IN THE HIGH COURT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

(DAR-ES-SALAAM SUB-REGISTRY)

AT DAR-ES-SALAAM

MISCELLANEOUS CIVIL CAUSE NO: ..... OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA 1977 - AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME.

AND

IN THE MATTER OF BASIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES ENFORCEMENT ACT [CAP. 3 R.E. 2023]

AND

IN THE MATTER OF BASIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES ENFORCEMENT (PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE) RULES, 2014

AND

IN THE MATTER OF CHALLENGING THE ACTION OF RESPONDENT TO TOTAL SHUTDOWN INTERNET "BLACKOUTS" IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA FROM OCTOBER 29, 2025, AT 11:00 HOURS TO NOVEMBER 4, 2025, AROUND 17:00 HOURS.

TANGANYIKA LAW SOCIETY……..……1ST PETITIONER

BOB CHACHA WANGWE……..…….2ND PETITIONER

TWAHA MWAIPAYA…… 3RD PETITIONER

KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE……..4TH PETITIONER

VS

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS

AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY……1ST RESPONDENT

TANZANIA COMMUNICATION REGULATORY AUTHORITY……2ND RESPONDENT

VODACOM TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY…… 3RD RESPONDENT

AIRTEL TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY……..……4TH RESPONDENT

HONORA TANZANIA PLC @MIXX BY YASH……5TH RESPONDENT

VIETTEL TANZANIA PLC @HALOTEL……6TH RESPONDENT

TANZANIA TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION ……'…… 7TH RESPONDENT

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ……..……..8TH RESPONDENT

ORIGINATING SUMMONS

(Made under Articles 26 (2) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 as amended from time to time, Sections 4, 5 and 13 of the Basic Rights and Duties Enforcement Act, Cap 3 [R.E 2023] and Rule 4 of the Basic Rights and Duties Enforcement (Practice and Procedure) Rules, 2014)

LET THE PARTIES CONCERNED appear before the Honorable Judges _____,_____, and_____, sitting in Chambers on the _____, day of _____, 2025 at 9:00 O'clock in the forenoon or so soon thereafter for the hearing of the petition on the part of the Petitioners, that this Honorable Court may be pleased to declare that;

1. A DECLARATION that the act of 1st to 7th Respondents to shutdown internet nationwide from October 29, 2025 at 11:00 hours to November 4, 2025 at 17:00 hours was unconstitutional thus violated the provision of Articles 13(6), 14, 15 (1), 17(1), 18, 19(1), 20(1), 21(1), 22 (1), 26(1) and 29 of the Constitution of United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 (Constitution) as amended from time to time.

2. A DECLARATION that total internet shutdown is manifestly non-compliant with the doctrine of legality, proportionality and necessity, as it lacks a clear, specific, and constitutionally justifiable basis, rendering the action unconstitutional.

3. A DECLARATION that the total internet shutdown by the 1st to 7th Respondent caused substantial and grievous harm to the economic, social, political, and civil rights of citizens.

4. A DECLARATION that the 1st, 2nd and 8th Respondents violated the State's duty to protect the public, the people and their rights under the Constitution, regional and international human rights law standards.

5. **AN ORDER of Permanent Injunction** restraining the Respondents, their agents, and all persons acting under their authority from imposing any further general or targeted shutdown or restriction of internet and mobile data services, or restricting access to specific social media platforms, without:

    (i) A clear, specific statutory provision enacted by Parliament, and

    (ii) A binding judicial order from a court of competent jurisdiction.

6. **AN ORDER** directing the Respondents to FORMALLY, guarantee IN WRITING, through widely circulating news outlets and social media platforms, **non-repetition of internet shutdown, slowdown, blocking specific IP addresses , DNS tempering Bandwidth throttling, traffic shaping, keyword tampering** and or any other form of internet restriction unless equitably justifiable and just.

7. **AN ORDER** directing the Respondents to publish, through widely circulating news outlets and social media, an **apology to all Tanzanians** and the globe for the violation of their fundamental constitutional rights during the total internet shutdown period.

8. A **Disclosure Order** directing the Respondents and Interested Parties to disclose and file before this Honourable Court an inventory of all written and

or verbal directives, instructions, correspondence or communications between them issued from or before 1st October to or after 10th November 2025 that relate or led to the total internet shutdown.

9. **AN ORDER** for any further orders or directions this Honourable Court may deem fit and just to grant.

10. Since this is a matter of profound public interest, each party to bear their own costs.

ON THE GROUNDS THAT

a. That the Respondents' action of imposing a **general nationwide internet shutdown** from 29th October to 4th November 2025 was a blanket and baseless restriction, denying millions of people access to essential digital services, communication, movement and access to, sharing or receiving, information freely without interference.

b. The Respondents' decision to shut down the internet was made without any legal provision authorizing such an action.

c. That while the provision of the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Act requires the 2nd Respondent to protect the interests of the customers and to ensure the availability of internet service to the customer, during the internet shutdown, the 2nd Respondent did not fulfil its duty, causing the general public unjust disturbances and suffering.

d. That while the Access to Information Act provides for the right to access information and the Cyber Crimes Act criminalizes illegal data interference, the 1st and 7th Respondents chose to ignore all these provisions of the law and decided to unjustifiably shut down the internet in respect of users the United Republic of Tanzania.

e. That the 1st and 7th Respondents opted to shutdown internet without giving the public notice to the general public. Equally, customers of the 3rd 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Respondents were taken by surprise as there was no notice or sufficient cause to prepare the public for an internet services blackout, thus affecting their rights and causing more harm to them.

f. That because there was no notice for the decision, the reasons for the decision were obviously not given; and because there was no court order, the affected general public was not given the right to be heard as the Respondent's decision to shut down the internet was not oriented on any known legal procedures, not sanctioned by any court order and, depriving service users of their fundamental human rights at such a critical moment.

g. That internet shutdown was not proportional to the objective aimed to be achieved, if any, as it was sweepingly imposed countrywide for days, not taking into cognizance of its utility in some places, such as hospitals, making it unreasonable.

h. That internet shutdown by the Respondents was not necessary in a democratic society, especially at a time when the voting processes in the disputed general election were continuing, and the internet was needed to facilitate processes such as verifying voters in the system, correspondence around the tallying process, all of which could not be done without the internet.

i. That the Respondents did not put a mechanism to protect susceptibility of abuse of powers, if any, to shut down the internet, that is why the blackout affected the whole country, and there seems to be little hope for accountability unless this honorable Court make orders to that effect.

j. That the procedures for shutting down the internet, including notice to users and reasons thereof, were not followed and the reasons were not furnished to the users; and the timing of the internet shutdown was improper at times where the nation was ongoing a mandatory curfew, electoral injustices and protests,

thus causing a lot of human right violations to the Petitioners and general public.

k. That because there was no public notice from the Respondents effecting the internet shutdown or service unavailability, the Petitioners and the general public are unaware of any reasons for the internet shutdown and whether such reasons, if any, serve any legitimate purpose.

l. That the action of the Respondents shutting down the internet caused the petitioners and the general public to fail to access lawful and necessary content and services online.

m. That the internet shutdown deprived the general public of vital information on **public health, safety, and security** during a critical national event, as a substantial number of people rely on the internet to access such information, obtain essential medicines, procure necessary provisions for their families, such as groceries, information relating to travel and communicate matters relating to their personal security.

n. That the internet shutdown caused significant interference with economic and business activities, including online sales, advertising, marketing of goods and services, and adversely affected those engaged as brand ambassadors, digital influencers, and those whose sole livelihood depends on digital commerce.

o. That a total internet shutdown is grossly disproportionate to any legitimate aim, as less restrictive means were available but not deployed, contrary to the requirements of a democratic society.

p. That the shutdown violated rights beyond expression and information, constituting an attack on the fundamental rights to work, health, education, scientific progress, right to personal security and liberty, right to life, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and cultural life by paralysing the essential infrastructure for modern life, as affirmed by international principles.

q. That the actions of the Respondent to shut down the internet were unreasonable as they failed to take into account the bigger impact of their action, including the impact on the economy, financial institutions were not working, the health sector, such as hospitals and pharmacies were not working, affected education, transport and communications and other impacts, thus making it unconstitutional.

r. That government entities fail to take into account some constitutional principles and directives as provided under article 8 and 9 of the Constitution of United Republic of Tanzania as well as Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

s. The Respondents' conducts of shutting down the internet contravened Tanzania's obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Articles 9 and 11), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 19 and 21), and the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/32/L.20 on the promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet.

SPECIFIC ARTICLES IN PART III OF CHAPTER ONE OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA 1977 AS AMENDED

The Petitioners aver that the Internet shutdown violated several provisions of the Constitution, as follows:

i. **Article 12(1) and (2)** – The shutdown undermined the inherent dignity of every person by arbitrarily cutting off citizens from communication, receiving, disseminating and sharing information, and participation in social and public affairs.

ii. **Article 13(1) (a)** – The acts of the Respondents to shut down the internet without prior notice to the general public, without giving the reasons for the decision to the public, without a court order and without hearing opinions

or consulting the potentially affected users and the community violate the constitutional right to be heard.

iii. **Article 14**- the acts of the Respondents shutting down the internet was illegal, for reasons that If the internet had been accessible, many of the lives lost could have been saved; those affected by live bullet shootings during curfew hours would have been better informed, and people with injuries, who otherwise could not call for transport or medical help due to communication blockages, would have received timely hospital treatment. Thus, internet shutdown affected the right to life and social protection.

iv. **Article 15(1)-** Shutting down the internet interfered with personal liberty, as both the petitioner and the general public were unable to live freely, communicate, or transact without access to the internet; many were arrested and tortured because they could not communicate with each other to seek legal, family or societal support.

v. **Article 16(1)** - The internet shutdown violated citizens' privacy and disrupted the protection of their personal communications, as the network restrictions unlawfully interfered with individuals' data and correspondence.

vi. **Article 17 (1)-** By shutting down the internet, the respondents significantly hindered individuals' freedom of movement; it became challenging to request or call for transportation, and apps like Bolt, Uber, and similar services stopped working in absence of internet; people were unable to book flights, trains, or other forms of transport, or to make necessary e-payments, thus, respondents effectively restricted the right to freedom of movement.

vii. **Article 18(a)–(d)** – The internet blackout unlawfully deprived citizens of their rights to hold opinions, express views, seek, receive, and share information, as well as to stay informed about national and global affairs, especially during the critical period of the staged election.

viii. **Article 19(1)-** Shutting down the internet infringes on this right, as it's common for individuals of various denominations to attend church services and access religious and biblical content online.

ix. **Article 20(1)** – by disabling Internet access and social media platforms, the respondents violated citizens' freedom of association. This action frustrated essential online and mobilisation activities necessary for civic, economic, and social involvement. People rely on platforms like WhatsApp groups, Twitter Spaces, Clubhouse, TikTok, Zoom, Teams, Google Meet and countless other online forums for meeting, association, and critical societal discussion. Curtailing access to the internet violated freedom of association.

x. **Article 21(1)** – By shutting down and censoring platforms, the Respondents limited the citizens' ability to participate in governance, as people were denied access to tools necessary for political debate, election monitoring, and public engagement.

xi. **Article 22 (1)** – The internet shutdown violated the right to work in numerous ways. Lawyers were unable to file cases, process tax returns, or register new companies. Journalists could not work online, while doctors were prevented from sharing medical and patient reports. Online businesses had to close, and many other professions were impacted. Judges were also affected, unable to conduct research or receive urgent cases such as bail applications and habeas corpus petitions for detained individuals. These actions by the Respondents resulted in widespread violation of the right to work violations.

xii. **Article 26(1)** - The Respondents' actions in restricting public access to the internet violate Article 26(1) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, which requires respect for the Constitution and the laws of the land.

xiii. **Article 29(1)-** because of the internet blackout, the petitioners and the general public have been unable to enjoy several fundamental human rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.

PARTICULARS OF FACTS RELIED UPON.

1. That the **2nd to the 4th Petitioners**, as patriotic citizens of the United Republic of Tanzania, are directly impacted by, and knowledgeable about, the circumstances giving rise to this petition. They bring this matter before the court both personally and to serve the public interest, aiming to protect the integrity of the Constitution and the digital rights of every Tanzanian.
2. That the 1st Petitioner, Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), serves as the Bar association for Tanzania Mainland, established in 1954 by an Act of Parliament, the Tanganyika Law Society Ordinance 1954, and is now governed by the Tanganyika Law Society Act, Cap 307 R.E. 2002. TLS upholds Rule of Law, integrity and transparency as its core values, facilitates public access to justice, provides legal aid, and is dedicated to protecting and assisting the public in all legal matters in Tanzania.
3. That on **29th October 2025**, at 11:00 hours, the Petitioners and millions of other Tanzanians experienced a sudden, total, and unexplained disruption of internet services across all major Internet service providers that is 3rd, 4th ,5th ,6th and 7th Respondent This blackout extended nationwide, rendering access to mobile data, websites, and all other online platforms completely unavailable.
4. That the disruption lasted for almost a full week, ending around **November 4, 2025**. Throughout this period, all forms of online communication, such as messaging, email, social media, financial services, and news portals, were inaccessible.
5. That the internet shutdown occurred on the day of the General Elections day, and days subsequent thereto and lasted on the 4th day of November

2025 during a period when citizens depended heavily on digital communication to share information, monitor election results, and track political developments.

6. That the total internet shutdown was neither publicly announced nor authorized by any lawful instrument, and no notice or explanation was provided to Internet users or by service providers, which is contrary to principles of legality, proportionality, necessity, transparency, and accountability.

7. That on 31st October 2025 on an interview with **BBC Africa**, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mahmoud Kombo Thabit, later admitted and defended the government's decision to impose the internet shutdown when he was asked why internet was shut down by News anchor Waihiga Mwaura, and the Minister respond as follows

".. ***The internet because internet when we try to open also it created the havoc among small group of vandalists who are create problem in vandalism so they were using the main communication media was the internet***".

See link in B1, Tanzania Foreign Minister on elections, unrest and internet shutdown - BBC Africa

8. That the Internet shutdown constituted a significant breach of economic, social, and civic rights, unlawfully denying millions access to essential digital services. This action resulted in measurable economic harm, with credible estimates placing daily losses in the millions, adversely affecting both citizens and the national economy.
9. That independent Internet observatories, including NetBlocks and OONI (Open Observatory of Network Interference), recorded a sustained drop in national connectivity exceeding **75%** from 29 October to 4 November 2025, confirming the existence and scope of the nationwide Internet shutdown.

Kindly find the attached annexure marked as B2 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this affidavit, can also be see in the below link

Nationwide internet outage detected in Tanzania

10. *That on 4 November 2025, Vodacom Tanzania PLC issued a public notice informing its customers of a disruption of internet services that occurred from 29 October to 4 November 2025. The notice states that the interruption was due to reasons beyond the company's control and that the affected services had been restored.*

A copy of the said notice is annexed hereto and marked B3, and leave of this Honourable Court is craved to have the same form part of this Petition.

