by Freedom House \(report 2025\)](#), this is equally worrying. [According to official data](#), tourist numbers have increased from 758,634 in 2024 to 925,163 in 2025, reaching unsustainable levels.

Finally, the government response outlines that it is finalising its draft General Management Plan (GMP) and is putting in place various management and conservation efforts for the Ngorongoro World Heritage Site. We find it highly problematic that no consultation has taken place with residents of NCA to develop this GMP, and that the exercise is completely lacking transparency and legitimacy. The topic of the GMP was intensely discussed by communities in their meetings with the Presidential Commissions (see [MISA newsletters](#) for updates).

The state party report fails to adequately address the concerns of the Maasai community, who have historically inhabited and depended on this land. The government response concentrates on governance, tourism development, and land use, but does not explicitly prioritise human rights or ensure their long-term sustainability. While it mentions “stakeholder engagement” in certain sections, it does not provide evidence that indigenous voices were actively and adequately included in decision-making processes. As primary stakeholders, we can attest that inclusion in decision-making has been absent.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Maasai International Solidarity Alliance

You will find in annex to this contribution:

- the Maasai conservation vision (annex 1)
- a list of all existing hotels and accommodation facilities in NCA (annex 2)
- newsletters of the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance about what is really happening in Maasai land ([Jan-March 2025](#), [April 2025](#)) (annex 3)