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United Republic of Tanzania

Head of state: **John Magufuli**

Head of government: **Kassim Majaliwa**

Head of Zanzibar government: **Ali Mohamed Shein**

The authorities restricted the rights to freedom of expression and association, and failed to address discrimination on grounds of gender and sexual orientation. Refugees and asylum-seekers faced overcrowding, insufficient rations, and bureaucratic obstacles put in place by the state authorities.

RIGHTS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX PEOPLE

The government continued its crackdown against LGBTI people, closing down health centres and threatening to deregister organizations that provided services and support to them. On 17 February, the Health Minister closed down 40 private health centres, accusing them of promoting same-sex relations which is punishable by up to 30 years' imprisonment. On 25 June, the Home Affairs Minister threatened to deport any foreign national, or prosecute anyone, working to protect LGBTI rights.

In Zanzibar 12 women and eight men – were detained on 18 September while receiving HIV/AIDS training at a hotel. The government accused them of promoting LGBTI rights. On 17 October the authorities arrested 13 health and human rights activists, including two South Africans and one Ugandan, during a consultative meeting to discuss the Tanzanian government's decision to limit provision of certain health services for LGBTI people. The activists were released without charge on 27 October, after a court found that there was insufficient evidence for the prosecutor to sustain the case.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Opposition MPs who were perceived as critical of the government faced harassment, intimidation and arrest. On 21 September, Zitto Kabwe, leader of the Alliance for Change and Transparency party, was arrested following comments he made on social media. These concerned the House Speaker's handling of reports by two parliamentary committees formed to investigate tanzanite and diamond mining before they were debated in Parliament. He appeared before the Parliamentary Privileges, Ethics and Powers Committee on 22 September and was subsequently released. The Committee had not sent their report to the Speaker by the end of the year.

On 31 October, Zitto Kabwe was again detained by police for allegedly issuing false statistics on the national economic growth figures. According to Section 37(5) of the Statistics Act of 2017, any agency or person who publishes or communicates official statistical information which may result in the distortion of facts,

commits an offence. This can be punishable by a fine or imprisonment of not less than three years, or both. Zitto Kabwe was released on 31 October without charge.

Tundu Lissu, President of Tanganyika Law Society and an MP for the opposition Chadema party, was arrested on 21 October and charged with "hate speech" after he criticized President Magufuli. In a public speech on 17 July, he said that the government was discriminating along family, tribal and regional lines when employing government officials, and issuing work permits along religious lines. He also referred to the President as a dictator. He was released the same day after interrogation by the police.

Media freedom deteriorated significantly. President Magufuli stated in January that the days of newspapers viewed as "unethical" were numbered. From June to September, three newspapers – *MwanaHalisi*, *Mawio* and *Raia Mwema* – were either closed or temporarily banned from publishing because of "unethical" reporting and inciting violence. On 15 June the Information, Sports and Culture Minister banned *Mawio* for two years over articles it published linking two former presidents with alleged improprieties in mining deals signed in the 1990s and early 2000s. On 19 September, the Information Service Directorate issued a two-year ban on *MwanaHalisi*, after accusing it of insulting the President and publishing unethical stories. This was the second time the newspaper had been suspended in three months.

On 17 March, Dar es Salaam's Regional Commissioner led a raid on Clouds Media Group, allegedly for their decision not to broadcast a video aimed at undermining a popular local pastor.

The Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, 2017, passed in September, curtailed online freedom. According to the regulations, social media users and online content producers are held liable for materials deemed "indecent, obscene, hate speech, extreme violence or material that will offend or incite others, cause annoyance, threaten harm or evil, encourage or incite crime, or lead to public disorder". Those found guilty face a fine of 5 million Tanzanian shillings (USD2,300), a minimum of 12 months in jail, or both.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

On 22 June, President Magufuli issued a statement banning pregnant girls from returning to public-funded schools. He stated: "As long as I'm President, no pregnant students will be allowed to return to school." He said that young mothers could opt for vocational training or become entrepreneurs, but should not be permitted to pursue formal education in public schools. On 25 June, the Home Affairs Minister threatened to deregister organizations that challenged the President's ban on schooling for pregnant girls and teenage mothers.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

According to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, by the end of October, 359,494 Burundian refugees resided in Tanzania (see Burundi entry). On 20 January, the Home Affairs Ministry revoked prima facie refugee status recognition of Burundian asylum-seekers, and new arrivals had to undergo individual refugee status determination processes. UNHCR warned that the situation in Nduta camp in Tanzania, in particular, was "alarming". Originally designed to hold 50,000 people, at the end of 2017 it was home to over 127,000. UNHCR and its partners also lacked sufficient capacity to prevent, or respond adequately to, sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR raised concerns about risks to health and safety caused by overcrowding. On 27 August, the World Food Programme warned that the already insufficient food rations for refugees in Tanzania would have to be further reduced unless there was urgent funding from donors. Regular food and water shortages in the camps in Tanzania were seen by some refugees as an attempt to force them to return home. This was particularly in the light of comments made in July by President Magufuli during a visit by Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza, encouraging refugees to return to Burundi.

Tanzania operated a de facto encampment policy by which refugees who left the camps without permission faced fines or arrest.

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