11. That the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights issued a press release on 1 November 2025, condemning the internet shutdown in Tanzania. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights reminded Tanzania that restricting the internet and digital communication during elections is incompatible with the right to freedom of expression and access to information as outlined in Article 9 of the African Charter.

Kindly find the attached annexure marked as B4 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this petition.

12. That regional and international human rights bodies, including **Access Now, CIPESA, Amnesty International,** and **Human Rights Watch**, also issued joint statements urging Tanzania to restore access and refrain from imposing future network disruptions, noting the economic, social, and political harm caused by such actions.

Kindly find the attached statements marked collectively as B5 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this petition.

13. That internet shutdown did affect general population and the Civil Societies and Non-Government Organisation work in Tanzania issue the statement to condemn the action by the Respondent.

Kindly find the attached copy of the statement marked as annexure B6 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this petition.

14. That the government's justification, which is an afterthought, for preventing violence does not meet the constitutional requirements of legality, necessity, and proportionality in a democratic society. Imposing a blanket internet shutdown is an extreme and arbitrary action that suppresses lawful speech and disrupts essential communication, greatly exceeding any legitimate purpose of maintaining peace.
15. That the Respondents decided to shut down the internet without any legal provision granting them the authority to do so.
16. That while the provisions of the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Act require the 2nd Respondent to protect the interests of customers and ensure service availability, during the internet shutdown, the 2nd Respondent failed to fulfil its statutory duty, causing the general public to suffer unjustly.
17. That the Access to Information Act guarantees the right to access information, while the Cyber Crimes Act prohibits illegal data interference. Despite these legal protections, the Respondents disregarded both laws and proceeded to shut down the internet in Tanzania.
18. That the Respondent arbitrarily discontinued internet services without issuing prior public notice to the general populace, including the customers of the 3rd 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Respondents. This sudden and unilateral action subjected the public to unexpected disruption, thereby infringing upon their fundamental rights. The resultant harm was both foreseeable and grave, warranting judicial intervention.

19. That the absence of any notice or court order deprived the public of the fundamental right to be heard, violating core principles of natural justice. The respondent arbitrarily imposed an internet shutdown at a critical juncture, flagrantly disregarding constitutional and human rights protections. Such unilateral actions erode the rule of law and undermine the trust essential to democratic governance.
20. That the shutdown was not proportional because, if the object was legally justifiable, the Respondent could have, say, restricted only certain applications or social platforms. Instead, they decided to impose a nationwide blackout for the entire period. Furthermore, the shutdown did not consider geographical location. If necessary, only specific areas could have been targeted instead of the whole nation, making the action unreasonable.
21. That internet shutdown by the Respondents was not necessary in a democratic society, especially at a time when the voting processes in the disputed general election were continuing, and the internet was needed to facilitate processes such as verifying voters in the system, correspondence around the tallying process, all of which could not be done without the internet.
22. That the Respondents did not put in place a mechanism to protect susceptibility of abuse of powers, if any, to shut down the internet, which is why it was the blackout affected the whole country, and there seems to be little hope for accountability unless this honourable Court make orders to that effect.
23. That the procedures for shutting down the internet, including notice to users and reasons thereof, were not followed and the reasons were not furnished to the users; and the timing of the internet shutdown was improper at times where the nation was ongoing a mandatory curfew, electoral injustices

and protests, thus causing a lot of human right violations to the Petitioners and general public.

24. That because there was no public notice from the Respondents effecting the internet shutdown or service unavailability, the Petitioners and the general public are unaware of any reasons for the internet shutdown and whether such reasons, if any, serve any legitimate purpose.
25. That the action of the Respondents shutting down the internet caused the petitioners and the general public to fail to access lawful and necessary content and services online.
26. That the internet shutdown deprived the general public of vital information on public health, safety, and security during a critical national event, as a substantial number of people rely on the internet to access such information, obtain essential medicines, procure necessary provisions for their families, such as groceries, information relating to travel and communicate matters relating to their personal security.
27. That the internet shutdown caused significant interference with economic and business activities, including online sales, advertising, marketing of goods and services, and adversely affected those engaged as brand ambassadors, digital influencers, and those whose sole livelihood depends on digital commerce.
28. That a total internet shutdown is grossly disproportionate to any legitimate aim, as less restrictive means were available but not deployed, contrary to the requirements of a democratic society.
29. That the shutdown violated rights beyond expression and information, constituting an attack on the fundamental rights to work, health, education, scientific progress, right to personal security and liberty, right to life, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and cultural life by paralysing the essential infrastructure for modern life, as affirmed by international principles.

30. That the actions of the Respondent to shut down the internet were unreasonable as they failed to take into account the bigger impact of their action, including the impact on the economy, financial institutions were not working, the health sector, such as hospitals and pharmacies were not working, affected education, transport and communications and other impacts, thus making it unconstitutional.
31. The Respondents' conducts of shutting down the internet contravenes with Tanzania's obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Articles 9 and 11), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 19 and 21), and the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/32/L.20 on the promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet.
32. That internet shutdown during election day affects the election exercise as there was no sharing of the information between political parties and other stakeholders like voters, election observers and journalist.

Kindly find the attached summary report issued by AU, EAC and SADC marked collectively as annexure B7 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this petition.

33. That the acts of the Respondents and Interested Parties have directly and indirectly violated the Petitioners' and the public's rights to freedom of expression, communication, privacy, equality, and participation in social and public affairs as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.
34. That these actions are arbitrary, disproportionate, and unjustifiable under any legal or constitutional standard, constituting a continuing infringement of the principles of democratic governance, accountability, and the rule of law.

THIS ORIGINATING SUMMONS has been taken out at the instance of **ADVOCATE JEBRA KAMBOLE, MPALE MPOKI, HEKIMA MWASIPU AND DEOGRATIUS COSMAS MAHINYILA** on the grounds and reasons set-forth in the Affidavits of **Petitioners,** which are annexed hereto, and which shall be read at the time of hearing together with any other further grounds and reasons to be adduced at the time of hearing.

Given under my **Hand** and **Seal** of the Court this _____, day of _____, 2025.

_____

REGISTRAR

Presented for filing this _____, day of _____, 2025.

_____

REGISTRY OFFICER

Drawn and filed jointly by:-
Jebra Kambole (Advocate)
Deogratius Cosmas Mahinyila
Law Guards Advocates
Tiger Tower, 1st Floor
Manyanya Area, Kinondoni
P.O. Box 5413,
Dar-Es-Salaam
+255 717 334032
Email; jebrakambole@gmail.com

10/12/2025

Mpale Mpoki (Advocate)

Mpoki & Associates, Advocates,
Victoria Tower, Floor 9, Wing A
Ally Hassan Road
P.O Box 14232
Dar Es Salaam
Tel: +255-764-500500
+255-715-187777
+255-765-941 890
Email: Mpokikaba@gmail.Com

Advocate Hekima Mwasipu
Matwiga Law Chamber

Ibacon House, Ikungi Street,
Kinondoni Manyanya.
Box 31191, 0759502009
Dar -Es- Salaam

To Be Served Upon:-

Director
Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority
Dar es salaam.
Tanzania

Minister
Communications and Information Technology
Dar-es-salaam
Tanzania

The Solicitor General,
Office of the Solicitor – General,
10 Kivukoni Road
P.O. Box 71554 DAR ES SALAAM
Tel: +255 22 211 1622/212 0 469
Fax: +255 22 211 1621
Email: info@osg.go.tzs

VODACOM TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY
15th Floor Vodacom Tower,
Ursino Estate Plot 23,
Old Bagamoyo Road,
P.O. Box 2369
Dar es Salaam

AIRTEL TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY
Airtel House,
Corner of A.H Mwinyi Road & Kawawa Road, Kinondoni
PO Box 9623,
Dar-es-Salaam,
Tanzania

VIETTEL TANZANIA PLC (HALOTEL)
10th Floor, Tanzanite Park, Plot No. 38,
South Ursino, New Bagamoyo Road,
P.O. Box 34716,

Dar es Salaam.

HONORA TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY @ MIXX BY YAS
PSSSF Commercial Complex,
30th Floor, Suite 24,
Sam Nujoma Road,
House No. 24,
16102 Sinza C Street,
Dar es Salaam.

Director General,
Tanzania Telecommunications Corporation,
Extelcoms House,
32, Samora Street,
P.O. BOX 9070,
11104 Dar es Salaam,
Tanzania

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(DAR-ES-SALAAM SUB-REGISTRY)

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ……..……..8TH RESPONDENT

JOINT AFFIDAVIT OF THE PETITIONERS

WE, BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI, BOB CHACHA WANGWE, TWAHA MWAIPAYA and KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE, Adults, Male, Christians and Citizens of Tanzania, **DO HEREBY TAKE OATH** and **STATE** the following: -

1. That the 1st Petitioner's affidavit is sworn by Boniface Mwabukusi, President of the 1st Petitioner, the Bar Association for the Tanzania mainland.
2. That the 1st Petitioner is the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), the Bar Association for Tanzania Mainland, founded in 1954, governed by the Tanganyika Law Society Act, Cap 307 R.E. 2023.
3. That the 1st Petitioner's core value is integrity and transparency, assisting the public to access justice and to provide legal aid to the public.
4. That the statutory function of the 1st Petitioner is to represent, protect and assist members of the legal profession in Tanzania as regards conditions of practice and otherwise.
5. That the 1st Petitioner has a statutory duty to protect and assist the public in Tanzania in all matters touching, ancillary or incidental to the law.
6. That the 1st Petitioner has the mandate to do all other things which are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the foregoing objects or any of them.
7. That the 1st petitioner has more than 14,000 members who are using different mobile network owned by 3rd to 7th Respondent, and on the 29th

October 2025 around 11:00 hrs when internet was shutdown affect the operation of the 1st Petitioner and it's members.

8. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th Petitioners are users of mobile telecommunication services, which also provide internet services, the 2nd Petitioner registered with number 0718664381 Mix by Yas, 3rd Petitioner registered with number 0746777845 Vodacom and 4th Petitioner number 0787719872 registered as Airtel, respectively and altogether.
9. The 1st and 2nd Respondents are public entities vested with statutory powers to oversee and regulate communications in the United Republic of Tanzania.
10. The 8th Respondent is the Chief Legal Advisor of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.
11. The 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Respondents are telecommunication companies duly registered in Tanzania, providing, among others, mobile network and internet services to a ton of their subscribers and users.
12. That on **29th October 2025**, at 11:00 hours, the Petitioners and millions of other Tanzanians experienced a sudden, total, and unexplained disruption of internet services across all major Internet service providers, Vodacom, Airtel, Mixx by Yas (Tigo), Halotel, and TTCL. This blackout extended nationwide, rendering access to mobile data, websites, and online platforms completely unavailable.
13. That the disruption lasted for almost a full week, ending around **November 4, 2025**. Throughout this period, all forms of online communication, such as messaging, email, social media, financial services, and news portals, were inaccessible.
14. That the internet shutdown occurred on and after the General Elections day, during a period when citizens depended heavily on digital communication to share information, monitor election results, and track political developments.

15. That the blackout was not publicly announced or authorized by any lawful instrument, and no notice or explanation was provided to Internet users or by service providers.

16. That on 31st October 2025 on an interview with **BBC Africa**, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mahmoud Kombo Thabit, later admitted and defended the government's decision to impose the internet shutdown when he was asked why internet was shut down by News anchor Waihiga Mwaura, and the Minister respond as follows

".. ***The internet because internet when we try to open also it created the havoc among small group of vandalists who are create problem in vandalism so they were using the main communication media was the internet***".

See link in B1, Tanzania Foreign Minister on elections, unrest and internet shutdown - BBC Africa

17. That the Internet shutdown paralysed economic, social, and civic life, cutting off millions from essential digital services such as online banking, e-commerce, telehealth, education, emergency alerts, and media communication.
18. That the internet blackout caused measurable financial losses, with reports estimating daily economic costs in the millions.
19. That independent Internet observatories, including NetBlocks and OONI (Open Observatory of Network Interference), recorded a sustained drop in national connectivity exceeding **75%** from 29 October to 4 November 2025, confirming the existence and scope of the nationwide Internet shutdown.

Kindly find the attached copy of the estimated loss marked as annexure B2 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this affidavit

(Also see the link –Nationwide internet outage detected in Tanzania

20. *That on 4 November 2025, Vodacom Tanzania PLC issued a public notice informing its customers of a disruption of internet services that occurred from 29 October to 4 November 2025. The notice states that the interruption was due to reasons beyond the company's control and that the affected services had been restored.*

A copy of the said notice is annexed hereto and marked B3, and leave of this Honourable Court is craved to have the same form part of this Affidavit.

21. That the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights issued a press release on 1 November 2025, condemning the internet shutdown in Tanzania.

Kindly find the attached copy of the statement marked as annexure B4 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this Affidavit.

22. That regional and international human rights bodies, including **Access Now, CIPESA, Amnesty International,** and **Human Rights Watch**, also issued joint statements urging Tanzania to restore access and refrain from imposing future network disruptions, noting the economic, social, and political harm caused by such actions.

Kindly find the attached copies of the statements marked as annexure B5 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this affidavit.

23. That following the internet shut down it affect even operations of civil society organizations and non-governmental organization; they decide to issue statement on several issues include internet shutdown.

Kindly find the attached copy of the statement marked as annexure B6 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this affidavit.

24. That the government's justification for preventing violence does not meet the constitutional requirements of legality, necessity, and proportionality in a democratic society.
25. That the Respondents decided to shut down the internet without any legal provision granting them the authority to do so.
26. That the provisions of the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Act require the 2nd Respondent to protect the interests of customers and ensure internet service availability.
27. That the Access to Information Act guarantees the right to access information, while the Cyber Crimes Act prohibits illegal data interference.
28. That the Respondents arbitrarily discontinued internet services without issuing prior public notice to the general populace, including the customers of the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Respondents.
29. That the absence of any notice or court order deprived the public of the fundamental right to be heard.
30. That the shutdown was not proportional to the object intended to be achieved.
31. That internet shutdown by the Respondents was not necessary in a democratic society.
32. That the Respondents did not put mechanism to protect susceptibility of abuse of the powers, if any, to shut down the internet.
33. That the procedures for shutting down the internet, including notice to users and reasons thereof, were not followed and the reasons were not furnished to the users; and the timing of the internet shutdown was improper at times where the nation was ongoing a mandatory curfew, electoral injustices and protests.
34. That the Petitioners and the general public are unaware of any reasons for the internet shutdown and whether such reasons, if any, serve any legitimate purpose.

