



Document #2085503

HRW – Human Rights Watch (Author)

World Report 2023 - Tanzania

President Samia Suluhu Hassan's government lifted the ban on newspapers, ended a decades-long prohibition on pregnant students and adolescent mothers attending school, and released a political opposition leader from detention. However, the government continued arresting opposition supporters. Authorities have yet to conduct meaningful investigations into serious abuses that marred the 2020 elections and have not reformed the raft of legislation restricting the right to freedom of expression. The government forcibly relocated pastoral Maasai communities, despite protests by community members, local groups, and the international community.

Freedom of Expression and Media

Despite taking some positive steps by lifting the ban on some publications, media continued to face severe restrictions.

On February 10, the minister for information [lifted the ban](#) on *Mseto*, *Mawio*, *Mwanahalisi*, and *Tanzania Daima* newspapers, which had been imposed for publishing articles critical of late President John Magufuli. Since 2015, authorities had regularly revoked the licenses of newspapers for publishing material critical of the government, often citing the 2016 Media Services Act.

On July 1, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) [suspended online media outlet DarMpya](#) for failing to renew its license, following the publication's coverage of a June 17 protest in Dar es Salaam against alleged interference by Kenya during the government's relocation of pastoralist Maasai communities in northern Tanzania. Local media [reported that DarMpya changed its name to ZamaMpya](#) in August after TCRA did not approve its application to renew its license.

The whereabouts of the investigative journalist Azory Gwanda, who was picked up from his home in Kibiti by unidentified people in November 2017 while investigating serious alleged human rights violations, remain unknown. The authorities have not conducted meaningful investigations into his forced disappearance [despite calls by local activists and media](#).

Government Opponents

On March 4, the authorities released Freeman Mbowe, chairperson of the Chadema political party, Tanzania's main opposition party, after he [spent more than seven months in pretrial detention](#) on terrorism charges. Police [arrested Mbowe and 11 other party members](#) on July 22, in Mwanza, where they were due to hold a conference to discuss reforms to the country's constitution, which the party said [gives too much power to the president](#).

On May 25, police in Manyara [arrested and detained for several hours 20 members of Chadema's youth wing](#) at a meeting on constitutional reforms. Chadema alleged [in a statement](#) that the police beat some of the youth leaders while they were in detention.

Children's Rights

On March 8, the Tanzanian government and the World Bank published their agreement to restructure Tanzania's Secondary Education Quality Improvement Program, pledged new measures to effectively end a school ban against students who are pregnant or are mothers, and ensure their right to education. The government pledged to forbid "involuntary pregnancy testing," which had been mandatory in most secondary schools and is used to expel pregnant students. These reforms remained outstanding at time of writing.

The Education Act still allows for [students to be expelled](#) if they are married or if they commit "an offense against morality," which has been used in the past to expel students who are pregnant, married, or are mothers.

On September 15, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child [found that Tanzania violated pregnant girls and adolescent mothers'](#) rights to education, health, privacy, and their best interests through mandatory pregnancy testing at schools, and subsequent expulsion of pregnant and married girls.

The government has also not outlawed child marriage despite a [2016 High Court decision to amend the Marriage Act](#) to raise the legal age of marriage to 18 for girls and boys.

Land Rights

Following longstanding land disputes in the northern Arusha region, in mid-2022 the government pushed ahead with its involuntary and forcible relocation of pastoral Maasai communities from a designated game-controlled area in Ngorongoro, despite protests by community members, widespread international criticism, and a 2018 court injunction against the evictions. United Nations human rights experts [warned](#) that the government's actions could amount to forced evictions and arbitrary displacement, prohibited under international law.

Tanzanian authorities [threatened](#) to arrest and "hold accountable" people that protested the relocation. Authorities also announced plans for a 10-day special operation to remove all "illegal immigrants" following [allegations](#) that pastoralists from Kenya had illegally crossed the border to occupy the area. Maasai people inhabit both Kenya and Tanzania.

The authorities threatened and arrested people for commenting on the relocation exercise and on June 10, security forces shot at and fired tear gas at protesting community members. Police arrested and later charged 23 community members for the killing of policeman Garlius Mwita on June 10.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The authorities continue to use the Sexual Offenses Special Provisions Act of 1998 to punish consensual adult same-sex conduct by up to life imprisonment, while the authorities continue to [restrict organizations](#) working to promote the rights and health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

On September 11, the minister of information, Nape Nnauye, said that [people found to be distributing materials depicting same-sex relations online](#) would face “strict action.” The 2020 [Electronic and Postal Communications \(Online Content\) Regulations](#) prohibit “[promoting homosexuality](#),” which could include conducting LGBT rights advocacy. Violators may be fined or sentenced from one to up [to five years](#) in prison.

ecoi.net description:

Annual report on the human rights situation in 2022

Country:

Tanzania, United Republic

Source:

[HRW – Human Rights Watch](#) (Author)

Original link:

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/tanzania-and-zanzibar>

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

12 January 2023

Available on ecoi.net since:

16 January 2023

Document ID:

2085503

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ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

