

World Report 2024



Tanzania

Events of 2023

Residents of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in northern Tanzania overlook facilities belonging to the Ngorongoro Pastoral Council, June 18, 2023.

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The government of Tanzania continued its forced evictions of pastoralist Maasai communities from areas in northern Tanzania's Ngorongoro district.

President Suluhu Hassan ended a five-year ban on political rallies and announced steps toward constitutional reform, but the authorities arrested political opposition figures and critics of a [controversial government deal](#) for the management of the country's ports. The government failed to implement a 2016 High Court decision to raise the age of marriage for women to 18.

Freedom of Expression and Media

On May 12, Gerson Msigwa, the chief government spokesperson, [asked the public](#) to share information with law enforcement officials to aid the investigation to establish the whereabouts of missing journalist Azory Gwanda. Gwanda was picked up from his home in Kibiti in the Pwani region by unidentified people in November 2017 while investigating serious alleged human rights violations. The authorities [have not conducted meaningful investigations](#) into his enforced disappearance.

The authorities [detained or threatened](#) at least 23 people since June 10, including protesters, after they criticized the Tanzania National Assembly's ratification of an agreement for the management

of Tanzania's ports for giving the Emirate of Dubai excessive control of Tanzania's ports. At a press conference on August 11, Inspector General of Police Camilius Wambura described the online criticism of the agreement as "seditious" and said authorities would deal with those critical of the agreement.

In September, police [arrested gospel singers](#) Sifa Bujune, Salome Mwampeta, and Hezekiel Millyashi on accusations of promoting an inciteful song. Their arrest was in connection with their song "[Mnatuona Nyani](#)" ("You See Us as Monkeys"), which is about police brutality. The three were detained for five days without bail.

Government Opponents

At a meeting with political party leaders in Dar es Salaam on January 3, President Hassan [announced](#) the [end](#) of a six-year ban on politicians holding political rallies and meetings outside of election periods.

On January 26, opposition leader and former presidential candidate Tundu Lissu [returned](#) to Tanzania after a five-year exile. In September 2017, unidentified attackers had shot and wounded Lissu, an outspoken member of parliament and a vocal critic of the president, in Dodoma. Lissu had also been [arrested multiple times](#) in 2017, including for "hate speech" and "insulting words that are likely to incite ethnic hatred."

On March 1, opposition politician and Chadema party member Godbless Lema [returned](#) from exile in Canada to a cheering crowd. In 2020, Lema [fled](#) to Canada with his family after being granted asylum there following the 2020 elections, during which Lema was [arrested](#). On March 5, the president said the government is looking forward to [dropping](#) charges against him.

On September 10, police both [arrested](#) and [released](#) Lissu in Arusha hours before a scheduled political rally on allegations of holding an unlawful assembly and obstructing police.

Right to Education

On June 28, Deputy Minister for Education, Science and Technology Omar Kipanga [told](#) the National Assembly that a total of 1,907 teenage mothers had resumed classes by January 2023. Tanzania pledged in February 2022 to [adopt guidelines](#) to guarantee that schools ensure adolescent mothers can return to schools by June 2022, in response to strong objections from human rights activists and others. In 2017, the government [adopted](#) a discriminatory ban in 2017 prohibiting pregnant students and teenage mothers from continuing their education in public schools.

Land Rights

Human Rights Watch found that since June 2022, the authorities have engaged in [abusive and unlawful tactics](#), including beatings, shootings, sexual violence, and arbitrary arrests to forcibly evict residents in Loliondo division, Ngorongoro district.

South of Loliondo, the government has, since March 2022, implemented a resettlement plan that will forcibly displace herder communities from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) to Handeni district, Tanga region, about 600 kilometers away, with little or no consultation with communities affected by the move. As part of the resettlement plan, the government has taken steps to [transfer funding for public services](#), including for health and education, from Ngorongoro district to Handeni, depriving NCA residents of these basic services.

Amnesty International [reported](#) that on August 15, security forces arrested 39 community members in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, following a community meeting in Endulen village, accusing

them of attacking journalists attending the meeting. Police later arrested Ngorongoro [parliamentarian](#) Emmanuel Lekishon Shangai on allegations that he organized attacks against the journalists.

On January 28, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights concluded its investigation into evictions in Ngorongoro and urged the government to “explore fresh rounds of civil dialogues” with communities in the NCA, the Loliondo division of Ngorongoro, and Msomera village in Handeni.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In February, the government [banned](#) the use of supplementary books with content that “goes against the national morals and traditions”—widely interpreted as content that references homosexuality and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people—in all schools across the country. On April 17, Minister of Information, Communication and Information Technology Nape Nnauye [told](#) the National Assembly that the government had shut down over 3,360 social media accounts and websites that were involved in “promoting homosexuality.”

The Sexual Offenses Special Provisions Act of 1998 punishes consensual adult same-sex conduct with up to life imprisonment.

Child Marriage

In June, the High Court [ordered](#) the attorney general to comply with the 2016 landmark decision [ruling the minimum marriage age for girls of 14 years unconstitutional](#) and [directed](#) the government to raise the legal age of marriage to 18 years for both men and women within six months.

Legislative Reform

On March 8, the president [announced](#) the creation of a committee for constitutional reforms. In 2012, the government had embarked on a review of the constitution, but the process [stalled](#) in 2015 after President John Magufuli took office.

On June 13, the government [amended](#) the 2016 Media Services Act, which regulates the media industry and journalism profession, to remove criminal liability for defamation. In the past, the authorities had [used](#) the law to restrict the work of journalists and to suspend newspapers for publishing material critical of the government.

On June 8, the National Assembly [approved reforms](#) to the structure and operations of the Tanzania Intelligence and Security Services (TISS). The bill, which was not published on the National Assembly's website, reportedly removes oversight of TISS from the attorney general, the ministers of state and foreign affairs, and the chief secretary, transferring oversight to the president and the director general of TISS.

Key International Actors

In March, the government announced a bilateral cooperation agreement on political and diplomatic consultations, security, and energy resources with [Namibia](#), and it agreed to strengthen political and economic relations with [South Africa](#). In the same month, following a visit by United States Vice President Kamala Harris, the US [pledged](#) to foster bilateral relations with Tanzania regarding “long-term economic growth for Tanzania, the climate crisis, and ... regional and global challenges.”