35. That the action of the Respondents shutting down the internet caused the petitioners and the general public to fail to access lawful and necessary content and services online.
36. That the internet shutdown deprived the general public of vital information on public health, safety, and security during a critical national event.
37. That the internet shutdown caused significant interference with economic and business activities, including online sales, advertising, marketing of goods and services, and adversely affected those engaged as brand ambassadors, digital influencers, and those whose sole livelihood depends on digital commerce.
38. That the shutdown violated rights beyond expression and information, constituting an attack on the fundamental rights to work, health, education, scientific progress, right to personal security and liberty, right to life, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and cultural life.
39. That the actions of the Respondent to shut down the internet were unreasonable as they failed to take into account the bigger impact of their action, including the impact on the economy, financial institutions were not working, the health sector, such as hospitals and pharmacies were not working, affected education, transport and communications, among others.
40. The Respondents' conducts of shutting down the internet contravenes Tanzania's obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution on the promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet.
41. That internet shutdown during election day affects the election exercise as there was no sharing of the information between political parties and other stakeholders like voters, election observers and journalist.

Kindly find the attached summary report issued by AU, EAC and SADC marked collectively as annexure B7 and leave of the Court is craved for the same to form part of this petition.

42. That the acts of the Respondents and Interested Parties have directly and indirectly violated the Petitioners' and the public's rights to freedom of expression, communication, privacy, equality, and participation in social and public affairs as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.
43. That internet shutdown violates several laws, both municipal and international, including the Access to Information Act, the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Act, and the Cyber Crimes Act.
44. That we make this Affidavit conscientiously believing the same to be true and in support of the reliefs sought in the Constitutional Petition.
45. That We are challenging the Respondents' decision to shut down the internet in the United Republic of Tanzania.
46. That the Petitioners do not have an alternative remedy with regard to the Constitutionality of the actions of the Respondents.
47. That this is a public interest litigation which aims to protect freedom of expression, access to information, media freedom, journalistic work, and the right to be informed by the public in the United Republic of Tanzania
48. That it is only the High Court of Tanzania which has jurisdiction to declare a particular action by respondents as unconstitutional to such extent.
49.

Signed and dated at Dar-es-salaam this 10 December 2025.

.....

BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI

PRESIDENT OF THE 1ST PETITIONER

.....

BOB CHACHA WANGWE

2nd Petitioner

.....

TWAHA MWAIPYA

3rd Petitioner

.....

KUMBUSHO DAWSON

4th Petitioner

VERIFICATION

WE, BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI being the president of the 1st Petitioner, **BOB CHACHA WANGWE, TWAHA MWAIPYA and KUMBUSHO DAWSON,** being Petitioners in this Petition, do hereby verify that all that is stated in Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16, 17,18,19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 47 AND 48 are true to the best of our knowledge.

Signed and Verified at Dar-es-salaam this 10 day of December 2025.

.....

BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI

PRESIDENT OF THE 1st PETITIONER

.....

BOB CHACHA WANGWE

2ND PETITIONER

.....

TWAHA MWAIPAYA

3RD PETITIONER

.....

KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE

4TH PETITIONER

SWORN at Dar-es-salaam by the said
BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI.
who is introduced to me by **JEBRA KAMBOLE**
the latter been known to me personally
in my presence this 10 day of 12 2025.

.....
DEPONENT

BEFORE ME:

NAME: ABBRIATY SADA KWEA
ADDRESS: 76722
TITLE: ADVOCATE
SIGNATURE .....

COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS

Abbriaty Sada Kivea
S.L.P. 76722 Dar es Salaam
Advocate, Notary Public
& Commissioner for Oaths

SWORN at Dar-es-salaam by the said
BOB CHACHA WANGWE
who is introduced to me by **JEBRA KAMBOLE**
the latter been known to me personally
in my presence this 10 day of 12 2025.

.....
DEPONENT

BEFORE ME:
NAME: ABBRIATY SADA KIVEA
ADDRESS: 76722
TITLE: ADVOCATE
SIGNATURE .....
COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS

Abbriaty Sada Kivea
Box 76722 Dar es Salaam
Advocate, Notary Public
& Commissioner for Oaths

SWORN at Dar-es-salaam by the said
TWAHA MWAIPAYA
who is introduced to me by **JEBRA KAMBOLE**
the latter been known to me personally
in my presence this 10 day of 12 2025.

.....
DEPONENT

BEFORE ME:
NAME: ABBRIATY SADA KIVEA
ADDRESS: 76722
TITLE: ADVOCATE
SIGNATURE .....
COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS

Abbriaty Sada Kivea
Box 76722 Dar es Salaam
Advocate, Notary Public
& Commissioner for Oaths

SWORN at Dar-es-salaam by the said
KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE
who is introduced to me by **JEBRA KAMBOLE**
the latter been known to me personally
in my presence this 10 day of 12 2025.

.....
DEPONENT

BEFORE ME:
NAME: ABBRIATY SADA KIVEA
ADDRESS: 76722
TITLE: ADVOCATE
SIGNATURE .....

Abbriaty Sada Kivea
Box 76722 Dar es Salaam
Advocate, Notary Public & Commissioner for Oaths

COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS
.....

Presented for filling this .....day of 2025

REGISTRY OFFICER

Drawn and filed jointly by:-
Jebra Kambole (Advocate)
Deogratius Cosmas Mahinyila
Law Guards Advocates
Tiger Tower, 1st Floor
Manyanya Area, Kinondoni
P.O. Box 5413,
Dar-Es-Salaam
+255 717 334032
Email; jebrakambole@gmail.com

10/12/2025

Mpale Mpoki (Advocate)

Mpoki & Associates, Advocates,
Victoria Tower, Floor 9, Wing A
Ally Hassan Road
P.O Box 14232

Dar Es Salaam
Tel: +255-764-500500
+255-715-187777
+255-765-941 890
Email: Mpokikaba@gmail.Com

Advocate Hekima Mwasipu
Matwiga Law Chamber
Ibacon House, Ikungi Street,
Kinondoni Manyanya.
Box 31191, 0759502009
Dar -Es- Salaam

To Be Served Upon:-

Director
Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority
Dar es salaam.
Tanzania

Minister
Communications and Information Technology
Dar-es-salaam
Tanzania

The Solicitor General,
Office of the Solicitor – General,
10 Kivukoni Road
P.O. Box 71554 DAR ES SALAAM
Tel: +255 22 211 1622/212 0 469
Fax: +255 22 211 1621
Email: info@osg.go.tzs

VODACOM TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY
15th Floor Vodacom Tower,
Ursino Estate Plot 23,
Old Bagamoyo Road,
P.O. Box 2369
Dar es Salaam

AIRTEL TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY
Airtel House,
Corner of A.H Mwinyi Road & Kawawa Road, Kinondoni

PO Box 9623,
Dar-es-Salaam,
Tanzania

VIETTEL TANZANIA PLC (HALOTEL)
10th Floor, Tanzanite Park, Plot No. 38,
South Ursino, New Bagamoyo Road,
P.O. Box 34716,
Dar es Salaam.

HONORA TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY @ MIXX BY YAS
PSSSF Commercial Complex,
30th Floor, Suite 24,
Sam Nujoma Road,
House No. 24,
16102 Sinza C Street,
Dar es Salaam.

Director General,
Tanzania Telecommunications Corporation,
Extelcoms House,
32, Samora Street,
P.O. BOX 9070,
11104 Dar es Salaam,

IN THE HIGH COURT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

(DAR-ES-SALAAM SUB-REGISTRY)

AT DAR-ES-SALAAM

MISCELLANEOUS CIVIL CAUSE NO: ..... OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA 1977 - AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME.

AND

IN THE MATTER OF BASIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES ENFORCEMENT ACT [CAP. 3 R.E. 2023]

AND

IN THE MATTER OF BASIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES ENFORCEMENT (PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE) RULES, 2014

AND

IN THE MATTER OF CHALLENGING THE ACTION OF RESPONDENT TO TOTAL SHUTDOWN INTERNET "BLACKOUTS" IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA FROM OCTOBER 29, 2025, AT 11:00 HOURS TO NOVEMBER 4, 2025, AROUND 17:00 HOURS.

TANGANYIKA LAW SOCIETY……..……1ST PETITIONER

BOB CHACHA WANGWE……..…….2ND PETITIONER

TWAHA MWAIPAYA……. 3RD PETITIONER

KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE……..4TH PETITIONER

VS

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS

AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY……1ST RESPONDENT

TANZANIA COMMUNICATION REGULATORY AUTHORITY……2ND RESPONDENT

VODACOM TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY…… 3RD RESPONDENT

AIRTEL TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY…….……4TH RESPONDENT

HONORA TANZANIA PLC @MIXX BY YASH…….5TH RESPONDENT

VIETTEL TANZANIA PLC @HALOTEL……6TH RESPONDENT

TANZANIA TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION ……'…… 7TH RESPONDENT

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ……..……..8TH RESPONDENT

PETITIONERS AFFIDAVIT AS TO ADMISIBILITY

I, BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI, BOB CHACHA WANGE, TWAHA MAWIPAYA and KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE Adults male, Christians and Residents of Mbeya and Dar es salaam respectively **DO HEREBY TAKE OATH** and **STATE** the following: -

1. That I, the 1st respondent am the President of the 1st Petitioner, the Bar Association for Tanzania mainland.
2. That the 1st Petitioner is the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), which is the Bar Association for Tanzania Mainland, founded in 1954 by an Act of Parliament, the Tanganyika Law Society Ordinance 1954. TLS is currently governed by the Tanganyika Law Society Act, Cap 307 R.E. 2002.
3. That the 1st Petitioner's core value is Rule of Law, integrity and transparency, assisting the public to access justice and to provide legal aid to the public.
4. That the statutory function of the 1st Petitioner is to represent, protect and assist members of the legal profession in Tanzania as regards conditions of practice and otherwise.
5. That the 1st Petitioner has a statutory duty to protect and assist the public in Tanzania in all matters touching, ancillary or incidental to the law.
6. That the 1st Petitioner has the mandate to do all other things which are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the foregoing objects or any of them.

7. That the 1st and its members have the duty to respect the laws of the land as provided under the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, including the orders issued by authorities, including the 1st Respondent.
8. That, the 1st Petitioner, as a national Bar Association and has more than 14,000 members in the country, has a civic duty to protect the Constitution and the laws of the land.
9. That, the 2nd 3rd and 4th respondents are citizens of Tanzania carrying on business in Tanzania knowledgeable of their Civic and Constitutional Rights including the right to freedom of association expression and the right to receive information.
10. That in the discharge of the Constitutional and civic duties, the Petitioners have the right to take legal action in order to protect the Constitution and the laws of the land.
11. That every individual in Tanzania, under the Constitution, is required to respect and abide by the laws of their beloved nation, including the 1st petitioner as a juristic person and it's members.
12. That, the Petitioners therefore as part of their constitutional duty, have the duty to respect the law, including the duty to challenge order issued by the Respondents.
13. That, the Petitioners herein have a duty to respect the law, including the duty to ensure that the Respondents performs its constitutional and statutory duty.
14. That internet shutdown affects the general public but also affect the petitioners and their activities.
15. That the Constitution provides that a person can take legal action to protect their rights or consider public interest litigation when the rights have been violated, are being violated or are likely to be violated.

16. That the Petitioners are filing this case as public interest litigators for the benefit of all Tanzanians.
17. That, we make this affidavit in support of the admissibility of the petition pursuant to provisions of the Basic Rights and Duties Enforcement Act as amended.

Signed and dated at Dar-es-salaam this 10 day of December, 2025.

.....

BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI

PRESIDENT OF THE PETITIONER

.....

BOB CHACHA WANGE

.....

TWAHA MWAIPAYA

.....

KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE

VERIFICATION

WE, BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI, being the president of the Petitioner in this Petition, and **BOB CHACHA WANGE, TWAHA MWAIPAYA AND KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE** do hereby verify that all that is stated in

Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,9,10,11,12,13, 14,15 and16 are true to the best of my knowledge as the President of the Petitioner

Signed and Verified at Dar-es-salaam this 10 day of December 2025.

.....

BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI

PRESIDENT OF THE PETITIONER

.....

BOB CHACHA WANGWE

.....

TWAHA MWAIPAYA

.....

KUMBUSHO DAWSON KAGINE

SWORN at Dar-es-salaam by the said **BONIFACE ANYISILE KAJUNJUMELE MWABUKUSI** who is introduced to me by **JEBRA KAMBOLE** the latter been known to me personally in my presence this 10 day of 12 2025.

.....

DEPONENT

BEFORE ME:

NAME: ABBRIATY SADA KIVEA

ADDRESS: 76722

Abbriaty Sada Kivea
P.O. 76722 Dar es Salaam
Advocate, Notary Public & Commissioner for Oaths

TITLE: ADVOCATE .....

SIGNATURE .....

COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS

SWORN at Dar-es-salaam by the said

BOB CHACHA WANGWE.

who is introduced to me by **JEBRA KAMBOLE**

the latter been known to me personally

in my presence this 10 day of 12 2025.

.....

DEPONENT

BEFORE ME:

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ADDRESS: 76722 .....

TITLE: ADVOCATE .....

SIGNATURE .....

COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS

Abbriaty Sada Kivea Box 76722 Dar es Salaam Advocate, Notary Public & Commissioner for Oaths

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TWHAHA MWAIPAYA

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ADDRESS: 76722 .....

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SIGNATURE .....

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Abbriaty Sada Kivea Box 76722 Dar es Salaam Advocate, Notary Public & Commissioner for Oaths

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ADDRESS: 76722
TITLE: ADVOCATE
SIGNATURE .....

Abbriaty Sada Kivea Box 76722 Dar es Salaam Advocate, Notary Public Commissioner for Oaths

COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS

Presented for filling this .....day of 2025

REGISTRY OFFICER

Drawn and filed jointly by:-
Jebra Kambole (Advocate)
Deogratius Cosmas Mahinyila
Law Guards Advocates
Tiger Tower, 1st Floor
Manyanya Area, Kinondoni
P.O. Box 5413,
Dar-Es-Salaam
+255 717 334032
Email; jebrakambole@gmail.com

10/12/2025

Mpale Mpoki (Advocate)

Mpoki & Associates, Advocates,
Victoria Tower, Floor 9, Wing A
Ally Hassan Road
P.O Box 14232
Dar Es Salaam
Tel: +255-764-500500
+255-715-187777
+255-765-941 890

Email: Mpokikaba@gmail.Com

Advocate Hekima Mwasipu
Matwiga Law Chamber
Ibacon House, Ikungi Street,
Kinondoni Manyanya.
Box 31191, 0759502009
Dar -Es- Salaam

To Be Served Upon:-

Director
Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority
Dar es salaam.
Tanzania

Minister
Communications and Information Technology
Dar-es-salaam
Tanzania

The Solicitor General,
Office of the Solicitor – General,
10 Kivukoni Road
P.O. Box 71554 DAR ES SALAAM
Tel: +255 22 211 1622/212 0 469
Fax: +255 22 211 1621
Email: info@osg.go.tzs

VODACOM TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY
15th Floor Vodacom Tower,
Ursino Estate Plot 23,
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P.O. Box 2369
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AIRTEL TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY
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10th Floor, Tanzanite Park, Plot No. 38,
South Ursino, New Bagamoyo Road,
P.O. Box 34716,
Dar es Salaam.

HONORA TANZANIA PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY @ MIXX BY YAS
PSSSF Commercial Complex,
30th Floor, Suite 24,
Sam Nujoma Road,
House No. 24,
16102 Sinza C Street,
Dar es Salaam.

Director General,
Tanzania Telecommunications Corporation,
Extelcoms House,
32, Samora Street,
P.O. BOX 9070,
11104 Dar es Salaam,
Tanzania

ANNEXURE B2

The NetBlocks Cost of Shutdown Tool (COST) estimates the economic impact of an internet disruption, mobile data outage or app restriction using indicators from the World Bank, ITU, Eurostat and U.S. Census.

NETBLOCKS®
MAPPING INTERNET FREEDOM

Affected country or region

Tanzania

Whole country

The regions affected by a subnational shutdown (not available)

Services restricted, throttled or unavailable in partial shutdown

Total shutdown

Or none in case of a total shutdown

Days

7

Hours

0

The duration of the disruption

$96,445,101
TOTAL COST IMPACT

TZS 227,031,768,829
TANZANIAN SHILLING

Note
Using Brookings Institution method which relies on development indicators

Note
Using approximated digital economy extent of 0.03

Note
This methodology estimates the GDP impact from a nation-wide internet shutdown or outage affecting landline and mobile services

Note
Total cost in local currency is TZS 227,031,768,829 Tanzanian Shilling (TZS) using exchange rate as of May 2023

Note
This service estimates the economic impact of a single hypothetical internet disruption of the specified type, location and duration. It primarily models internet shutdowns and outages which impact entire populations typically lasting on the order of a few hours or days. Economic indicators for 2020 have been applied.

NETBLOCKS®, Cost of Shutdown Tool™, and associated slogans, brands, logos and features are trademarks of Netblocks Ltd. Information provided are illustrative estimates and may change over time. See data policy. Data sources and base methodologies remain the property of their respective owners.
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ANNEXURE B3

TAARIFA KWA WATEJA

Mpendwa Mteja,

Tunaomba radhi kwa ukosefu wa huduma ya intaneti iliyojitokeza Oktoba 29 hadi Novemba 04, kutokana na sababu zilizo nje ya uwezo wetu.

Tunapenda kuwajulisha kwamba huduma zetu za intaneti zimerudi hewani na jitihada mbalimbali zinachukuliwa kuhakikisha huduma zimerejea kikamilifu.

Hali kadhalika, tutawatumia ujumbe wateja wetu waliokua na mabando hai ya intaneti au waliofanya manunuzi katika kipindi hiki. Zoezi hili linaweza kuchukua siku kadhaa kutokana na idadi ya wateja walioathirika.

Tunaomba radhi kwa usumbufu uliyojitokeza na tunawashukuru kwa uvumilivu wenu.

Vodacom Tanzania PLC
04 Novemba 2025

Pamoja Tunaweza

ANNEXURE B4

PRESS RELEASES

Press release on the Nationwide Internet Outage on Election Day in the United Republic of Tanzania

Nov 01, 2025 Français

SHARE

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission) is following with concern the ongoing rights-related developments in the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania) which occurred during the general elections held on 29 October 2025.

The Commission is concerned by the reports that Tanzania experienced a nationwide internet outage on Wednesday, 29 October 2025, as the elections commenced with little to no online communication, in what has been described as a "digital blackout." *1*

The Commission wishes to reiterate the importance of the internet in advancing human and peoples' rights in Africa, particularly with regards to the reality that for elections to be free, fair and credible, the electorate must have access to information at all stages of the electoral process.

As noted in **Resolution 580 on Internet Shutdowns and Elections in Africa** the Commission specifically called on States Parties to take the necessary legislative and other measures to ensure open and secure internet access before, during and after elections, including ensuring that telecommunications and internet service providers take adequate steps to provide unrestricted and uninterrupted access, and to refrain from ordering the interruption of telecommunications services, shutting down the internet, and/or disrupting access to any other digital communication platforms before, during or after the elections. *2*

Internet shutdowns undoubtedly constitute a violation of **Article 9** of the **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights** which guarantees individuals the right to receive information, as well as the right to express and disseminate information. Furthermore, **Principle 38** of the **Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa** specifically provides that "States shall not interfere with the right of individuals to seek, receive and impart information through any means of communication and digital technologies, through measures such as the removal, blocking or filtering of content, unless such interference is justifiable and compatible with international human rights law and standards," and further that "States shall not engage in or condone any disruption of access to the internet and other digital technologies for segments of the public or an entire population."

Similarly, **Principle 27** of the **Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa** provides that "In exceptional cases in which a shutdown may be permissible under international law, the reasons for any shutdown shall be proactively disclosed. Such limitation shall be authorized by law, serve a legitimate aim and be necessary and proportional in a democratic society."

In light of the above, the Commission calls upon the Government of Tanzania to exercise its duty of protecting human rights in the country, by ensuring that the citizens' right to freedom of expression and access to information are respected and protected.

The Commission reiterates its unwavering commitment under Article 45 of the Charter to promote and protect human rights and stands ready to collaborate with the Government of Tanzania, and other local and international actors, to find peaceful solutions that promote national unity and sustain free, fair, transparent elections across Africa.

Done in Banjul, 30 October 2025

1. https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/117541-tanzania-hit-nationwide-internet-outage-election-day-protests-erupt
2. Adopted during the 78th Private Ordinary Session, held virtually from 23 February to 08 March 2024

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION TANZANIA

Trending News

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights deplores the violent attacks on schools in Kebbi and Niger States, the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Press Releases | Nov 23, 2025

Communiqué de presse sur l'enlèvement de membres de la famille de l'artiste et activiste Elie Kamano en République de Guinée

Press Releases | Nov 21, 2025

Communiqué de Presse: La Commission africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples effectue une visite de courtoisie au Président de la Commission de l'Union africaine

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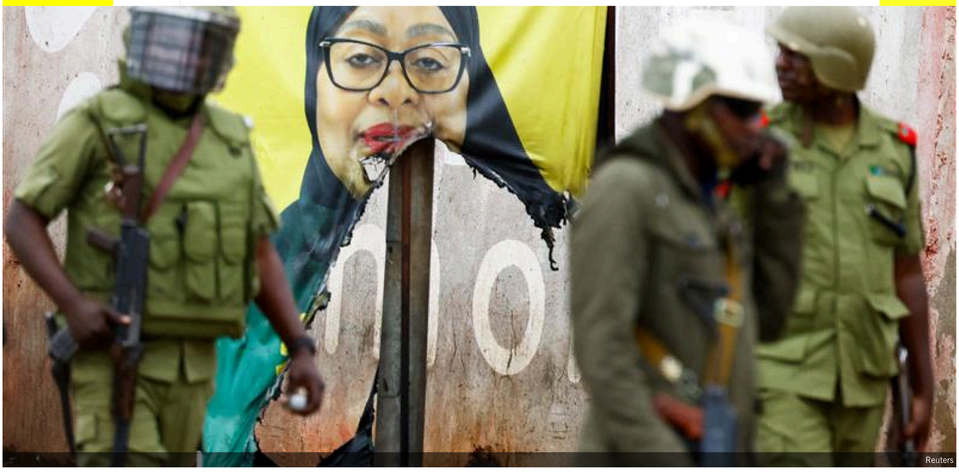
Reuters

NEWS

3 November 2025

Tanzania: Unlawful killings and other human rights violations continue amid internet and electricity blackouts

In response to the ongoing partial internet shutdown by Tanzanian authorities following the October 29 general elections, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for East and Southern Africa, Vongai Chikwanda said:

"For close to a week now, many people in Tanzania have suffered nationwide internet and electricity shutdowns. Amnesty International is particularly alarmed by reports that amidst the blackouts, security forces have used excessive force to suppress and disperse ongoing post-election protests, resulting in the deaths and injuries of protesters.

> "Amnesty International is particularly alarmed by reports that amidst the blackouts, security forces have used excessive force to suppress and disperse ongoing post-election protests, resulting in the deaths and injuries of protesters.
>
> Vongai Chikwanda, Deputy Regional Director, Amnesty International, ESARO

"This is the third time in less than a year that Tanzanian authorities have resorted to an internet blockade to silence dissenting voices. Authorities must immediately refrain from suppressing protests and instead respect, protect, and facilitate the right to peaceful assembly. They must immediately and unconditionally release all those arrested solely for exercising their right to peaceful assembly."

"Authorities should promptly, thoroughly, independently, impartially, transparently and effectively investigate all killings by security agents and bring to justice in fair trials those suspected of being responsible. Authorities must also provide victims and their families with access to justice and effective remedies.

> "Authorities should promptly, thoroughly, independently, impartially, transparently and effectively investigate all killings by security agents and bring to justice in fair trials those suspected of being responsible
>
> Vongai Chikwanda

"The authorities must also allow both local and international media to freely report on the human rights situation in the country and refrain from restricting access to information, both online and offline including by immediately restoring internet access and access to basic public services. The ongoing restrictions are making it difficult to verify information, and to document election-related human rights violations."

Background

Tanzanians went to the polls on 29 October in an election dominated by the ruling Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, with the two main opposition presidential candidates, Tundu Lissu from Chadema (Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo or the Party for Democracy and Progress), and Luhaga Mpina from ACT-Wazalendo, barred from standing. Verified videos showed protesters on the streets of Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, Tunduma, Tanga, and Mwanza among other towns. Ahead of the elections, Amnesty International issued a briefing outlining how the Tanzanian authorities have intensified their repression of peaceful dissent against the opposition, journalists, human rights defenders, activists and civil society organizations.

Authorities imposed nationwide internet restrictions on election day disrupting mobile data services and blocking access to social media platforms across major networks. On Monday 3 November, residents reported partial resumption in some cities.

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Tanzania’s Internet Disruption Undermines Electoral Integrity and Imperils Livelihoods

October 30, 2025

By CIPESA Staff |

The ongoing internet disruption in Tanzania is gravely undermining the integrity of the country’s general elections and jeopardising livelihoods. With citizens unable to access credible and diverse information, the blackout not only erodes public trust but also risks intensifying ongoing demonstrations. It further prevents citizens, journalists, and civil society actors from documenting human rights violations committed by security agencies and other actors.

The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) expresses solidarity with the people of Tanzania and joins the local and international community in urging the Government of Tanzania to immediately and fully restore internet access and to refrain from any form of network disruption.

CIPESA has joined numerous international organisations in calling on Tanzania’s Ministry of Communication and Information Technology to uphold digital rights and to keep the internet on before, during, and after the elections.

CIPESA also supports the #KeepItOn coalition which is a global network of more than 345 organisations across 106 countries working to end internet shutdowns in its appeal to President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan to publicly commit to ensuring that all people in Tanzania have unrestricted access to the internet, digital platforms, and communication channels throughout the electoral period.

In addition, CIPESA has joined the Net Rights Coalition, a network of internet freedom advocates working to share knowledge and combat digital rights threats, in calling on the Government of Tanzania to respect and promote digital rights.

These calls come against a backdrop of declining digital freedoms in Tanzania, marked by increasing restrictions on online expression, threats to media independence, and a shrinking civic space. Restoring full internet access is not only a democratic imperative. It is essential for protecting human rights, fostering transparency, and ensuring that citizens can freely participate in shaping their country’s future.

CIPESA’s efforts are in line with the principles of the African Declaration on Digital Freedom **and** Democracy that emphasises digital democracy as a cornerstone of open, inclusive, and rights-respecting societies.

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Get In Touch

Plot 10B Katalima Crescent
Naguru.
P.O.Box 122311
Kampala (U)

media@cipesa.org

Landline : +256 414 289 502

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#KeepItOn: Authorities in Tanzania must commit to unrestricted access to the internet during elections

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issued by various stakeholders, including the ACHPR. "While we acknowledge the restoration of connectivity across the country, we urge the Tanzanian authorities to unblock all digital communication platforms, refrain from imposing future disruptions, launch a thorough, independent investigation into the reported human rights violations documented, and ensure accountability for all violations perpetrated.

Update: On October 29, 2025, Tanzanian authorities imposed widespread, nationwide internet shutdowns amid voting and protests. As of this update, neither the government nor the ISPs operating in the country has provided any explanation for the disruptions, and the shutdown is ongoing.

According to technical data from Cloudflare Radar, Tanzania experienced a near complete internet blackout, with traffic dropping by over 90% around 9:30 UTC (12:30 local time) across the country.

Access Now and the #KeepItOn coalition strongly condemn the ongoing internet blackout in Tanzania and urge the government to immediately restore full connectivity. We call on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the UN, the Freedom Online Coalition, and the international community to join civil society groups in denouncing and demanding an end to this unlawful disruption of access.

_____

In an **open letter** to President Samia Suluhu, Access Now and the #KeepItOn coalition are urging authorities in Tanzania to uphold human rights and ensure open and secure access to the internet and digital communications before, during, and after the upcoming elections on October 29, 2025, to guarantee a participatory and transparent electoral process.

Tanzania is no stranger to shutdowns, with **X being the latest platform facing an unconstitutional clampdown from authorities**. The platform has been shut down since May 2025 amid opposition leader Tundu Lissu's treason trial and harsh criticism against the government. At the time, **authorities confirmed** they had banned X for featuring pornographic content.

> **"Authorities in Tanzania have often turned to extreme measures to control information flows, silence opposition, and crush dissent; this must not be allowed to become the norm. Access Now and the #KeepItOn coalition urge President Suluhu to uphold the rule of law and the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution— the people of Tanzania deserve nothing less."**
>
> FELICIA ANTHONIO, #KEEPITON GLOBAL CAMPAIGN MANAGER AT ACCESS NOW

The internet and social media platforms play a critical role in ensuring people can exercise their freedom of expression, maintain access to important and sometimes life-saving information, and participate in civic processes in a meaningful way. A democratic society demands meaningful access and the freedom and safety to exercise these rights. People in Tanzania must be able to access critical and updated information about election processes and candidates, be able to document and relay events and outcomes, as well as have avenues to sound the alarm and hold authorities accountable for human rights abuses and violations.

> **"As Tanzania heads towards a highly controversial election period, it is even more important that platforms for civil and political conversations and discourse are safeguarded and free from state interference. Authorities must course correct and quickly, otherwise they risk further eroding democratic values and normalising silencing contrary opinions and political opposition — tactics that are associated with authoritarian regimes, not democracies."**
>
> BRIDGET ANDERE, SENIOR POLICY ANALYST AT ACCESS NOW

READ THE OPEN LETTER

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#KeepItOn: Authorities in Tanzania must commit to unrestricted access to the internet during elections

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Tanzania: Killings, Crackdown Follow Disputed Elections

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A Tanzanian police water cannon shoots water at opposition party supporters during a protest in Kigoma, Tanzania, on October 30, 2025, a day after Tanzania's presidential and legislative elections. © 2025 Photo by -/AFP via Getty Images

(Nairobi) – The authorities in Tanzania responded to widespread protests following the October 29 elections with lethal force and other abuses, Human Rights Watch said today. On November 1, Tanzania's electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission, announced that the incumbent president, Samia Suluhu Hassan, won the election with 97.66 percent of the vote. She was sworn in on November 3 for a second term at a ceremony closed to the public amid continuing protests.

The protests, some of which were violent, erupted on election day and have continued over three days in Dar es Salaam and other cities. Police responded with tear gas and live ammunition to disperse crowds. The government imposed nationwide internet restrictions on October 29, and multiple internet monitoring organizations confirmed that internet connectivity had been disrupted. Reports on the evening of November 3 indicate that some internet access has been restored but that restrictions on social media and messaging platforms persist.

"The Tanzanian authorities' violent and repressive response to election-related protests further undermines the credibility of the electoral process," said Oryem Nyeko, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch. "The government has a responsibility to maintain security, but it needs to respect rights and ensure that all those responsible for violence are investigated and appropriately prosecuted."

In October, Human Rights Watch reported that the Tanzanian government intensified political repression, suppressed political opposition and critics of the ruling party, stifled the media, and failed to ensure the electoral commission's independence in the lead up to the elections.

Tanzania's main opposition party, Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema), had urged its supporters not to participate in the elections. An opposition party official and a resident of Dar es Salaam told Human Rights Watch that police officers and individuals in civilian clothes shot and killed protesters and passers-by on election day and in the two days that followed.

John Kitoka, the director of foreign and diaspora affairs of Chadema, said that the party had collected reports of up to 1,000 people killed by police and unidentified security force personnel in the aftermath of the elections in eight of Tanzania's 31 regions.

Human Rights Watch has not been able to confirm these numbers but regional and international bodies such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Southern African Development Community, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the European Union have raised concerns in their public statements about the large number of fatalities.

A resident of Dar es Salaam's Temeke district told Human Rights Watch via telephone that on October 30 at around 3:30 p.m., her neighbor, who was not participating in the protests, was shot and killed outside his home by a man that witnesses said was wearing civilian clothes.

From the evening of October 29 until November 3, the government imposed a 24-hour lockdown, ordering all residents to stay at home. A resident of Dar es Salaam told Human Rights Watch that shops were closed for three days after election day but were allowed to open briefly on November 2. The resident said the lockdown prevented them from leaving their homes to buy food and get money from the bank.

The lockdown prevented the media from being able to report on the elections and the ensuing protests. Two Tanzania-based journalists said they were unable to carry out reporting on the ongoing events because of the lockdown.

The authorities appear to have blocked foreign journalists from covering the elections by failing in some instances to respond to accreditation applications. The International Press Association of East Africa said it does not know of any journalists working for international media who were accredited to travel to the mainland to cover the elections.

Agence France-Presse reported on October 24 that its journalists, despite being accredited, were denied access to grounds in Stone Town, Zanzibar, where President Hassan was due to hold a rally.

One journalist told Human Rights Watch that he applied for accreditation to cover the election on mainland Tanzania via an online portal on the election commission's website but did not receive any response. He followed up with phone calls to the commission and was told by a high-ranking official that they would return his call, but they did not.

The Tanzanian authorities should immediately end the use of excessive and lethal force against protests, and take steps to ensure accountability for allegations of election-related killings, beatings, and assaults by security forces, and hold those responsible accountable, Human Rights Watch said.

Tanzania is obligated to respect everyone's rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association under international human rights law and its constitution. Tanzania security forces should abide by the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, which require law enforcement officials to apply nonviolent means and to use force only when strictly unavoidable to protect life. The principles also require governments to ensure that arbitrary or abusive use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials is punished as a criminal offense under national law.

Under international human rights law, Tanzanian authorities should refrain from imposing internet shutdowns, disruptions, or blocking access to websites and platforms including before, during, and after elections. The African Commission stated that the recent shutdown in Tanzania violates article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which guarantees the rights to freedom of expression and access to information. It called on the Tanzanian government to respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression and access to information.

"Street demonstrations against the conduct of elections should not be used as a pretext for violating people's rights," Nyeko said. "The authorities are obligated to promote and protect the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and fully restore access to the internet."

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ANNEXURE B6

JOINT STATEMENT
CONDEMNING PRE- AND POST-ELECTION GRIEVOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN TANZANIA

7th November 2025, Dar es Salaam

We, the undersigned CSOs, are deeply concerned and strongly condemn widespread reports of serious human rights violations that occurred before, during, and after the 2025 general elections. These include killings of civilians, unlawful arrests, abductions, enforced disappearances, suppression of media freedoms, internet shutdown, and denial of due process rights. Although the extent of human rights abuse is yet to be fully uncovered, we are aware of the following and consider it a worrying indication.

Excessive Use of Force and Killings of Civilians

There have been widespread videos of excessive use of force, live ammunition, and tear gas to disperse demonstrators. According to news sources, many unarmed civilians have been killed during demonstrations. Equally concerning are the growing reports of bystanders and other civilians killed in their homes or elsewhere, even as they posed no threat whatsoever.

Videos and images shared on social media since the return of internet connectivity show widespread reprisal killings against young people who were often caught unaware. These killings have deeply affected families and communities. In some regions, children witnessed their parents being beaten, arrested, or killed, resulting in long-term psychological trauma. This is against Article (19) (1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 9 on the right not to be separated from parents.

The killings did not spare journalists who were performing their duties, and some were in their homes. There have been confirmed reports of the killing of a Clouds Media journalist, Master Tindwa, at his residence in Temeke, and Kelvin Lameck Mwakangondya from Baraka FM in Mbeya, who was reported to have been killed on 29th October 2025, while on duty.

A journalist from Azam media group in Dar es Salaam was seriously injured, and two other journalists in Arusha, namely Godfrey Thomas from Ayo TV and Alphonce Kusaga from Sunrise radio, were arrested. There have also been reports of the killing of a religious leader, Sheikh Msopa, a well-known cleric who was shot on 29th October 2025 at his home, Mabibo Mwisho, Dar es Salaam.

Arbitrary and Unlawful Arrests and Detention

According to information obtained and observed, many civilians, particularly young people, have been arbitrarily and unlawfully arrested in different parts of mainland Tanzania. Reports from Mwanza, in an interview with the Regional Commissioner by the Independent Television (ITV) on 30th October 2025, indicate that numerous young people are alleged to have been arrested and have not been granted bail. This is also the case in Dar es Salaam, where reports of several civilians being held at Oysterbay Police Station and other stations without the right to bail have been reported.

In Kilimanjaro, reports indicate that about 312 people were arrested and detained at Moshi Central Police Station, of whom 300 were released on bail on 5th November 2025. The reports state that the remaining 12 are still detained, without being afforded the right to bail or taken to court to defend themselves. Reports from the regions of Arusha, Mbeya, Dodoma, Mara, Kigoma, and Songwe also indicate that many young people continue to be detained without the right to bail.

This is against Article 13(6)(a) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, which provides that no person may be subjected to arbitrary actions, and Article 15, which speaks against unlawful and arbitrary detention. This is also contrary to the provisions of section 148(5) of the Criminal Procedure Act Cap 20, R.E 2022, on the right to bail.

We have also received information from credible sources that many individuals have been arrested since 20th October 2025 and remain detained in various police stations without being brought before a court or granted access to legal representation. Among those still detained is the Deputy Chairperson of CHADEMA, Hon. John Heche.

Internet Shutdown

According to the United Nations, the Internet is a right. The Internet has become a key means for individuals to exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression, as stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The right to information is protected under Article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as regional and international instruments to which Tanzania has ratified.

For six (6) consecutive days since 29th October 2025, authorities shut down internet access nationwide. This significantly restricted the free flow of information, monitoring of election processes, and reporting of human rights violations. The shutdown also hindered people from accessing critical information, particularly on how to avoid the demonstrations for those who did not want to take part.

Our Call to the Government

We wish to express, as fellow citizens, our most profound solidarity with all those affected by the recent violence. To begin restoring the nation's faith in justice and humanity, we appeal to the Government to urgently undertake the following steps:

i. Immediately release all detainees on bail or bring them before the court to answer the allegations they are about to be charged with.
ii. Allow families of those deceased to access, identify, and bury their loved ones in line with their traditions and religions.
iii. Allow for an independent, transparent, and time-bound investigation into the killings and excessive use of force. An independent international team of experts should do this.
iv. Avoid the culture of impunity by prosecuting those responsible for unarmed civilian killings.
v. Protect freedom of expression, access to information, and media freedom, including ensuring the safety and independence of journalists and media houses.
vi. Work on reconciliation and long-term healing through dialogue and the engagement of key stakeholders, i.e., political parties, the interfaith community, and civil society.
vii. Compensate all families who lost their loved ones because of excessive use of force by security agencies.

Signed and delivered by:

1. Legal and Human Rights Centre
2. Twaweza
3. Foundation For Civil Society
4. JamiiAfrica
5. Msichana Initiative
6. Centre for Strategic Litigation
7. Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group

ANNEXURE B7

AFRICAN UNION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE OCTOBER 2025 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The African Union Election Observation Mission calls for urgent constitutional reforms and inclusive politics in the United Republic of Tanzania

5 November 2025

A. INTRODUCTION

At the invitation of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), an independent African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) was deployed in Tanzania and Zanzibar from 14 October to 3 November 2025, to observe the 29 October 2025 General Elections. The Mission was led by H.E. Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, former President of the Republic of Botswana, and supported by H.E. Geoffrey Onyeama, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It comprised 72 observers drawn from ambassadors accredited to the AU, Members of the Pan African Parliament, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), gender, youth, media experts, and elections experts from 31 African countries.[1]

As part of the mandate to promote and strengthen democracy and good governance across the continent, the AUEOM was guided by relevant AU instruments, including the 2000 Constitutive Act of the Union, the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the 2002 OAU/AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, the 2002 AU Guidelines for Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions, and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process. The Mission also evaluated the elections in line with international and regional standards for democratic elections, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the 2005 Declaration of Principles on International Election Observation, and Tanzania's legal framework for the conduct of elections.

The objectives of the AUEOM were to: (a) assess whether the 2025 electoral process complies with AU principles, normative frameworks and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, as well as Tanzania's national legal framework; (b) ascertain that the environment was peaceful for conducting democratic elections that will foster acceptance of the electoral outcomes; (c) evaluate the level of preparedness of the electoral commission and other electoral institutions; (d) provide recommendations for improving future elections and (e) demonstrate the AU's solidarity and support for Tanzania's democratic and electoral processes to ensure that the conduct of genuine elections contributes to the consolidation of peace and stability, and promotes inclusive development in the country.

The arrival of the AUEOM was preceded by a Pre-Election Assessment Mission, deployed by the African Union Commission from 11 to 21 June 2025, to assess the preparations for the elections.

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[1]Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo Republic, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Egypt, Eswatini, Guinea Bisau, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Seychelles, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Before the election day on 29 October, the AUEOM met with selected electoral stakeholders, including the INEC, the Zanzibar Election Commission (ZEC), government representatives, political parties, CSOs, the media, citizen observer networks, academia, and representatives of the international community. Through these consultations, the Mission gathered diverse perspectives on the level of preparations. It is worth noting that the AUEOM was unable to meet with some stakeholders due to restrictions imposed by the Government of Tanzania.

From 26 October, the Mission deployed 28 teams of 72 observers to 17 regions to observe the remaining campaign period, early voting in Zanzibar, and Election Day (including opening, voting, closing, and counting).

This preliminary statement is based on the assessment of the pre-election period and Election Day activities. The AUEOM was unable to complete election day observations at some polling stations due to outbreaks of deadly protests and the subsequent six-day internet shutdown.

To enhance future electoral processes in Tanzania, the Mission will publish detailed findings, recommendations and key lessons, two months after the official declaration of the elections' results.

B. PRE-ELECTIONS FINDINGS

1. Political Context

The 2025 General Elections were Tanzania's seventh since the advent of multiparty democracy in 1995. The political context was characterised by the refusal of the main opposition party, CHADEMA, to sign the Code of Conduct and its subsequent boycott of the General Elections, citing the government's failure to implement the proposed electoral reforms. The subsequent arrest and prosecution of CHADEMA Chairperson Tundu Lissu on treason charges, and the arrest of Vice Chairperson John Heche on immigration charges, as well as the High Court's banning of the party from conducting any political activity due to allegations of disproportionate use of party resources, incapacitated the main opposition.

Additionally, the disqualification of Luhaga Mpina, the presidential candidate of ACT-Wazalendo, on the grounds of non-compliance with nomination and endorsement requirements, further characterised the political climate. Compared to previous elections, these developments diminished the competitiveness of the 2025 elections.

The Mission observed that President Samia Suluhu Hassan's assumption of office in 2021, following the death of President John Pombe Magufuli, marked the beginning of the relaxation of restrictions on political rallies, the return of politicians who had been exiled, and the issuing of licences to the media. Although these measures initially expanded the political space for inclusive participation, they were short-lived.

Some electoral reforms were undertaken prior to the 2025 General Elections. However, these did not address major constitutional limitations that could have levelled the playing field and promoted electoral integrity.

Some of the key constitutional reforms that were not implemented before the elections included (a) appointing Commissioners for the INEC through an independent body, (b) amending Article 41(7) of the Constitution to enable presidential election results to be challenged in court, and (c) revising Article 67(1)(b) of the Constitution to allow independent candidates to contest in elections.

Some of the events leading up to the 2025 General Elections therefore conflict with the African Union principles on the right to and freedom of participation in elections, as outlined in Article 4(1)(2) of the ACDEG and Article 13(1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), including the decision of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The Mission emphasises that regular elections without genuine competition and adherence to democratic principles result in voter apathy and ultimately lead to citizens' disengagement from political activities. In this regard, the AUEOM underscores the importance of safeguarding political freedoms, ensuring equitable participation for all political actors, and fostering a conducive environment for competitive democratic elections.

2. Legal Framework

The 2025 General Elections in Tanzania were governed by a legal framework that includes: (a) the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977); (b) the Constitution of Zanzibar (1984); (c) the Presidential, Parliamentary and Councillors' Elections Act (2024), (d) the Political Parties Act (2019) Zanzibar Elections Act (2020), (e) the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Act (2024), and (f) Election Expenses Act (2024).

The AUEOM noted that Tanzania's legal framework provides the basis for organising the elections. However, as previously discussed, some provisions in the legal framework are inconsistent with regional, continental and international standards. For further emphasis, Article 41(7) of the Constitution prohibits the right to challenge presidential election results and Article 39(1) of the Constitution prohibits independent candidates from exercising the right to be elected. These provisions violate the core principles of the right to a fair hearing before a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal as outlined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Article 7) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 2(3).

In addition to the Union's elections, Zanzibar conducts its own Presidential, House of Representatives, and local authorities' elections. The Mission noted that in Zanzibar, the 2020 Constitutional Amendment and the 2024 Electoral Act introduced some reforms. However, critical gaps remained, including a trust deficit related to the management of

early voting. The trust deficit mainly concerns how votes cast during early voting are managed overnight until the main election day, as well as the lack of a separate voters' roll for early voting.

3. The Electoral System

Tanzania's electoral system combines First Past the Post (FPTP) and proportional representation. The President and 272 Members of Parliament are elected through FPTP in single-member constituencies, with 113 Special Seats for women allocated to parties in proportion to the seats they won.

Zanzibar also maintains its own House of Representatives and President, elected through a similar FPTP system, reflecting its semi-autonomous status. The Zanzibar House of Representatives comprises 76 members, including 50 elected members, seven (7) nominated members, and 18 special seats reserved for women.

The AUEOM acknowledges this hybrid electoral system in both the mainland and Zanzibar as inclusive and in consonance with the AU's Agenda 2063, the ACDEG, and the Maputo Protocol, which collectively emphasise inclusion, equity, and full participation of women in governance.

4. Election Administration

The AUEOM recognised the preparations carried out by the INEC and the ZEC for the 2025 General Elections, in accordance with the established electoral framework. Among the commendable activities undertaken by the Commissions were the voter registration drive that enrolled new voters, voter education, logistics planning, and the procurement of biometric verification kits, among others.

However, various stakeholders raised concerns about the late release of INEC's election calendar, citing a lack of transparency, which made it difficult for stakeholders to plan more effectively and engage with the election processes. An earlier and inclusive dissemination would have aligned with regional best practices.

While the legal framework in the Constitution accorded the Commissions some form of independence, the inclusion of senior public officers as returning officers under Section 6(1) of the Electoral Act, combined with oversight by the Prime Minister's office, undermined the independence of the INEC.

Furthermore, the Constitution and the INEC Act concentrate significant powers in the presidency to appoint all INEC members. This contrasts with the appointment process of the ZEC, where two Commissioners are recommended by the opposition leader or other political parties after consultations.

(a) *Voter Registration*

The INEC commendably updated its permanent voter register through a two-phase registration process that took place from 20 July 2024 to 23 March 2025 and from 1 May to 4 July 2025. During this period, the Provisional National Voters' Register (PNVR) was updated and displayed across 40,170 centres nationwide, a measure which contributes to transparency.

Notably, efforts to enhance inclusion in the election included registering voters in 130 prisons across Mainland Tanzania and 10 correctional institutions in Zanzibar. A total of 37,647,235 voters were registered, of whom 50.3% were women and 49.7% were men.

However, the Mission noted concerns from civil society regarding the potential registration of non-citizens in border areas, pointing to persistent trust deficits and highlighting serious risks to electoral credibility.

(b) *Voter Education*

The INEC granted accreditation to 164 CSOs to conduct voter education, reflecting inclusion in the electoral process. In 2021, the Commission adopted a Strategic Plan (2021/22–2025/26) to guide the implementation of voter education programmes. Subsequently, INEC launched awareness programmes on its election technology tools, particularly the Permanent Voter Registration System (PVR) and the Integrated Electoral Management System (IEMS). The targeted groups for the voter education programmes included youth (18–35), young and new voters (7.5 million), women, persons with disabilities, rural communities, other marginalised groups, and security agencies. Voter education was carried out through various media platforms, including radio and social media. These efforts were deemed progressive by the Mission.

However, stakeholders raised concerns that voter education faced challenges that undermined meaningful citizen participation and democratic accountability. These included the late accreditation of CSOs and media outlets, restrictions on online platforms, which hampered the digital reach of voter education messages; uneven coverage of voter education programmes, which excluded some remote and rural areas, among other issues.

5. Political Party and Candidate Nomination

The nomination process took place from 9 to 15 August 2025 in line with the Elections Act (2024). The nomination fees for mainland were 1,000,000 Tanzanian Shillings (approximately USD 400) for presidential candidates and 50,000 Tanzanian shillings (approximately USD 20) for parliamentary candidates. In Zanzibar, the rates were slightly higher: 2,000,000 Tanzanian shillings (approximately USD 800) for presidential candidates and 100,000 Tanzanian shillings (approximately USD 40) for House of

Representatives candidates. Comparatively, these fees were regarded as affordable for candidates, thereby promoting inclusion.

The Mission noted that the Union had 17 Presidential candidates (3 women and 14 men), 1,735 Parliamentary candidates (1,177 men and 558 women), and 7,289 Local Council aspirants (6,589 men and 700 women) competing in the general elections. For the Zanzibar elections, there were 11 presidential candidates, of whom three were women.

As previously discussed, the mission also noted the disqualification of the ACT Wazalendo presidential candidate on the grounds of failing to meet nomination regulations.

6. Electoral Campaign and Finance

The official campaign period lasted from 26 August to 27 October 2025. Compared to previous elections, the 2025 general elections were uncompetitive, and stakeholders attributed this to the main opposition political party, CHADEMA's boycott of the contest, and the disqualification of the ACT-Wazalendo presidential candidate. Campaign activities were dominated by the ruling CCM, as evidenced by extensive public rallies and very visible billboards and posters across the country.

The revised Election Expenses Act (2024) and Political Parties Act (2024) introduced measures to curb illicit funding in elections and promote fairness. However, stakeholders reported that the ruling CCM party had unequal access to and utilisation of state-owned media and public resources, due to weak enforcement of these two laws. The Mission noted that an uncompetitive political environment did not promote the AU principles for the right and freedom of participation in elections, as outlined in the ACDEG and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

7. Women's Political Participation

In Tanzania, Article 66(1b) of the Constitution establishes special seats for women in the National Assembly, ensuring a minimum quota for female representation. Article 13 further guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on gender. Initially set at 20% in 1998, the quota was increased to 30% and, following the 2015 elections, to 40%, resulting in women holding approximately 37% of parliamentary seats in the most recent parliament.

The Mission observed that Special Seats remained the dominant pathway for women's representation in Parliament, rather than through competitive electoral contests. This trend indicated that while Tanzania was progressing towards compliance with AU principles on gender equality, full substantive equality—where women compete and succeed in open elections—had yet to be fully achieved. The FPTP electoral system further compounded these challenges, as it tends to favour established political actors and limited opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Despite these efforts, the 2025 elections showed a mixed picture of women's political participation. According to figures from INEC, the number of women parliamentary candidates increased to 32.2% (558 out of 1,735), a significant rise from 23.3% in 2020 and just 4.4% in 1995. At the presidential level, three women contested out of 17 candidates (18%), and nine of the 17 running mates were women (53%), indicating their growing visibility at the highest political level. However, this upward trend was not consistent across all levels of governance. Women's participation in Local Council elections remained significantly lower, with only 9.6% (700 out of 7,289 candidates) being women, compared to 90% men.

8. Youth Participation

Article 21(1) of the Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to participate in governance, either directly or through representatives, while Article 5 grants all citizens aged 18 and above the right to vote, including youth as a major demographic. Although these provisions do not establish youth quotas or reserved seats as they do for women, they support principles of inclusion. While the Elections Act (2024) sets the minimum voting age at 18 and requires proof of age for voter registration, it does not address the administrative and procedural barriers young people face in obtaining identification cards. This omission may have indirectly restricted youth participation in the electoral process, falling short of the African Youth Charter's objective to guarantee young citizens the right to participate in all spheres of society, despite Tanzania's signature and ratification of the same.

The Mission noted that youth participation in Tanzania's electoral processes faces significant challenges such as underrepresentation in directly elected positions due to financial constraints, societal stereotypes (assumptions that young people cannot lead), and entrenched party patronage favouring older politicians. The absence of deliberate policies or mechanisms to ensure youth representation in Parliament was very glaring.

Some youth-led organisations were accredited to conduct voter education. In Zanzibar, young people were included, for the first time, in a special advisory committee established by the ZEC to contribute to the electoral process. This committee also comprised representatives of women and persons with disabilities, reflecting institutional efforts to promote inclusivity.

9. Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

The Mission acknowledged that the Persons with Disabilities Act (2010) reasonably provides for persons with disabilities to be elected to public office and includes accessibility measures for voters, such as access at polling stations and tactile ballot templates.

The Zanzibar Persons with Disabilities Act (2022) mentions political participation of persons with disabilities. However, it does not cover disability issues such as accessibility and reasonable accommodation, leaving persons with disabilities vulnerable in exercising their political rights.

Although the Constitution guarantees their rights to vote and run for public office, there are no dedicated seats in Parliament or local councils specifically set aside for persons with disabilities. The Mission noted that their inclusion largely depends on political parties' discretion, often through women's special seats rather than a disability-specific mechanism. This lack of structural guarantees persisted despite Tanzania's legal commitments under the Persons with Disabilities Act (2010).

INEC reported that there are 49,174 voters with disabilities. However, the Mission observed that this data was not disaggregated by gender and age, making it challenging to assess the participation of women with disabilities and young people with disabilities, who face multiple barriers because of their intersecting identities. The Mission also noted that INEC did not provide data on the number of candidates with disabilities to the public. This lack of information impacted the Mission's ability to evaluate the participation and representation of persons with disabilities as political candidates.

10. Participation of Civil Society Organisations

The INEC accredited 164 CSOs to conduct voter education and 76 to observe the 2025 elections, while ZEC accredited 45 CSOs for voter education and 51 for election observation, recognising their vital role in supporting democratic processes. In Zanzibar, some CSOs received accreditation only four days before Election Day. Such delays in accreditation hindered CSOs' work in the electoral process.

Overall, CSOs alleged selective treatment in gaining access to electoral processes, with limited information provided on why some groups were not accredited. Despite these challenges and limited resources, CSOs remained active in promoting civil and political rights.

11. The Media Coverage of the Electoral Process

The Mission observed that Tanzania's media landscape was diverse, including both state-owned and private outlets. However, access to major digital platforms was restricted during the election period under laws such as the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2020, following alleged cyberattacks on government accounts, which subsequently resulted in the blocking of some social media platforms.

Across the country, numerous outlets were deregistered or banned, and journalists worked under restrictive reporting guidelines that curtailed press freedom and public access to diverse information.

Traditional public media, especially radio, television, and print, showed a discernible bias in favour of the ruling CCM, restricting visibility for opposition parties and candidates. These issues highlighted gross inconsistencies with Article 17 of the ACDEG, which advocates for equitable access to both public and private media for all political actors during elections.

The Mission noted with concern a total internet shutdown in Tanzania during the mid-stage of the elections, which persisted until the departure of the AUEOM on 3 November 2025. This unfortunate development hindered citizens' access to information and limited election observers' ability to fully observe and report on crucial elements of the election process, such as voting, closing of polls, and counting of votes.

12. Electoral Security

The Tanzania Police, along with other state security agencies, played a vital role in maintaining order during the electoral process. In the lead-up to the 2025 General Elections, the Police established Gender Desks as part of their response to gender-based violence, especially for women in politics.

However, stakeholders reported challenges such as delayed investigations, lack of gender-sensitive training, funding constraints, and victims' fear of reporting due to stigma.

The AUEOM noted allegations of politically motivated abductions that remained unresolved ahead of the elections. The lack of prompt and thorough investigations into these incidents, along with insufficient communication on progress, eroded stakeholder confidence in the security institutions.

The Mission also noted with concern, allegations of excessive use of force by the police and the military in maintaining law and order during protests that characterised election day and immediately afterwards.

C. ELECTON DAY FINDINGS

1. Early Voting in Zanzibar (28 October 2025)

The AUEOM deployed three teams of observers to observe early voting on 28 October 2025. The process was established to facilitate voting by security personnel and election officials who would be deployed away from their registered areas on election day.

Early voting in Zanzibar was conducted peacefully.

The Mission observed professional conduct by electoral and security officials in the discharge of their duties. The opening process was largely efficient, timely, and well-resourced with all the necessary materials, although some complaints were raised by election agents alleging that they were not sufficiently informed of or invited to monitor the preparations for the vote before stations opened. The Mission also noted that handwritten signage made access to some early voting stations difficult.

At all stations visited, the Mission observed that voting proceeded uninterrupted with most early voters managing to cast their ballots. However, observers noted one allegation from a candidate that voters at a particular station, who appeared to be

marginally younger, were not eligible to vote. No further evidence was provided to support the allegation.

Most stations visited were virtually empty two hours before the close of polls, suggesting that voters were limited and organised to vote in the morning.

It was noted that while enfranchising security and election officials who would be deployed for official duty on election day was commendable, the management of early votes added to those cast on election day for counting could be improved to enhance transparency and accountability.

Two teams from the Mission were denied access to observe the closing of stations for early voting, which raised questions about compliance with regulations facilitating election observation based on regional and continental standards and principles of transparency in election administration.

2. Voting Day (29 October 2025)

The Mission deployed 72 observers across 17 regions to cover 176 constituencies nationwide. On Election Day, the observers visited 352 polling stations to observe the opening, voting, closing, and counting procedures in 202 urban (57.5%), 149 rural (42.5%) areas.

The electoral environment in the morning was generally calm. However, the situation shifted to violent protests, gunfire, road closures, and tyre burning in areas such as Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, Mwanza, Kagera, Dodoma, Kigoma, Tebora, Buhungwa, Singinda, among others. Our observers encountered serious security challenges as they could not return to Dar es Salaam immediately due to a sudden imposition of a curfew.

Furthermore, the AUEOM noted the absence of formal communication regarding the curfew, despite the established communication between the Mission and relevant authorities. As a result, some observers and drivers became stranded because they could not return to their accommodation and had to seek shelter in people's homes.

The Mission also experienced a shutdown of internet services, which occurred from around 11:00am on 29 October 2025. This affected the Mission’s communication, as well as the transmission of data and reporting from its observers.

The Mission’s Election Day observations below are based on reports received from our observers through our online reporting platform, phone calls, and in-person briefings.

Opening of polling

The Mission was deployed across 17 regions of Tanzania, observing the opening of 28 polling stations.

Voters were seen arriving early in the morning to cast their votes. Short queues, averaging 1 to 15 voters, were observed outside some stations (37%) before opening. However, at most stations (63%), there were no queues when the polling stations opened.

The Mission noted that INEC made efforts to ensure voter access in 70% of the polling stations visited, which had facilities for persons with disabilities. However, those not accessible were on uneven ground, located upstairs, lacked sign language interpreters, did not have information and instructions in large print and Braille formats, or had inaccessible ballot boxes and booths for wheelchair users, despite the provisions in the Persons with Disabilities Act (2010).

Additionally, voters without a voters' card were still permitted to vote if identified in the register, and upon presenting either their national ID cards, passports, or drivers' licences, ensuring that no eligible voter was disenfranchised.

The Mission observed that 11 out of 28 polling stations opened late by between 15 minutes and an hour, mainly due to poor preparations by polling officials, late delivery of voting materials, late arrival of staff, slow arrangement of materials, and delays in setting up the station.

The Mission noted that essential materials were available in most polling stations (96%). However, tactile ballot folders were not supplied.

Voting Process

All polling stations observed exhibited low voter turnout, indicating voter apathy and disengagement from the electoral process.

The secrecy of the vote was guaranteed by the proper layout of certain polling stations visited, which ensured the privacy of the ballot.

The Mission noted good practices, such as prioritising elderly voters. Assistance was also given to voters who needed support, including those who are visually impaired. However, the absence of priority lines in several centres put older persons, pregnant women, and mothers with infants at a disadvantage, and child-friendly measures were absent.

An average of five election officials were deployed at each polling station visited. There was a commendable gender balance, with 50% being women.

Party agents were present at most polling stations observed. The agents were mainly from CCM in 96.9% of the stations visited and ACT-Wazalendo in 39.9% of those stations. INEC cooperated with political party and candidate agents and ensured that they all had hard copies of the voters' roll to enhance voter verification. However, observers reported receiving limited cooperation from polling officials, some of whom were reluctant to share information to facilitate the work of accredited observers. The Mission observed the presence of the Tanzania Police at all the polling stations visited,

from the opening, voting, counting, to the closing of the polls. Their presence was observed to be cooperative, non-intrusive, discreet, and professional at all stations, which contributed to order, safety, and voter confidence.

While voting earlier in the day proceeded slowly but efficiently at most polling stations visited, some observers noted that polling stations with presidential ballots did not have party agents or observers. At some of these stations, certain voters were allowed to vote without their identities being checked on the voter register. These voters were also given multiple ballots to vote in full view of observers.

The Mission managed to continue observing the voting processes at some polling stations but was unable to do so at others due to outbreaks of protests and violence in their deployment areas. In other cases, observers were asked to only observe voting for five minutes at each polling station, which limited their access to the voting process.

Closing and Counting

The Mission observed peaceful closing procedures at several polling stations. In some of these stations, observers noted some compliance with procedures such as reconciliation and tallying. However, at other stations, observers noted that ballot counts did not tally.

The Mission also observed some ballot stuffing at several polling stations, where voters were issued multiple ballots to vote, compromising election integrity. Most of these instances were noted in polling stations where only the presidential ballot box was set up. Such stations did not appear to be manned by political party agents, only having INEC officials, including in Zanzibar.

During the counting, several of our observers were asked to leave polling stations before the process concluded. Such restrictions on observation were not consistent with any of the INEC or ZEC procedures and overall limited the transparency of the vote count.

D. CONCLUSION

The Mission acknowledges commendable efforts undertaken to logistically prepare for the elections, to introduce technology in election administration, and to promote the participation of marginalised groups in voting.

The AUEOM further notes Tanzania’s efforts to comply with its Constitution and relevant legal frameworks in conducting elections.

However, the legal framework’s failure to comply with some AU democratic norms and international standards for democratic elections, non-implementation of recommended reforms from previous election observation missions, the interruption of the polling process in some parts of the country, and the internet shutdown on election day and afterwards compromised the integrity of the 2025 Tanzania General Elections.

At this preliminary stage, the Mission concludes that (a) the 2025 Tanzania General Elections did not comply with AU principles, normative frameworks, and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections; (b) the environment surrounding the elections—before, during, and immediately after—was not conducive to peaceful conduct and acceptance of electoral outcomes; (c) the preparedness level of the electoral commission and other electoral institutions was inadequate to address the challenges that compromised the integrity of the elections.

In this regard, Tanzania should prioritise electoral and political reforms to address the root causes of its democratic and electoral challenges witnessed ahead of, during, and after the 2025 General Elections. Such reforms should be underpinned by transparent and accountable conduct by state institutions, inclusion and accommodation of divergent views, citizen participation, and the upholding and respect for human rights.

The Mission regrets the loss of lives following election day protests observed. Our heartfelt condolences go to the bereaved families. The Mission further regrets the damage to private property and public infrastructure arising from the election-related protests. Citizens are encouraged to always pursue democratic and peaceful means to express their discontent.

In upholding law and order, the Mission urges security institutions in Tanzania to exercise restraint and respect human rights. Additionally, the Mission encourages thorough investigations that are transparent to ensure justice for those affected by the deadly protests.

The final AUEM report with detailed findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be published within two months.

Issued on 5 November 2025

H.E. Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi

Head of the African Union Election Observation Mission
(Former President of the Republic of Botswana)

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PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE RICHARD MSOWOYA

FORMER SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

AND

HEAD OF THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM)

TO

THE 2025 GENERAL ELECTION

OF THE

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

3 NOVEMBER 2025

Your Excellency Dr Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, Former President of the Republic of Botswana and Head of the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM);

Your Excellency Ndayizeye Domitien, Former President of the Republic of Burundi and Head of the International Conference on Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Election Observation Mission;

Your Excellency Dr. Speciosa Kazibwe, Former Vice President of the Republic of Uganda and Head of the East African Community Election Observation Mission;

Honourable Mosotho Moepya, Chairperson of the Independent Election Commission of the Republic of South Africa and Head of the Electoral Commissions Forum;

Your Excellency Elias Magosi, SADC Executive Secretary;

Distinguished Members of the SADC Organ Troika;

Chairperson of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council;

Your Excellencies, Heads and Representatives of the Diplomatic Missions Accredited to the United Republic of Tanzania;

Distinguished Heads of International Election Observation Missions here present;

Distinguished Heads of International Organisations;

Distinguished Representatives of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania;

Chairperson, Representatives and Members of the Electoral Commission;

SADC Election Observers;

Representatives of Local Election Observers;

Religious Leaders and Members of Civil Society Organisations;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished Guests.

1. INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and as mandated by His Excellency Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika, the President of the Republic of Malawi, and the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, it is my distinct honour to welcome you all to this important event where I present the Preliminary Statement of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) on the 2025 General Election in the United Republic of Tanzania. The General Election was conducted over two days, starting with the security forces on 28 October 2025 in Zanzibar, while the rest of the voters voted on 29 October 2025.

As Head of SEOM, I am ably supported by distinguished Troika representatives from the Republic of Malawi and the Kingdom of Eswatini, the SADC Secretariat and the Chairperson of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC).

The SEOM strength is 80 in total, comprising 66 observers, 13 SADC Secretariat staff and one SEAC member. The SADC observers were drawn from ten (10) Member States, namely, the Kingdoms of Eswatini and Lesotho, the Republics of Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The Mission deployed 27 teams of observers to 27 of the 31 regions in the United Republic of Tanzania, namely: Dar Es Salaam, Arusha, Dodoma, Geita, Iringa, Kilimanjaro, Pemba North, Mbeya, Mwanza, Morogoro, Zanzibar Central and South, Tanga, Lindi, Ruvuma, Zanzibar Urban and West, Manyara, Pemba South, Mtwara, Njombe, Shinyanga, Pwani, Singida, Rukwa, Kigoma, and Kagera. The Mission did not deploy in Katavi, Simiya, Songwe and Mara.

At the invitation of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Mission observed the General Election in accordance with the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021) and the relevant laws of the country.

As part of its mandate, the Mission engaged the following stakeholders: the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, the Attorney General, Political Parties, Civil Society Organisations, Academia, SADC Ambassadors and High Commissioners and other members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Inspector General of the Tanzania Police Force.

This preliminary report covers the Mission's observation of the pre-election period, Election Day and the counting process. The final report will include our observations of the post-election period, including the management and announcement of results.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

2.1 Some challenges encountered by our observers

Our observers initially experienced challenges in consulting with key stakeholders, particularly the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), as they had not been issued with Introduction Letters together with Accreditation Identification Cards as required by the law. Some INEC officials required the said Introduction Letters before consultations with the SEOM observers, but other officials did not make such a requirement.

Further, some stakeholders were reluctant to share information with the observers and often referred them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation for further information. Despite carrying their Accreditation Identification Cards, our observers in Tanga Town were subjected to aggressive interrogation by the security forces, had their official documents, including their passports, seized, though later returned, and were forced to delete mission-related photographs from their official gadgets.

It will suffice to highlight that it is a requirement of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021) that Member States, and I quote, "*Facilitate the observation of the entire electoral cycle*

of their national elections by SEOMs, including the deployment of Goodwill Missions, Long Term Observers, Short Term Observers, and pre-election assessment processes".

2.2 The Political and Security Environment

The Mission observed that the country was calm and peaceful during the pre-election period and most of the election day, save for isolated incidents towards the closure of the voting. The Mission further observed incidents or threats of violence during voting, closing and counting processes in some areas. Some stakeholders attributed the calmness to a coordinated schedule that was developed by the INEC for political rallies to ensure that there is no clash or friction between political parties in their campaigns.

However, a few stakeholders cautioned that the general calm and peace belies covert acts of general intimidation of the population and opposition political parties and candidates. These stakeholders cited the alleged abductions of some political activists. They also described a tense and intimidating political atmosphere.

The stakeholders highlighted the arrest of members of the opposition, notably the detention and trial of Tundu Lissu, the leader of the main opposition party, Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), on treason charges. The disqualification of some opposition candidates, particularly of Mr. Luhaga Mpina of ACT-Wazalendo also raised questions about the fairness of the electoral landscape, especially on the mainland. Some stakeholders viewed the

arrests and disqualification as undermining the URT's multi-party system by removing legitimate competition in the electoral process. This appears to create an uneven political playing field, which in turn also discourages public participation and voter turnout.

It is in this context that the Mission brings attention to Article 4.1.7. of the *Principles and Guidelines* that obliges Member States to and I quote: "***Guarantee an environment of open contest with no undue exclusion and restrictions on anyone to vote as well as the right of eligible and qualified citizens to stand as candidates in any election".***

2.3 Management of the Electoral Process

The elections were overseen by the INEC and ZEC, established under Article 74 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania and Article 119 of the Constitution of Zanzibar, respectively.

In this regard, the Mission observed the following:

(i) Most stakeholders were of the view that the two Electoral Management Bodies were adequately prepared to conduct the 2025 elections;

(ii) Voter registration was generally well conducted in phases by the Commission. The First phase was done on 20 July 2024 and concluded on 23 March 2025. The Second phase took place from 16 to 22 May 2025, covering 16 additional regions in the country.

The third phase involved the registration of new voters, including eligible prisoners, trainees of institutions of Correction of Offenders and remandees in the Permanent Voters' Register. This phase commenced on 28 June 2025 and ended on 4 July 2025;

(iii) Out of a population of 61,741,120 (Mainland Tanzania 59,851,347, and Tanzania Zanzibar 1,889,773), the Mission noted that the Commission registered 37,655,559 voters. This represents a 26.55% increase from the 29, 188, 347 registered voters in the 2020 General Election. Women comprised 50.31% of the registered voters, and the remaining 49.69% were men;

(iv) Mixed views were expressed regarding electoral law reforms. Some stakeholders expressed concern that there had not been any comprehensive electoral law reforms since the last elections, and that one party even declared non-participation in elections in the absence of constructive electoral reforms. Other stakeholders indicated that there has been a consolidation of the electoral laws, with some reforms having been introduced since the last elections. For this specific Preliminary Statement, the SEOM limits itself to the following pertinent observations, which concern the need for electoral reforms:

(a) Article 41(7) of the Constitution which covers the procedures for election of the President, provides that "*When a candidate is declared by the Electoral Commission to have been duly elected in accordance with this Article, then no court of law*

shall have any jurisdiction to inquire into the election of that candidate." This provision effectively bars any court from entertaining any challenge against the results of a presidential election, which is contrary to the expectation of electoral justice as envisaged by Article 4.1.5 of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

(b) While a clear mechanism exists for lodging electoral complaints during voter registration, voting and counting processes, some stakeholders raised concerns about Article 74 (12) of the Constitution which provides that *no court shall have power to inquire into anything done by the Electoral Commission in the discharge of its functions.* Stakeholders were of the view that this limits transparency and accountability over the entire electoral process.

(c) In terms of Articles 39, 67 and 77 of the Constitution of the URT, candidates who are not members of or sponsored by a political party cannot run in Presidential, Parliamentary or Local Government elections. These provisions have the effect of limiting the individual's freedom of association and exclude those who wish to contest in the elections without necessarily being bound to membership of a particular political party.

(d) Some stakeholders questioned the Commission's independence given that its members are appointed by the

President, who is also chairperson of the ruling party and a presidential candidate.

(e) Some stakeholders had reservations regarding early voting for security personnel, which is only catered for in Zanzibar. They viewed this early voting as a potential risk for electoral fraud and undermining electoral integrity, while others viewed it as necessary to enable the security and electoral personnel to fulfil their electoral duties in other areas on Election Day.

2.4 Gender and Youth Representation

The Mission noted that among 17 presidential candidates, only 3 were women. Some stakeholders raised concerns, citing persistent barriers to meaningful participation of women and youth, including limited campaign financing and logistics, leadership training and mentorship opportunities, internal nomination processes within parties, and enduring patriarchal norms.

It was the view of some stakeholders that cultural attitudes also hinder the participation of the youth, for example, in some rural areas, when youth show interest in participating in elections, the elderly express their preference for married people as opposed to single youth, as they believe married candidates are more stable.

2.5 Participation of Persons with Disabilities

The Mission noted that, out of the total number of registered voters, 49,174 voters were persons with disabilities.

2.6 Voter Education

Some stakeholders informed the Mission that youth and women-led accredited organisations played an active role in voter education, and that their participation is not only a civic duty but also enhances the democratic processes. Voter education was disseminated through various platforms, including radio and television programmes, media announcements, Commission's Public Address Vans, and dedicated Voter Service call Centres.

Some of the stakeholders highlighted the use of innovative methods for voter education, such as music, community-based role play, cartoon illustrations and tailored television shows for all. Despite these positive developments, concerns were raised about reduced funding for voter and civic education, particularly in the context of changing priorities amongst the international cooperation partners. In addition, dissatisfaction was expressed the late announcement of accredited organisations, which led to some groups losing funding from the INEC to conduct voter education. Furthermore, some established civil society organisations were of the view that they were deliberately excluded from accreditation by INEC, and this may have compromised the quality of voter education.

2.7 Freedom of Expression

Related to the political and security environment, the Mission noted concerns that there were increasing covert and overt limitations on the right to freedom of expression. It was also the view of these stakeholders that there is heavy censorship of online information platforms. The Mission observed that some social media platforms were not accessible, which could impact citizens' ability to express and receive political opinions.

2.8 State and Privately Owned Media

Both INEC and ZEC indicated that state-owned television had scheduled timeslots to cater for all political parties' messaging throughout the campaign period. In addition, the Mission noted that there were other privately owned media platforms airing campaign rallies and other campaign-related messaging. Notwithstanding this general situation, the Mission noted that state-owned media was predominantly covering election activities and messages of the ruling party.

Some stakeholders also highlighted that the private media outlets were self-censoring due to fears of losing their licences should their coverage of election issues be deemed unacceptable by the Government. They informed the Mission that the media space was more restricted than it was during the previous elections. Similar sentiments were expressed concerning online and social media platforms.

The Mission was further informed that one of the fundamental reasons for the lack of visibility of opposition parties in the media and public spaces during the campaign period was limited financial resources. Some stakeholders attributed this to the perceived fear that donors might face negative appraisals when they fund opposition parties.

4. OBSERVATIONS ON ELECTION DAY

On Election Day, the Mission observed the voting process and the performance of the INEC and ZEC in constituencies in 27 regions in the country.

The Mission was able to observe the opening of polls in some polling stations but could not generate all data relating to opening and voting processes as a result of an internet outage around midday. Due to protests in some areas and continued lack of internet connectivity, our Mission could not observe the closing and counting processes in most of the areas. Where we observed such processes, we could not generate data due to internet connectivity challenges. Below is the status as of the time the internet was shut down on voting day:

(a) The environment outside all the polling stations visited was calm and peaceful. However, our teams in Mbeya, Dodoma, Arusha and Dar Es Salaam Regions reported incidents of violence where members of the police were firing arms;

(b) SADC observers were granted free access to all the polling stations;

(c) 70% of the polling stations and their surroundings were free of campaign materials or visible campaign activities;

(d) 96% of the polling stations visited were adequately laid out;

(e) 93% of the polling stations observed opened on time;

(f) The voters' register was displayed in 93% of the polling stations observed;

(g) There were posters educating voters on the steps of voting posted outside 59% of the polling stations observed;

(h) Party agents and observers were present before opening and at the time of opening in 89% of the polling stations observed. However, there were more CCM party agents than others. The Mission observed that in some polling stations, although party agents were present, they were prevented from entering the polling stations to observe the opening procedures;

(i) In 93% of the polling stations observed, ballot boxes were locked and sealed adequately before voting started, while in some polling stations, some ballot boxes only had one seal instead of two seals. Some ballot boxes were loosely sealed and appeared easy to open;

(j) In 85% of the polling stations observed, the Presiding Officer showed the empty ballot boxes to all present before locking and sealing them;

(k) The presence of police was observed at 96% of the polling stations. The Mission noted that in 88% of the polling stations observed, the police were not armed. In some polling stations, they were more than the number of voters. In Dar Es Salaam, the Mission noted the heavy presence of the police and some major roads were closed;

(l) 89% of the polling stations observed were accessible to all voters, including people with disabilities;

(m) In 96% of the polling stations observed, essential election materials were available in the correct quantity before opening;

(n) The Mission noted a very low voter turnout in all polling stations observed. Some polling centres did not have voters at all;

(o) The Mission observed that in some polling stations observed, there were multiple orderly stacked ballots in the ballot box during voting, which created a perception of ballot stuffing, and an impression that individual(s) cast more than one vote at a time with the intention to cheat the election system;

(p) The Mission could not generate polling, closing and counting statistics due to internet shutdown that negatively impacted the use of the SEOM system used to generate data;

(q) Most of our observers could not observe closing and counting due to incidents and threats of violence in some areas; and

(r) The Mission did not observe the presence of domestic observers in most of the polling stations.

5. RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

5.1 At this juncture, allow me to recall that the SEOM is continuing the process of electoral observation in the post-election phase. As such, the Mission will not provide comprehensive recommendations or qualifications for the election at this stage. The Mission recommends as follows:

(a) In line with the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021), the Government and the National Assembly are urged to prioritise an inclusive process of the review of the Constitution of the country with a view to soliciting public views on the current and future modalities with respect to independent political candidates, permitting election petitions related to the presidential election, and judicial review of some of the decisions of the electoral management bodies;

(b) In line with the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021), creating an enabling environment to ensure that there are no exclusionary requirements on individuals seeking to be nominated for election;

(c) The Electoral Management Bodies and security personnel are urged to take measures to ensure that international election observers are accredited on time, provided with all administrative documentation as required by the law, and given the appropriate treatment when conducting their duties; and

(d) In addition to other national gender equity initiatives, political parties are urged to fully implement section 10C(1)(b) and (2) as read with the Third Schedule of the Political Party Affairs Laws (Amendment) Act, No. 3 of 2024, with respect to gender and social cohesion policies in order to enhance the meaningful participation of women in politics, particularly as candidates for election.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the SEOM observed that the pre-election and opening phases were conducted in an orderly manner. In view of the Mission observations as detailed above, and mindful of the preliminary nature of this statement, it is the SEOM's tentative conclusion that, in most areas, voters could not express their democratic will. Overall, the 2025 General Election in the United Republic of Tanzania fell short of the requirements of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

The Mission appeals to the citizens of the country to channel their concerns through established legal procedures and processes and not resort to violence or threats thereof.

Following the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021), our final report will be issued within thirty (30) days of this Preliminary Statement.

The SEOM advises that this statement was not delivered two days after election day, and to the public within the URT as is the normal SEOM practice. This was due to the above-mentioned security and communication challenges, which made it impractical to follow the normal SEOM procedure.

The SEAC shall return at an appropriate time to undertake a post-election review to determine the extent to which the recommendations of SEOM have been implemented and the nature of support, if any, that the Member State holding elections may require from the SADC region to implement those proposals.

Thank you very much!

Muito Obrigado!

Merci Beaucoup!

Asante Sana!

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE OCTOBER 2025 GENERAL ELECTION IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF THE OBSERVATION MISSION

The United Republic of Tanzania is one of the founding Partner States of the East African Community (EAC). One of the fundamental principles agreed by the EAC Partner States in the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, is good governance which includes principles of democracy.

In 2012, the East African Community adopted Principles for Election Observation and Evaluation that guide the Community when observing elections in all Partner States as one of the ways of enhancing and promoting good governance and democracy within the Community.

Accordingly, the Secretary General of the East African Community, Hon Veronica Nduva, instituted a 67-member East African Community Election Observation Mission in Tanzania under the leadership of **H.E. Dr. Wandira, Speciosa Kazibwe**, Former Vice President of the Republic of Uganda, deputised by the **Hon. Maina Karobia Mwangi**, Chairperson of the Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution Committee of the East African Legislative Assembly.

The members of the Mission were drawn from the East African Legislative Assembly, National Electoral Management Bodies, National Legislative Assemblies, National Human Rights Commission, Ministries Responsible for EAC Affairs in Partner States and other Government Ministries of the EAC Partner States.

The East African Community which is hosted in the United Republic of Tanzania has observed previous elections in Tanzania and in this case the Election Observation Mission was preceded by a Pre-Election Technical Assessment conducted by the East African Community Secretariat from 4th to 9th October, 2025 that evaluated the preparations and measures undertaken

by the various relevant institutions, agencies, and stakeholders in Tanzania involved in the electoral process.

The objective of the EAC Election Observation Mission was to observe the electoral process and offer an impartial, balanced and informed assessment of the electoral processes and procedures in accordance with the Laws of Tanzania and the regional and international principles, with the intention of strengthening political accountability and providing an opportunity for EAC Partner States to document best practices and learn from each other with the view of improving future electoral processes and democracy.

During the election observation mission, the EAC Election Observers interacted with various stakeholders in the electoral process and participants in the General Election including, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Inspector General of Police, the Registrar of Political Parties, the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance and the Media Regulatory Authority of Tanzania. The Observers also met with His Lordship, the Chief Justice amongst other stakeholders.

On 26th October, 2025, the EAC-Election Observers paid courtesy on H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and H.E. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar.

The Mission is grateful to all stakeholders who freely and willingly accepted to meet and interact with the EAC Election Observers.

The Observers also had consultations with the other regional and international observers present in Tanzania.

From 27th to 29th October, 2025, Members of the East African Community Election Observation Mission were deployed in thirteen (13) Teams, with eleven (11) Teams in the Mainland and two (2) Teams stationed in Zanzibar.

This Preliminary Report is based on the interactions the East African Community Election Observation Mission had with the various stakeholders, the findings of the EAC election observers on the key pre-election and election day activities including election campaigns, delivery of polling materials, preparation of polling stations, voting processes, counting and tallying of results at selected polling stations.

Observations

The Mission made the following observations:

Campaigns and preparations for elections:

i. The Mission noted that significant legal reforms were introduced in electoral related laws, including enhancing the independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission, enhancing inclusion and political representation of women, youth and Persons with Disabilities and making provision for the use of technology to modernize electoral processes and enhance efficiency and transparency.

ii. The Mission noted that most political parties contesting the general elections committed to a peaceful electoral process by signing a common code of conduct. The mission was however informed that one political party did not sign the code of conduct which was a precondition for participating in the general elections.

iii. The EAC Election Observation Mission noted that the Independent National Electoral Commission made adequate preparations for the 2025 General election. The Mission appreciates measures taken by the Independent National Electoral Commission to promote inclusion and participation in the electoral process, such as the provision of braille facilities for the visually impaired, according priority to the elderly, physically challenged and expectant voters.

iv. Since 28th August, 2025 when the campaigns started, they were conducted in a calm and peaceful environment that enabled political parties and candidates to campaign freely. Political parties were largely able to campaign peacefully through rallies, door-to-door outreach, and media channels without interruption.

v. Tanzania has a vibrant and pluralistic media environment with both private and public outlets. The Mission observed that the media offered extensive coverage of the electoral process and were also essential in distributing voter information to encourage meaningful participation in the elections.

vi. The Mission commends the active role played by civil society organisations in championing advocacy for electoral reform, civic and voter education, peace initiatives, and election observation.

Voting, counting and tallying:

On polling day, the Mission observed the following:

(a) Generally, polling stations opened on time. However, a few of the observed stations experienced brief delays of up to one hour, mainly due to heavy rainfall which disrupted opening procedures.

(b) All polling stations visited by EAC observers were free from visible campaign activities and materials.

(c) In all the polling stations visited by the EAC observers, essential election materials were present before opening. However, in two polling stations in Dar es Salaam, observers reported that some ballot boxes were not sealed appropriately as required.

(d) All polling materials were received in adequate quantities, and presiding officers demonstrated transparency by showing the empty ballot boxes before sealing them in the presence of party agents and observers. The Mission observed a few cases where the ballot boxes were not labelled or appropriately sealed. The Independent National Electoral Commission is urged to ensure that this does not become a widespread matter in future elections.

(e) The majority of the polling stations visited were accessible to persons with disabilities. In cases of inaccessibility, this was temporarily due to the heavy rains in some of the areas on the morning of polling day.

(f) Security personnel were present at all polling centres observed, maintaining a professional and discreet posture throughout the opening and early voting process. They did not interfere with electoral processes nor did they intimidate voters.

(g) The Mission noted the presence of political party agents and international and domestic observers at the polling stations visited, which is critical for a transparent polling process.

(h) Election officials displayed high levels of competence and professionalism, efficiently coordinated, directed voters and demonstrated good command of polling procedures which they implemented uniformly. The Mission commends the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) for the selection, training and preparation of polling officials and in particular, for involving young people and women in the management of the electoral processes.

(i) During the special voting on 28th October, 2025 in Zanzibar, Observers were granted access to the stations designated for special voting where we observed that Polling staff adhered to the electoral procedures. There were significant queues at the polling stations observed on 28th October, 2025 and the atmosphere at the polling stations visited remained peaceful, with the presence of non-intrusive security personnel throughout the day.

(j) However, we observed that at the close of the polls, procedures relating to the custody of the ballot boxes from the special voting until they are counted were not clear. The Independent National Electoral Commission and Zanzibar Electoral Commission are urged to ensure that the handling and custody of ballot boxes from special voting are streamlined in future elections.

(k) During the early morning on 29th October, 2025, voting proceeded peacefully, but the voting process was disrupted with incidents of violence witnessed in some areas of Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. In some stations particularly in Dar es salaam, observers had to abandon observation due to the volatile security situation.

(l) In most of the polling stations observed, there were no queues of voters waiting to vote.

(m) Some of our observers were not able to observe closing and counting procedures in some of the planned polling stations in some parts of Dar es Salaam due to unrest in the vicinity of the polling stations.

(n) In most of the polling stations observed, polling officials adhered to the closing and counting procedures. However, there were cases of our observers unable to witness the counting at close of polls.

(o) Our mission did not observe the national tallying process of the results as the mission was not informed of a designated national tally centre.

(p) The disruptions of internet connectivity and communication affected the Mission's ability and timeliness in finalising the compilation and analysis of the reports from the observers.

Recommendations:

Over and above that, the East African Community Observer Mission makes the following recommendations:

Maintaining peace, dialogue and peaceful resolution of disputes

1. The EAC Observer Mission urges all actors and stakeholders in the general elections to continue to maintain peace and embrace dialogue and other peaceful means for resolving any disputes that may arise from electoral processes.

2. The Mission reminds the political parties, the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania of the commitments and complaints procedures under the Electoral Code of Conduct for Presidential, Parliamentary and Councillors' Elections, 2025 and urge them to adhere to the code of conduct.

Use of technology to enhance efficiency and transparency

3. The Mission noted that although the electoral laws were amended to make provision for the use of technology to modernize electoral processes and enhance efficiency and transparency, the Independent National Electoral Commission confirmed to the Mission that they did not apply technology in this election. In future, the Mission urges the Independent National Electoral Commission to embrace and apply technology to enhance efficiency and transparency as envisaged by the electoral laws.

Enhancing civic education:

4. The Independent National Electoral Commission should intensify efforts to conduct civic education:
   (a) On the rights and obligations of citizens to encourage more citizen participation in choosing their leaders through democratic processes.
   (b) On the electoral system and the purpose and procedures of special voting, especially targeting the young people.

<u>Conclusion:</u>

The EAC Observer Mission congratulates the people, government and all stakeholders in Tanzania for concluding this electoral cycle and participating in the October, 2025 general elections.

The Mission strongly urges all stakeholders to maintain peace, exercise restraint and adopt dialogue and other peaceful means of resolving any disputes arising from the General elections that are provided for by law.

H.E. Dr. Wandira, Speciosa Kazibwe
Former Vice President of the Republic of Uganda
HEAD OF MISSION
EAC – ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION