

# Tanzanian Affairs

A smiling woman wearing a white chef's hat with a blue and white checkered band and a white apron over a patterned top. She is holding a large black cooking pot with its lid open, revealing a steaming dish of food inside. The background is a patterned wall.

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Tundu Lissu charged with treason  
Coping with USAID cuts  
Clean Cooking - Africa Energy Summit



*Tundu Lissu during his court appearance in April*

### **Tundu Lissu arrested, charged with treason**

On April 9, 2025, Tundu Lissu, the recently elected chairperson of Chadema, the most prominent opposition party, and the party's most likely 2025 presidential candidate, was arrested in Mbinga, southwest Tanzania. He had been addressing a rally calling for electoral reforms under the slogan "No Reforms, No Election."

Lissu was charged with treason, a non-bailable offense carrying a potential death penalty, and three counts of "publication of false information" under Tanzania's cybercrime laws, stemming from a YouTube post on April 3, 2025, alleging police involvement in electoral malpractices ordered by President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

Lissu was transferred to Dar es Salaam and appeared at Kisutu Magistrates Court on April 10, 2025. His treason case was adjourned

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*Cover image is taken from the "National Clean Cooking Strategy (2024-2034)" publication showing cooking on electric as a cleaner alternative to charcoal.*

to April 24, 2025, and he remains in custody, as treason charges do not allow bail.

On April 24, the police used force, including teargas, to disperse Chadema supporters outside the court, injuring at least 14 people. Lissu refused to attend a virtual court hearing, and two Chadema officials, John Heche and John Mnyika, were arrested en route to a join a group of supporters near the courthouse.

### **In context**

On April 12, 2025, the Independent National Elections Commission barred Chadema from participating in the October 2025 elections, citing the party's refusal to sign an electoral code of conduct, which Chadema views as a tool to suppress opposition. This disqualification severely limits Lissu's and Chadema's ability to challenge the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM).

Lissu has consistently called for an electoral commission that is genuinely independent, arguing that the current one, appointed by President Hassan, cannot ensure free and fair elections. His campaign intensified after the November 2024 local elections, where Chadema claimed thousands of its candidates were disqualified, allowing CCM to win almost all the seats contested.

A recent address to party members included a strong reminder of last year's local government elections where official results gave candidates from the ruling CCM party more than 99% of the grassroots level seats at stake amid widespread claims of electoral fraud. "After going through that experience, any Chadema member who hopes to win in the same circumstances is not serious," Lissu said. "We will just be slaughtered again, and that's why we are pushing for reforms across the entire system of conducting the elections to prevent a repeat of that kind of farce."

In September 2024, a senior Chadema official, Ali Mohamed Kibao, was abducted and killed, and the Tanganyika Law Society has reported 83 abductions or disappearances of government critics. There have also been mass arrests, including over 100 Chadema members (and five journalists) in Mbeya in August 2024, for planning a youth rally.

Lissu is no stranger to political difficulties. In 2017, he survived an

assassination attempt, sustaining 16 bullet wounds, which forced him into exile in Belgium until 2020. He ran against President John Magufuli in the 2020 election, which was marred by allegations of rigging, and returned to Tanzania in 2023 after Hassan lifted a ban on rallies.

### **Some responses**

Neither the Home Affairs Minister, Prime Minister nor President Samia Suluhu Hassan have directly addressed Lissu's April 2025 arrest in public statements available up to May 15, 2025.

President Samia has previously positioned herself as open to dialogue with opposition leaders, though Chadema leaders have questioned how wholehearted these efforts have been. Despite introducing some reforms in 2021-2022, such as lifting bans on opposition rallies, recent signs suggest Hassan is retreating from democratic commitments, with Lissu's arrest seen as part of a strategy to suppress opposition ahead of the October 2025 elections.

Zitto Kabwe, a leading figure in ACT Wazalendo, Tanzania's second-largest opposition party, has expressed his concern over Lissu's arrest. "Tundu Lissu's case is a test for Tanzania's democratic credentials under President Samia. How the courts handle it will be closely watched, both locally and internationally." Unlike Chadema, ACT Wazalendo did (with reservations) sign the electoral code of conduct.

John Heche, the vice-chair of Chadema, defended Lissu's campaign for electoral reform, invoking Tanzania's founding president: "Mwalimu Nyerere said that Tanzanian youth should rebel against oppressive systems. What is the problem with rebelling against people who steal elections, against elections being stolen?"

John Mnyika, the party's secretary general said: "They may silence Lissu for a day, but they cannot silence the will of the people forever."

The party has also released official statements on the case. "The arrest of the Chairman of Chadema, Tundu Lissu, is a clear signal by the Samia and CCM regime that they do not respect the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania that declares Tanzania to be a multiparty democracy."

Religious leaders in Tanzania have actively commented on Tundu Lissu's arrest and the broader state of Tanzania's democracy, expressing alarm





*Father Charles Kitima, secretary general of the TEC (Tanzania Episcopal Conference), who was attacked in April*

over democratic backsliding and human rights violations. On April 20, 2025, the TEC, representing Catholic bishops, issued a statement calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Lissu and other detained political leaders, emphasizing that such actions are essential for preserving national peace ahead of the October 2025 elections.

The European Parliament and Amnesty International have called for Lissu's immediate release, condemning his arrest as politically motivated and urging Tanzania to uphold freedom of expression and assembly. On May 8, the EU Parliament passed a resolution condemning Lissu's arrest and expressing "grave concern over the charges against him, which appear to be politically motivated and carry the risk of capital punishment." It called for his "immediate and unconditional release," ensuring his safety and right to a fair trial and legal representation. The resolution also urged Tanzania to respect democratic principles and allow opposition parties to operate freely.

### **A backlash to the backlash?**

Father Charles Kitima, secretary general of the TEC and a longstanding critic of human rights abuses, was attacked on April 30, 2025 at the TEC headquarters in Kurasini, Dar es Salaam, by unknown assailants. It has been widely alleged that this was in retaliation for his outspoken stance. He had criticised the government's actions, including Lissu's detention, as "unlawful", and linked Lissu's arrest to broader electoral

malpractices. “Stealing citizens’ votes, introducing fake or invalid ballots, and declaring someone who did not receive the majority of votes, while ignoring the rightful winner, that is evil, and it is the work of the devil.”

In a social media video recorded just hours before he was attacked, Kitima criticized “lawlessness” in Tanzania’s political system, urging the government to address electoral injustices to ensure free and fair polls. Following his attack, he relayed a message urging Tanzanians to “stand firm in defending fundamental national issues” and “not be afraid to pay the price for upholding justice and our national responsibilities.”

Opposition leaders condemned the attack, including Chadema’s John Heche who described it as “bad news for the country” and ACT Wazalendo’s Dorothy Semu who said it was “shocking and disturbing”. She questioned whether an ordinary person would attack a prominent religious leader in such a public location.

The government has not directly responded to Kitima’s specific comments on Lissu or electoral reforms, nor has it issued an official comment on the attack on Fr Kitima. However, both President Samia Suluhu Hassan and the Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa had recently warned religious leaders against using their platforms for political purposes. Just in April, Mr Majaliwa urged religious leaders to focus on moral issues like gender-based violence rather than political matters.

On May 2nd, the EU delegation in Tanzania expressed being “deeply saddened” by the attack, and the US Embassy issued a statement condemning the “shocking and brutal attack.” The EU described Kitima as a “respected voice for civic education, inter-faith dialogue, and a peaceful, inclusive society.” They echoed calls for a “thorough investigation” and wished for Kitima’s speedy recovery, emphasizing his role in promoting democratic values.

### **Looking to the election**

The next issue of *Tanzanian Affairs* is due out in October, around the time of the next elections. In the meantime, the situation is more than usually tense.

Chadema’s decision effectively to boycott the election means that one of the major players in Tanzanian politics will be sitting on the sidelines. It has also introduced some intra-opposition tension, as the other major

opposition party – ACT Wazalendo – with a big presence in Zanzibar has not joined the boycott.

Both decisions are understandable. ACT's major focus is Zanzibar, where the previous experience of CUF election boycotts has been that this has been ineffective and results only in a party being entirely locked out of power for five years. Party leader, Zitto Kabwe wrote recently that “to boycott these elections would be to hand victory to those who thrive on our silence. Instead, we fight, inspired by warriors of change who turned rigged elections into battlegrounds for justice. And that we will surely do!”

For Chadema, they highlight a situation where two key “referees” – the registrar of political parties and the electoral commission – are far from independent and ask how a meaningful election is possible in such circumstances. The “election code of conduct” appeared to be the immediate cause of their decision not to participate, and the party claims the code was a tool to suppress opposition. Nevertheless, their slogan “no reforms, no election” makes it clear that without significant electoral and/or constitutional reform, they were never likely to make a different choice.

With Chadema sitting things out, CCM faces little opposition. The only other party of significance is ACT-Wazalendo, which lacks Chadema's organisational strength (with the exception of Zanzibar).

Voter turnout, which fell from 67% in 2015 to 52% in 2020, may fall even further, reflecting growing number who question the point of voting.

Electoral reform, particularly the establishment of a truly independent electoral commission, has been a central demand of opposition parties, civil society, and religious leaders. However, there are no prospects for meaningful reform before October 2025. In February 2024, Parliament passed amendments including the National Electoral Commission Act adding “Independent” to the name of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), making it “INEC” and shifting appointments to a panel chaired by the chief justice. However, these changes have been widely criticised as cosmetic, as the president retains veto power over appointees, and returning officers remain presidential appointees.

In September 2023, the President cited “insufficient time” for constitutional reform before the 2024 local elections, a stance that

logically extends to 2025. This was despite a 2022 government task force recommending an independent electoral body and constitutional review. The government's introduction of bills effectively maintaining the status quo as well as its response to Chadema's "no reform, no election" campaign, have made it clear that the government has no inclination for change.

President Samia's initial reforms (initiating cross-party dialogue, lifting rally bans in 2023, etc.) raised hopes for a democratic revival. However, more recent actions, including appointing Magufuli loyalists like Paul Makonda (*see Issue 139*), the arrest of Lissu and a growing number of apparent disappearances of critics strongly suggest a return to a hardline approach.

Neither domestic advocacy nor international pressure has shifted CCM's stance, and the party's ongoing dominance suggests that the official election results are not difficult to forecast. Given the high state of tension, however, as well as widespread anger among opposition party supporters, the broader outcome of the election is much more open. Chadema supporters in particular will have no obvious outlet for their frustrations. Protests and rallies are likely, to which the police response is highly predictable.

## Ben Taylor: **MOBILE INTERNET ACCESS**

### **Rapid growth in mobile internet access, and mobile money**

The Tanzanian Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) has reported rapid growth in internet access in recent years, driven primarily by the use of mobile phones. The latest Communication Statistics Report, covering January to March 2025, reveals that internet service subscriptions have grown to 49.3 million, close to double the figure from December 2020 (25.2 million).

Mobile broadband (defined as 3G and above) leads with 27 million subscriptions, while a further 22 million depend on 2G subscriptions. Around 230,000 have fixed-line internet subscriptions. Many users may have more than one subscription.

According to the report, the improved connectivity is driven by significant infrastructure upgrades, and is reshaping the country's social and economic landscape. The report shows that the population living



in areas covered by 3G networks grew to 92.2%, while 4G coverage increased to 91% percent, and 5G coverage rose to 23%.

Meanwhile, a Bank of Tanzania Report covering payment systems in 2024 reported that the value of mobile money payments rose by 29% compared to 2023, which itself had seen a 35% rise above 2022 figures. The total value of mobile money payments in 2024 is reported as TSh 198.9 trillion (approx. GBP £55 billion), up from TSh 114 trillion in 2022.

Dr Tobias Swai of the University of Dar es Salaam said one of the most significant benefits of Tanzania's digital payment boom is the impact on financial inclusion. He said digital platforms have allowed millions of people, especially in rural areas, to access financial services without the need to visit a physical bank branch. "This shift is making financial services more accessible and convenient for people across Tanzania," Dr Swai said.

For context, Tanzania's GDP in 2024 is estimated at USD \$79 billion (approx. GBP £59 billion.) The mobile money sector's total transaction value being close to or exceeding Tanzania's GDP in 2024 underscores its critical role in the economy. However, the high proportion likely reflects the rapid circulation of funds, where the same funds are transacted multiple times within a year, inflating the total value relative to GDP, rather than mobile money directly contributing an equivalent amount to economic output.

## Charlotte Baker: **ATTACKS ON ALBINISM**

### **Attacks on people with albinism in Tanzania: African court holds government responsible – why it matters**

Charlotte Baker, Professor of French and Critical Disability Studies, Lancaster University

*This article was originally published on [TheConversation.com](https://www.theconversation.com)*

People with albinism face widespread discrimination in many sub-Saharan African countries. In Tanzania, this minority has been subjected to extreme forms of violence. The government's failure to protect their rights prompted the filing of a case before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The case was brought by Tanzanian and international civil rights groups against the government of Tanzania.

They were seeking more robust legal protections from the state for people with albinism.

In February 2025, the court delivered a landmark judgment, holding Tanzania accountable for human rights violations against persons with albinism.

### **What is the background to the case?**

Human rights violations and abuses against people with albinism in Tanzania are common. This includes extreme forms of violence such as killings, abductions, mutilations and infanticide. Even after a person with albinism has died, their graves are at risk of exhumation to obtain body parts for sale.

A range of traditional and more modern beliefs drive the oppression of people with albinism. However, structural reasons related to social inequities have created a market in the body parts of people with albinism. These are used for the production of “charms” by “witchdoctors” who promise they’ll bring wealth and success.

The first media reports of attacks on people with albinism in Tanzania emerged in 2007, bringing international attention to the issue. Since then, over 700 attacks and killings in 28 countries have been reported to the Canadian NGO Under the Same Sun, although many more go unrecorded. The organisation works to end discrimination and violence against persons with albinism.

In Tanzania, there have been 209 reports of attacks since 2007. In June 2024, a two-year-old girl with albinism was abducted and killed in Kagera region.

### **What does the court ruling mean for persons with albinism?**

Under international human rights law, the fundamental rights of persons with albinism must be protected under the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Upholding the rights of people with albinism would ensure that they were treated fairly and with respect.

The African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights found that, although some steps have been taken in the right direction, Tanzania has violated the right to life of persons with albinism by not protecting them as required under Article 4 of the African Charter. It also found the state violated the right to non-discrimination by failing to put enough

measures in place to fight myths and stereotypes relating to albinism.

### **What does the Tanzanian government need to do?**

The court determined that superstitions and harmful beliefs had led to discrimination and the targeted killings of persons with albinism. It ordered the government to make provision for nationwide awareness campaigns for at least two years to combat myths and superstitions about albinism.

The court requires the Tanzanian government to amend the 1928 Witchcraft Act to criminalise attacks against persons with albinism. This is in response to UN Resolution 47/8 on the elimination of harmful practices related to accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks.

The government of Tanzania is also ordered to implement its national action plan on the protection of persons with albinism. The national action plan should address stigma and structural issues that lead to discrimination.

The government must also ensure the right to health protection. This includes access to skin and eye health services. Providing protective clothing and sunscreens can be lifesaving. Meeting the needs of children with albinism in educational settings must be a priority for the Tanzanian government. This can mean minor adaptations to classroom layouts and access to visual aids. Most importantly, it requires a change in attitudes among teaching staff and other pupils.

Tanzania has also been ordered to establish a compensation fund and compensate persons with albinism who have been victims of violent attacks.

### **What power does the court have to ensure enforcement?**

The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights has instructed Tanzania to publish the judgment on government websites within three months. It should remain accessible for at least a year.

The government must also submit a report on the implementation of the ruling within two years. If it hasn't fully complied within three years, a hearing will be held. However, the court has a non-compliance crisis and there are no built-in consequences in its protocol.

The partners involved in bringing the case will monitor Tanzania's

compliance with the court's orders.

The Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa has called on civil society organisations, policymakers and human rights defenders to support efforts to protect the rights of people with albinism in Tanzania and beyond.

## James L.Laizer **TOURISM & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

### **Tanzania Establishes Task Force to Enhance Carbon Trading Framework.**

The Government of Tanzania has taken a major step toward advancing its climate and economic goals by launching a National Advisory Committee on Carbon Trading. The 20-member body was officially inaugurated on April 10, 2025, in Dodoma by the Minister of State in the Vice President's Office for Union Affairs and Environment, Mr. Hamad Masauni. Comprising representatives from government ministries, public institutions, civil society, and the private sector, the committee has been given a one-month mandate to assess the current carbon trading landscape, identify challenges, and propose actionable recommendations. Its overarching goal is to enhance Tanzania's participation in global carbon markets and ensure the country reaps substantial and equitable financial benefits.

Mr. Masauni emphasized that the committee will examine the full carbon trading value chain—from registration and measurement to transactions and agreements. He stressed the importance of improving transparency, accountability, and efficiency across the system. The committee is also expected to explore how key national infrastructure projects—such as the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP), the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, and the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR)—can leverage carbon trading opportunities to support environmental and financial sustainability. Additionally, the minister called for the development of a strong monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that carbon projects deliver measurable outcomes aligned with Tanzania's climate commitments and development goals.

Deputy Minister Khamis Hamza Khamis highlighted the need to educate the public about carbon trading to foster wider participation and local ownership. Meanwhile, Permanent Secretary Cyprian Luhemeja underscored that carbon trading presents a significant opportunity for Tanzania to benefit from climate finance, support social services, and stimulate green economic growth. With this strategic move, Tanzania positions itself to become a competitive player in the global carbon market, aligning environmental stewardship with national development. The committee's work is expected to lay a strong foundation for a well-regulated, transparent, and inclusive carbon trading system that contributes meaningfully to the country's long-term prosperity.

### **Restoring Tanzania: A Green Leap Toward Forest Revival and Climate Resilience**

Tanzania is advancing a bold and visionary environmental initiative through the Sustainable Environmental Restoration and Biodiversity Conservation Project, aiming to restore 5.2 million hectares of degraded forests and landscapes. This effort is part of "The Restoration Initiative (TRI)," a global programme involving ten countries, including Kenya, China, Pakistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Backed by a USD\$11.2 million grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the project is coordinated by the Vice President's Office in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and seven district councils. Its core objectives include restoring degraded ecosystems in the Great Ruaha and Lake Rukwa Basins and reducing carbon emissions by an estimated 4.7 million tonnes by 2025 through the rehabilitation of 110,000 hectares of land. Project coordinator Dr. Damas Mapunda underscored the critical role of cross-sector collaboration, particularly with the private sector. However, private-sector involvement has remained modest due to limited awareness, few financial incentives, and a lack of scalable, bankable restoration models.

To encourage private sector engagement, the Restoration Factory Programme—jointly implemented by Bridge for Billions and Anza Entrepreneurs—is equipping green entrepreneurs with the tools to create sustainable and profitable ventures. To date, 46 entrepreneurs have enrolled, with 31 successfully graduating, supported by 14

trained mentors. Innovative ventures are already emerging. Ms. Annet Mutembei of Nishati Eco is producing alternative charcoal from agricultural waste, helping to combat deforestation and reduce health risks for women. Meanwhile, Mr. Deogratius Kapalata of KPLT Co. Ltd is repurposing coconut husks into clean briquettes and oil, tackling both energy and public health issues. Tanzania's environmental restoration drive signals more than a policy shift—it is a transformative national movement. By blending innovation, entrepreneurship, and ecosystem recovery, the country is hopefully laying the foundation for a greener, more resilient, and economically inclusive future.

### **President Samia Launches Independent Commissions to Resolve Ngorongoro Land and Relocation Disputes**

President Samia Suluhu Hassan has officially inaugurated two independent commissions aimed at resolving long-standing land disputes and evaluating the voluntary relocation of residents from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. This action is expected to underscore the government's commitment to finding sustainable and inclusive solutions that balance conservation efforts with community needs. Ngorongoro, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has for decades been home to both wildlife and the indigenous Maasai pastoralists. However, growing human and livestock populations have raised ecological concerns. The number of residents has surged from 8,000 in 1959 to over 100,000 in 2021, while livestock numbers have grown from 260,000 in 2017 to more than one million. These increases have strained the ecosystem, creating conflicts between conservation policies and traditional livelihoods.

Historically, Tanzania has permitted indigenous communities to reside within certain protected areas. Yet tensions have grown due to reported land encroachments, restricted access to services, and allegations that basic provisions, such as food supplies, have been cut off to pressure communities into leaving. Speaking at the launch event on February 20, 2025, at the State House in Dar es Salaam, President Samia urged the commissions to approach the task with professionalism and objectivity. "I trust you will come up with lasting solutions on the issue, considering the national interest first," she said.

The first commission, chaired by Justice Gerald Ndika, will investigate land dispute claims. The second, led by Mr. Musa Iyombe, will assess



the voluntary relocation process. Both commissions are expected to include local community representatives to ensure inclusive dialogue and transparency. Their mandate is to deliver findings and recommendations within three months. This initiative follows President Samia's pledge in Arusha on December 1, 2024, after engaging directly with Ngorongoro leaders and residents. By establishing these commissions, the government is aiming to demonstrate a proactive and people-centred approach to conflict resolution, though this may not be an easy task. If handled effectively, this process could serve as a blueprint for addressing similar challenges across Tanzania—preserving biodiversity while safeguarding the rights and dignity of indigenous communities.

## **Dr Hildebrand Shayo: ECONOMICS**

### **Tanzanian FY25/26 Budget Deficit To Widen On Heightened Spending Commitments**

On March 11, 2025, Tanzania's finance minister presented the Budget Framework and Expenditure Ceiling for the 2025/2026 fiscal year (the financial year running from July to June) ahead of the final budget, which will be read in June 2025.

The FY24/25 budget deficit is projected to range from 3.2% to 2.8%, reflecting the outcomes from the first half of the fiscal year. In light of the FY25/26 budget framework and considering expenditure forecasts, revenues are also expected to perform relatively well. However, a close analysis of the prediction for a 3.0% deficit in FY25/26, based on the Bank of Tanzania reports and the Ministry of Finance, indicates some fiscal slippage amid increased spending commitments in the near term.

From an economic perspective, in addition to previous budget-related announcements, the anticipated 2025 elections will be a significant line item in expenditures, along with preparations for the Africa Cup of Nations 2027 tournament. This will involve increased spending to address funding cuts by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and higher security allocations for preparedness, likely reflecting the escalating conflict in the DRC and preparation for the October 2025 general election. This situation aligns with the government's announcement that no new infrastructure projects will

be initiated, as the focus shifts to completing the 9,711 projects currently underway while also seeking efforts to boost private sector funding.

Amid this background, Tanzania's current account deficit might narrow from an estimated 2.6% of GDP in 2024 to 2.4% in 2025, supported by a strong outlook for exports of goods and services. In 2026, based on numbers analysis, the current account deficit could narrow further to 2.2% as continued import-substitution efforts, lower energy prices, and slower construction activity will help to narrow the trade deficit.

Given that Tanzania isn't an island, heightened policy uncertainty and increased US protectionism and tariffs could pose significant risks for the country. Trade shocks to Mainland China from rising US tariffs and a stronger US dollar could reduce demand for Tanzanian goods and raise import costs.

Tanzania's current account deficit is predicted to decrease from an estimated 2.6% of GDP in 2024 to 2.4% in 2025, which is in agreement with the central bank's forecasts, according to a detailed examination of data from BOT and the Budget Framework and Expenditure Ceiling for the 2025/2026 fiscal year announcement. Data shows that the 3.2% prediction for 2025 considers the impact on agribusiness and better-than-expected 2024 results. According to data from the Bureau of Statistics, Tanzania's export prospects will be positively impacted by the government's incentives to increase production and self-sufficiency.

Strong export growth will reduce the trade deficit from an estimated 6.5% of GDP in 2024 to 5.6% in 2025. Compared to data from previous years, goods exports are expected to increase by 10.0% to USD 10.1 billion in 2025, driven by high metal and mineral prices, as well as regulatory improvements that will continue to encourage investment in Tanzania's mining sector. Gold production is projected to rise by 2.3% and is expected to account for 42.0% of Tanzanian exports in 2023. Meanwhile, the Kabanga nickel and cobalt projects that are expected to be operational will help Tanzania diversify its metals and minerals export portfolio.

On the agricultural side, government efforts to reduce reliance on imports through subsidizing agricultural inputs, providing better storage and transport infrastructure, and building new processing facilities will help bolster the volume and value of Tanzania's agricultural

exports, including cereals, sugar, cashews, tobacco, and coffee. This will decrease the demand for agricultural imports, which accounted for 5.1% of imports in 2023.

Import substitution efforts and lower energy prices will reduce the country's import bill in 2025. Analysis of the numbers suggests that import growth will slow from an estimated 4.3% in 2024 to 4.0% in 2025, with imports totalling around USD 14.9 billion. Given the assumption that the price of Brent crude will average USD 76.0 per barrel in 2025, a 2.8% decrease from USD 79.9 per barrel in 2024, this is good news for business.

Records show that oil accounted for 21.6% of Tanzania's goods imports in 2023, and considering the import substitution efforts, as the government seeks to reduce domestic dollar demand, this will also help to lower import demand. Although no new major strategic project exists, a strong infrastructure pipeline will accelerate real construction industry growth to 10.1% in 2025, which could keep the trade balance in deficit.

Despite slowing growth in the tourism sector, transport service activity will continue to pick up, keeping the services balance in surplus at 5.5% of GDP. The historical data shows that Tanzania's tourist arrival growth will slow from 57.0% in 2024 to 6.1% in 2025.

That said, to ensure that Tanzania maintains the momentum of the growth of its economy, there are indications that the Tanzanian authorities will continue to develop port infrastructure as the country aims to become a regional hub for landlocked East and Southern African markets such as Rwanda, Burundi, and Zambia.

On February 25, 2025, the US Donald Trump administration announced that it would eliminate over 90% of USAID's foreign aid contracts and cut USD 60 billion in global assistance. Available data indicate that USAID inflows accounted for 56.7% of Tanzania's secondary transfers in 2023. Unquestionably, according to an analysis of numbers, these secondary inflows will decline by at least 60.0% in 2025 to USD 271.0 mn.

Towards 2026, there are all indications the current account deficit will narrow to 2.2%. However, export growth will slow due to lower gold prices, decreased mining production, and a less optimistic agricultural

outlook, which are forecasting a decline in import demand and costs. Ongoing import-substitution efforts will reduce energy prices, and slower construction activity will narrow the trade deficit to 5.3% of GDP.

Under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership over the past four years, Tanzania is increasingly attracting investment from international companies, particularly in the mining sector. Inflows from global financial institutions will also remain robust.

In December 2024, the IMF completed the fourth review of Tanzania's Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement, disbursing USD 148.6 million; during the previous review, the IMF also approved a six-month extension of the ECF until May 2026. Additionally, import-substitution efforts and the ban on using foreign currencies for business transactions (starting on July 1) should help reduce the reserve drawdown. Due to this measure, reserves are expected to remain around the 4.0-month import cover mark over the next two years, increasing from USD 5.8 bn by end-2025 to USD 6.0 bn by December 2026.

Though the US is not a major trade partner of Tanzania, it is essential to note that it is vulnerable to trade shocks from Mainland China and other trade partners due to rising US tariffs. Increased trade tariff wars and slower Chinese growth could diminish demand for Tanzanian goods. Likewise, intensified US protectionism would bolster the US dollar, raising the cost of imports.

However, increasing tax payments and vigorous economic activity will accelerate revenue growth to 13.9% year-on-year, reaching 16.0% of GDP in FY24/25. This is broadly in line with the estimated growth of 13.6% in FY23/24. This implies that with reforms to improve tax issues, efforts will continue to focus on improving tax payment, particularly indirect taxes such as value-added and pay-as-you-earn taxes, which increasingly benefit from digital payment infrastructure.

Many readers will recall that this concern was highlighted in the June FY24/25 budget speech, which noted that businesses and institutions have been collecting taxes but failing to remit them as required by tax laws. Therefore, the projected faster real GDP growth, expected to rise from 5.5% in 2024 to 5.7% in 2025, will, in my view, further enhance revenue receipts.

## Ben Taylor: ENERGY & MINERALS

### Africa Energy Summit 2025

The Africa Energy Summit, held in January 2025 in Dar es Salaam, marked a pivotal moment for African energy policy and regional cooperation. Hosted by the Government of Tanzania, together with the African Union, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the World Bank, the summit reportedly convened over 25 African Heads of State, 1,000 delegates, and global partners to address the continent's energy crisis. Nearly 600 million people across the continent lack reliable electricity according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). The event was themed around the "Mission 300 initiative" – an aim to connect 300 million Africans to electricity by 2030.

The summit reinforced Tanzania's growing stature as a regional leader in East Africa's energy landscape. President Samia Suluhu Hassan's hosting of the event signalled Tanzania's commitment to spearheading energy transformation, bolstered by the near-completion of the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP), which has added 2,115 megawatts to the national grid (see below). The summit's attendance was impressive, including heads of state from Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia and others, as well as key figures like UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, World Bank President Ajay Banga, and African Development Bank President Dr. Akinwumi Adesina. This has been reported as representing a unified African push for energy access, fostering pan-African solidarity.

The summit's main outcomes included the Dar es Salaam Energy Declaration and the unveiling of National Energy Compacts by 12 countries, including Tanzania, Nigeria, and Senegal. The Declaration outlined actionable reforms including:

**Commitment to Universal Energy Access:** The Declaration prioritises providing reliable and affordable electricity to 300 million Africans by 2030, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 7 and the African Union's Agenda 2063. It emphasises inclusive access, particularly for rural and underserved communities.

**Promotion of Renewable Energy:** It underscores a shift toward renewable energy sources—such as solar, hydroelectric, and geothermal—to reduce reliance on fossil fuels like firewood and charcoal. This focus

supports climate resilience and aligns with the Paris Agreement, aiming to integrate clean energy solutions into national grids and promote sustainable development.

**Support for National Energy Compacts:** The Declaration endorses country-specific National Energy Compacts from 12 nations (including Tanzania, Nigeria, and Zambia), which outline tailored plans to expand electrification, reform energy sectors, and enhance regional grid integration through initiatives like the East African Power Pool.

**Mobilization of Financial Resources:** It secures over \$40 billion in pledges from the African Development Bank, World Bank, and other partners, alongside a \$5 billion Mission 300 Guarantee Facility to de-risk private sector investments, fostering public-private partnerships to scale up energy infrastructure.

**Advancement of Clean Cooking Solutions:** The Declaration commits to expanding access to clean cooking technologies, such as natural gas and improved cookstoves, to reduce health risks from traditional biomass use and support environmental sustainability across African households.

Tanzania's national compact set ambitious targets: electrifying 8.3 million households and 64,359 villages by 2030, raising the national electrification rate from 46% to 75%, and expanding cross-border electricity trade through the East African Power Pool.

The summit's success lies in its political will and financial commitments, but its diplomatic test will be sustaining global partnerships while navigating Africa's debt burdens. By prioritising African-led solutions and climate-resilient infrastructure, the event positions the continent as a proactive player in the global energy transition, potentially redefining its role from resource-rich-but-cash-poor to an aspiring clean energy powerhouse.

### **Stiegler's Gorge Dam reaches full turbine capacity**

A significant milestone has been achieved at the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP), located at Stiegler's Gorge on the Rufuji river, as all nine turbines are now fully operational, according to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy, Dr Doto Biteko. They are collectively generating 2,115MW.



“It is a great joy that all the machines are operational and generating power. The dream of harnessing electricity from this dam has come true, and power is now available,” said Dr Biteko.

He added that arrangements are afoot to invite President Samia Suluhu Hassan for the official project inauguration. Further, Egypt has confirmed its head of state will attend the inauguration, with the event schedule being finalised.

With the nation’s power production capacity increased, the government is in final discussions with Zambia to begin exporting electricity. A transmission line is currently under construction, with Zambia also building its section, paving the way for energy trade between the two nations.

A \$320 million project to connect Zambia and Tanzania’s power supplies is being financed largely by the World Bank, with support from the European Union and the UK.

Dr Biteko added that the government is also focusing on expanding electricity transmission infrastructure within the country so as to benefit more people.

### **Tanzania issues helium mining licence**

Tanzania has made a significant step towards helium production, with the issuance of the country’s first-ever helium mining licence to Helium One Global. The licence was granted for the company’s Rukwa Helium Project, which spans 480 square kilometres across the Momba and Sumbawanga districts in southern Tanzania’s Rukwa region.

In September 2024, Helium One Global had announced significant progress in its southern Rukwa operations and submitted a comprehensive Mining Licence (ML) application for its helium project. This was supported by an in-depth feasibility study, including subsurface modelling and a detailed commercial development plan.

The global helium sector is critical to industries like healthcare, electronics, and aerospace, driven by helium’s unique properties as a non-reactive, low-density gas essential for MRI scanners, semiconductor manufacturing, and scientific research. Global demand is rising, with the market projected to grow from \$2.7 billion in 2022 to over \$4 billion by 2030, fuelled by technological advancements and limited supply.

Major producers like the United States, Qatar, and Russia dominate, but supply constraints and geopolitical tensions have spurred exploration in new regions like Tanzania.

The Rukwa Basin holds the world's largest known primary helium deposit (138 billion cubic feet), positioning the country as a potential game-changer. Companies like Helium One Global and Noble Helium are leveraging advanced exploration techniques to tap these reserves, aiming to diversify the global supply chain amid increasing prices and demand.

The announcement of Tanzania's first helium mining licence has had an immediate impact on Helium One Global's market performance. The company, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange, saw its stock price rise by 17% following the news.

Helium One Global's CEO, Lorna Blaisse, expressed her enthusiasm about the development, emphasizing the strategic significance of Tanzania's helium reserves.

"This marks a milestone for both the Company and Tanzania, as it is the first mining license to be offered for helium in the country and of such a significant size," she said. "We very much look forward to progressing the project in Tanzania through to production, as well as remaining opportunistic on further opportunities in-country and elsewhere." Assistant Commissioner Francis Mihayo from Tanzania's Ministry of Minerals remarked, "The positive results from the Helium One Global's exploration deepen hope for helium presence in Tanzania."

## Ben Taylor: **HEALTH**

### **Coping with USAID cuts?**

Tanzania is grappling with significant challenges following the abrupt cuts to USAID funding in early 2025, particularly impacting the 1.6 million Tanzanians reliant on antiretroviral (ARV) medications for HIV management. The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which provided USD \$450 million annually, was a cornerstone of Tanzania's HIV response, funding ARVs, testing, community outreach, and healthcare workers. The funding freeze has disrupted this lifeline, threatening lives and reversing decades of progress.

Widespread fear of ARV shortages has led to hoarding and some patients dropping out of care, exacerbating risks of treatment failure and resistance.

On January 20, 2025, an executive order from the Trump administration imposed a 90-day pause on all US foreign assistance, including PEPFAR, for a review of programmatic efficiencies. This was followed by a stop-work order on January 24, halting existing grants and contracts, effectively freezing PEPFAR operations. USAID, the primary implementer of PEPFAR, faced severe cuts, with over 80% of its programs cancelled by February 2025.

Ten days later, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio granted a limited humanitarian waiver allowing PEPFAR to resume “life-saving HIV services,” specifically HIV treatment and care, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for pregnant and breastfeeding women, and HIV testing.

Despite the waiver, many PEPFAR contracts, particularly those managed by USAID, remain terminated or scaled back. Programmes in Tanzania providing HIV treatment to hundreds of thousands, including children, were shuttered. Payments for some intact contracts, such as those for HIV drug supply, are not flowing, keeping services effectively frozen. The Trump administration’s move to dissolve USAID and integrate its functions into the State Department as well as reductions at the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which handles 37% of PEPFAR funding, add additional strain.

In Tanzania, the USAID cuts have strained ARV supply chains, with reports of patients being told that free ARVs are no longer available, forcing them to purchase costly. Current ARV stocks are expected to last until the end of 2025, but the 2026 forecast is uncertain, risking stockouts.

The loss of funding has led to clinic closures, job losses for healthcare workers and disruptions in testing services, reducing access to care. Community-based services, including counselling and home delivery, have been hit hard, increasing risks of treatment interruptions, drug resistance, and HIV transmission.

The Tanzanian government, through the Ministry of Health and the Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS), has pledged to reallocate

budget funds to maintain ARV supplies, with the Medical Stores Department (MSD) assuring availability to quell public fears. A web-based Care and Treatment Centre (CTC) database, integrated with DHIS-2, is being launched to mitigate the loss of USAID-funded data clerks, enabling healthcare workers to manage records directly.

Meanwhile, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is exploring reinvesting savings from its HIV grant to secure ARV commodities, while UNAIDS and WHO are engaging TACAIDS to assess impacts and explore fundraising. Civil society is advocating for expanded Global Fund implementation to bridge gaps.

The annual cost of ARVs for 1.6 million people in Tanzania is estimated at TSh 5.7 trillion (~£1.6bn), far exceeding the Ministry of Health's 2024/25 budget of TSh 1.3 trillion, making it impossible to fully cover without external aid. Experts warn of 30,000 additional HIV-related deaths in two years if the crisis persists, along with risks of increased infections due to interrupted prevention programmes.

Tanzania is exploring alternative donors and private-sector partnerships, though these are unlikely to match PEPFAR's scale. The government's commitment to absorb healthcare workers and enhance digital systems shows proactive steps, but the scale of the crisis demands urgent international support to prevent a public health catastrophe.

Beyond HIV/AIDS, USAID's support for maternal, newborn, and child health, including antenatal care and vaccinations, has been cut, with crucial elements of ante-natal care programmes unbudgeted in national plans. This risks increased maternal and neonatal mortality, especially in rural areas.

The termination of USAID-backed malaria prevention (e.g., insecticide-treated bed nets) and TB programs threatens a resurgence of these diseases. The loss of logistics for TB sample transport and vaccine storage security has paralysed diagnostic and treatment efforts.

It has been reported that around 5,000 healthcare workers, many in HIV and malaria programmes, have lost their jobs, particularly in rural clinics. Over 60 NGOs, particularly those supporting agriculture and health, face collapse due to USAID's funding halt. Health-focused NGOs like ICAP have shut down, leaving thousands of medical professionals jobless and disrupting community-based services like counselling and

ARV home delivery. Amref Health Africa, a major NGO, lost 20% of its budget. Smaller NGOs, reliant on USAID for HIV and TB programs, face immediate financial crises, with many unable to secure alternative funding quickly.

The Africa CDC (a public health agency of the African Union) has stepped in with \$2 million for Tanzania's Marburg outbreak response, but its \$1 billion annual budget target is insufficient to fill USAID's void across health programs.

"The disruptions to HIV programs could undo 20 years of progress," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a press conference. He added that this could lead to over 10 million additional HIV cases across Africa and three million HIV-related deaths. He said that the US government has "a responsibility to ensure that if it withdraws direct funding for countries, it's done in an orderly and humane way that allows them to find alternative sources of funding."

The US's plans to exit the WHO have also forced the UN agency, which typically receives about a fifth of its overall annual funding from the US, to freeze hiring and initiate budget cuts.

It is no exaggeration to say that Tanzania's health sector is in crisis due to USAID cuts, with HIV/AIDS programmes, maternal health, and TB/malaria efforts facing severe disruptions. NGOs are collapsing, healthcare workers are unemployed, and patients are struggling to access ARVs and services. The government's mitigation efforts and support from the Global Fund and Africa CDC are insufficient to bridge the funding gap. Without rapid intervention, Tanzania risks a public health catastrophe, with millions facing life-threatening consequences.

### **Tanzania declares end to Marburg Virus outbreak**

The government on March 13, 2025 formally declared the end of the outbreak of the Marburg Virus after 42 days of monitoring with no new cases reported.

The outbreak of Marburg virus was declared on January 20 this year by President Samia Suluhu Hassan after two cases were confirmed in Biharamulo District, in the Kagera Region, which borders Uganda to the north, Rwanda to the west and Burundi to the southwest. Both patients lost their lives while on treatment.

The last confirmed MVD case was reported on January 28, 2025. This second case (which occurred after the previous issue (*No.140*) of *Tanzanian Affairs* went to press), came after both President Samia and the World Health Organisation celebrated Tanzania's swift actions to contain the outbreak and limit the number of infections to a single case.

This is the second outbreak of Marburg virus, with the first having occurred in 2023.

"Since the declaration of the outbreak the government in collaboration with stakeholders and partners jointly took stringent measures to contain and control the outbreak," said Minister for Health, Jenista Mhagama.

She urged the public to remain vigilant and continue observing all recommended measures and adopt positive behaviours including hand washing using running water, soap or hand sanitizer and timely report all rumours and unusual events in the community using toll-free hotline number 199 or nearby health facility.

"We should also be aware that the country remains at risk of other highly infectious diseases, including Ebola which has been reported in neighbouring countries and Mpox which has recently been declared in our country and continues to be reported worldwide," Ms Mhagama said.

In a similar statement the World Health Organisation said it worked closely with Tanzanian health authorities to rapidly scale up key measures such as disease surveillance and trained more than 1000 frontline health workers in contact tracing, clinical care and public health risk communication to contain the second outbreak of MVD in Tanzania. "The Organisation also delivered over five tonnes of essential medical supplies and equipment," WHO said in a statement.

### **Auditors criticise dependence on poorly-regulated traditional medicine**

Criticism of traditional medicine came from an unusual source in April, with the presentation to Parliament of the annual Controller and Auditor General (CAG) report.

The audit report exposed significant public health risks due to unregulated traditional and alternative medicine practices. From 2020



to 2024, at least 16 deaths were linked to unsafe traditional remedies, with seven fatalities in 2023 alone in Simiyu and Lindi regions. The report highlights systemic weaknesses in oversight by the Ministry of Health and the President's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG). The Tanzania Traditional and Alternative Health Practice Council (TAHPC) lacks a system to track incidents, leaving many cases unreported and hindering effective response.

The audit revealed that only 12 of 21 practitioners visited in four Local Government Authorities (Dodoma, Arusha, Temeke, and Bariadi) were registered, with Temeke having 71% unregistered practitioners. Inadequate registration data, missing details like street or ward information, and an outdated Health Practitioners Registration System (HPRS) exacerbate enforcement challenges. Overburdened coordinators struggle to monitor remote areas, and the sector's 2022/23–2027/28 strategic plan remains unapproved, stalling progress.

"The continued operation of unregistered practitioners and use of unsafe remedies not only poses serious health risks but also undermines public confidence in the traditional medicine sector," the report cautions.

Ben Taylor:

## EDUCATION

### **Student Loans system struggling under weight of non-repayment**

The sustainability of Tanzania's Higher Education Students Loans Board (HESLB) is at risk, with TSh 760 billion (~£210m) in outstanding loan repayments on the books, raising concerns about the future of higher education financing in the country.

Since the introduction of student loans at the start of the 1994/95 academic year, the government has disbursed TSh 7.2 trillion to 754,000 students. However, it has been reported that of the 448,824 eligible beneficiaries, only 226,292 are actively making repayments.

By the end of 2023, total collections reportedly stood at TSh 1.34 trillion, accounting for only 64% of the TSh 2.1 trillion in mature loans.

"We have intensified efforts to identify beneficiaries in employment and those operating in the informal economy," said Dr Bill Kiwia, the HESLB executive director.

Non-compliance among informal sector beneficiaries, who evade repayment, remains a significant issue. Some employers fail to deduct and remit loan repayments promptly, while others submit incorrect deductions. And many graduates face irregular income, making consistent repayments difficult.

A lack of integration between HESLB and key national databases, such as the National Identification Authority (NIDA), further complicates the tracking of beneficiaries.

The government allocated TSh 743.3 billion for student loans in the 2023/24 financial year, up from TSh 570 billion in 2021/22, to meet the growing demand for financial assistance.

In February, the parliamentary committee recommended an increase in HESLB's budget to ensure all eligible students receive loans.

HESLB, established under Act No. 9 of 2004 (amended in 2007, 2014, and 2016), is tasked with providing loans and grants to financially needy Tanzanian students in accredited higher education institutions. Its primary mandates include issuing loans, recovering loans to sustain a revolving fund, and fostering strategic partnerships to enhance financing. The revolving fund model is central to its financial health, aiming to recycle loan repayments to fund new loans.

Research by the Tanzania Institute of Education and University of Dar es Salaam indicates that while HESLB has increased enrolment, it has also widened social inequalities. Students from low-income backgrounds often face barriers due to stringent criteria, and inadequate funding channels fail to support all eligible candidates, impacting the Board's mission and public perception.

### **NGOs call for an end to corporal punishment in schools**

Following the tragic death of a Form Two student in Simiyu region, allegedly beaten and trampled by her teacher, several organisations have urged the government to abolish the 2002 education guidelines that permit corporal punishment. The NGOs also called for the development of alternative disciplinary guidelines aimed at promoting positive student behaviour.

The involved organisations include HakiElimu, Msichana Initiative, Save the Children, Childrens Dignity Forum, Shule Direct, Children in

Crossfire, and the Tanzania Child Rights Forum (TCRF).

HakiElimu director Dr John Kalage expressed concern about the increasing number of incidents where children had died or suffered serious injury through corporal punishment issued by teachers. He urged the government to take action to end corporal punishment in schools.

He referred to research conducted by HakiElimu, which shows that in schools where teachers do not use corporal punishment, students feel safer.

Children in Crossfire programme manager, Ms Saraphina Lelo, emphasised that while abuse primarily occurs in schools, its impact extends throughout society.

"The child carries that trauma, and it becomes their way of life. This child will grow up to be a parent, and they might continue this kind of punishment with their children. Society will continue thinking that corporal punishment is the right way to discipline a child, while the reality is they are hurt," she said.

In response, Education Commissioner Dr Lyabwene Mutahabwa told Mwananchi newspaper that while corporal punishment cannot be entirely abolished, the monitoring system has been strengthened to ensure it is applied in line with existing guidelines.

He explained that the guidelines state that corporal punishment should only be administered by the headteacher or principal and should not exceed three strokes.

"Claiming that corporal punishment will be completely abolished is not true; this may happen in the future, but what we are doing now is strengthening monitoring to ensure that this punishment is applied according to the guidelines," said Dr Mutahabwa.

"Nothing is more important to us than the safety of the child. As a community, we must work together to report any abuse so that actions can be taken," he said.

Ben Taylor:

## TRANSPORT

### **More financial challenges for Air Tanzania**

Air Tanzania Limited (ATCL) has reported a loss of TSh 91.8 billion (~£25m) for the financial year 2023/24, a 62% increase in losses compared to the previous year. The was reported by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG), Charles Kichere, in his annual audit of government finances, presented to President Samia Suluhu Hassan on March 27 at State House in Dar es Salaam.

Despite receiving a TSh 100 billion subsidy from the government, ATCL faced significant operational challenges that contributed to the mounting losses.

Mr Kichere attributed the airline's financial troubles largely to the extended repair time for its Airbus, which led to the grounding of planes for several months, severely affecting operations. He emphasised the urgent need for ATCL to work closely with the government to explore more efficient operational strategies.

Nevertheless, the Tanzanian government has stepped up its efforts to revive ATCL by continuing to invest in the acquisition of new aircraft, Minister for Transport Professor Makame Mbarawa told Parliament in May.

He reported that since President Samia Suluhu Hassan assumed office, the government has procured seven new aircraft, bringing the total number of new planes in ATCL's fleet to 15, including one dedicated cargo aircraft. He added that the newly acquired aircraft have enabled the airline to expand its services to 27 destinations, up from 23 destinations served in March 2021.

### **New investment and management for TAZARA**

The Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) is set to receive a USD \$1.4bn investment from the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) to overhaul its operations. Under the proposed deal, CCECC will invest \$1 billion in rehabilitating railway tracks to improve safety, efficiency, and capacity, and \$400 million will go toward the procurement of 32 locomotives and 762 wagons, enhancing both freight and passenger transport services.

The announcement was made by TAZARA managing director and chief executive officer, Mr Bruno Ching'andu, during the Zambia



*The TAZARA railway line*

International Mining and Energy Conference (ZIMEC 2025) in Kitwe, Zambia, in March.

Construction and rehabilitation work is expected in the first three years, with CCECC handling full operational management for the following 27 years. The state-run CCECC is also the original builder of the rail line.

Mr Ching'andu said the decision to grant the concession followed a comprehensive evaluation of TAZARA's long-standing challenges. The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model was selected to align with TAZARA's shareholder interests.

CCECC will be responsible for the immediate rehabilitation of the railway and the supply of rolling stock. It will also cover operational costs through concession fees payable to TAZARA while ensuring the efficient operation and maintenance of the railway system. At the end of the concession period, the fully rehabilitated assets will be returned to TAZARA.

The rehabilitation is seen as part of China's strategy to secure mineral exports (including copper and cobalt) from Zambia and DR Congo via Dar es Salaam, competing with the US-backed Lobito Corridor to Angola's coast.

At the present time, cross-border train services have been suspended due to political issues, not technical failures, requiring passengers to purchase separate tickets for Dar es Salaam to Mbeya and Tunduma/ Nakonde to Kapiri Mposhi, with independent travel between Mbeya and Tunduma.

Donovan McGrath:

## TANZANIA IN THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

### **World Bank announces multimillion-dollar redress fund after killings and abuse claims at Tanzanian project**

*(Guardian online - UK) Extract:* The World Bank is embarking on a multimillion-dollar programme in response to alleged human rights abuses against Tanzanian herders during a flagship tourism project it funded for seven years. Allegations made by the pastoralist communities living in and around Ruaha national park include violent evictions, sexual assaults, killings, forced disappearances and large-scale cattle seizures from herders committed by rangers working for the Tanzanian national park authority (Tanapa). The pastoralists say most of the incidents took place after the bank approved \$150m (£166m) for the Resilient Natural Resources Management for Tourism and Growth (Regrow) project September in 2017, aimed at developing tourism in four protected areas in southern Tanzania in a bid to take pressure off heavily touristed northern areas such as Ngorongoro and Serengeti. In 2023, two individuals wrote to the bank accusing some Tanapa employees of “extreme cruelty” during cattle seizures and having engaged in “extrajudicial killings” and the “disappearance” of community members... [The] bank published a 70-page report following its own investigation, which found “critical failures in the planning and supervision of this project and that these have resulted in serious harm”. The report ... notes that “the project should have recognised that enhancing Tanapa’s capacity to manage the park could potentially increase the likelihood of conflict with communities trying to access the park.” ... The report includes recommendations aimed at redressing harms done and details a \$2.8m project that will support alternative livelihoods for communities inside and around the park... Anuradha Mittal, executive director of the Oakland Institute, said the “scathing” investigation “confirmed the bank’s grave wrongdoing which devastated the lives of communities. Pastoralists and farms who refused to be silenced amid widespread government repression, are now vindicated.” She added that the bank’s response was “beyond shameful”. “Suggesting that tens of thousands of people forced out of their land can survive with ‘alternative livelihoods’ such as clean cooking and microfinance is a slap in the face of the victims.” ... The

Oakland Institute said the affected communities reject the bank's recommendations, and have delivered a list of demands that includes "reverting park boundaries to the 1998 borders ... The bank has said any future community resettlement will be the government's decision. (3 April 2025)

### **Labour government discussed Tanzania asylum camp plan in 2004, files show**

*(Guardian online – UK) Extract:* Tony Blair's government discussed diverting £2m earmarked to prevent conflict in Africa in order to fund a controversial pilot scheme to process and house asylum seekers in Tanzania, newly released government files show. Under the scheme, Britain would have offered Tanzania an extra £4m in aid if it opened an asylum camp to house people claiming to be Somali refugees while their applications to live in Britain were assessed. Hilary Benn, the then international development secretary, wrote to the then home secretary, David Blunkett, in 2004 saying the migration partnership with Tanzania was "off the ground", files released to the National Archives in Kew, west London, show... The then armed forces minister, Adam Ingram, however, wrote to Benn to say that while he agreed that the removal of refused asylum seekers should be addressed, he did not "consider it appropriate" to draw on the ACPP fund. Ingram wrote: "In the medium and longer terms improving stability in Africa is likely to be one of the more sustainable means of reducing the flow of economic and other migrants; that is what the ACPP exists to achieve... (31 December 2024)

### **Move over, Med diet – plantains and cassava can be as healthy as tomatoes and olive oil, say researchers**

*(Guardian online – UK) Extract:* Plantains, cassava and fermented banana drink should be added to global healthy eating guidelines alongside the olive oil, tomatoes and red wine of the Mediterranean diet, say researchers who found the traditional diet of people living in Tanzania's Kilimanjaro region had a positive impact on the body's immune system. Traditional foods enjoyed in rural villages also had a positive impact on markers of inflammation, the researchers found in a study published . . . in the journal *Nature Medicine*. Dr Quirijn de Mast, one of the paper's authors, said they were now in a race against time to record and study the potential benefits of African heritage diets

before they disappear as people move to cities and adopt western-style eating habits. "Time is ticking because you see that these heritage diets are being replaced more and more by western diets," he said. "We will lose so much interesting information [from which] we can learn – and not only in Africa." In previous research, the team had established that people following the traditional way of life in rural areas had a different immune-system profile to urban dwellers, with more anti-inflammatory proteins. Chronic inflammations is a key driver of many non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including rheumatoid arthritis and Alzheimer's disease. The new study set out to establish whether diet played a role. For a fortnight, 77 young men in their 20s and 30s were switched from heritage to western-style diets, or the reverse – with blood samples taken at the start and end, and again four weeks later. Meals on the heritage diet menu included green plantain mixed with kidney beans, boiled chicken served with green vegetables and brown rice and beans. On the western-style menu, they included pizza, fried chicken and french fries and spaghetti served with beef stew. Those newly adopting a western-style diet saw inflammatory markers in their blood increase and tests suggested their immune systems did not respond as well to infections. They also gained weight. By contrast, switching from a western diet to a heritage diet had a largely anti-inflammatory effect, and blood markers linked to metabolic problems fell. In a third arm of the trial, participants following a western-style diet were asked to drink the local fermented banana beverage, known as mbege, for one week. That group also saw improvements in markers of inflammation. For Dr Godrey Temba, the first author of the paper and a lecturer at KCMC University in Moshi, Tanzania, the findings were not a surprise. "When we are in most of the villages, talking to elderly people [of] 80 or 90 years, they were very healthy. They don't have any health complications [and] they tell you about consuming this type of diet and this beverage since they were 25." However, the diet and its benefits have not been explored and documented – unlike the traditional diets of the Mediterranean and Nordic countries, which are promoted by the World Health Organization for their beneficial effects. Temba said: "We think this is the right time ... so that [African heritage diets] can also be included in the global guidelines of diets, because they really have a health benefit ... (17 April 2025)



**Archaeologists uncovered a cache of 1.5 million-year-old bone tools. They're trying to determine who made them**

*(CNN online – USA) Extract:* Archaeologists have uncovered a collection of bone tools in northern Tanzania that were shaped by ancient human ancestors 1.5 million years ago, making them the oldest known bone tools by about 1 million years, according to new research. Researchers have unearthed stone tools that date back to at least 3.3 million years ago, but before this discovery, the oldest known bone tools were found at European sites believed to be 250,000 to 500,000 years old. The fragments of limb bones, most from hippopotamuses and elephants, show evidence of having been sharpened and shaped, likely with the aid of stone pieces. Some of the bones reach up to nearly 15 inches (38cm) long. The bone tools, which all appear to have been systematically produced in the same style as one another, were found in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge. The site is also where archaeologists have previously unearthed artifacts related to some of the first stone tools crafted by early hominins, or who walked upright. The new findings, presented in a study published ... in the journal *Nature*, suggest that our ancient human relatives applied the same techniques they used to make stone tools to specific bones they selected from large mammals. Researchers believe the tools are evidence that hominins long ago were capable of abstract reasoning, or the ability to think critically by identifying patterns and making connections. "This expansion of technological potential indicates advances in the cognitive abilities and mental structures of these hominins, who knew how to incorporate technical innovations by adapting their knowledge of stone work to the manipulation of bone remains," said lead study author Dr. Ignacio de la Torre, scientist at the Spanish National Research Council's Institute of History and codirector of the Olduvai Gorge Archaeology Project, in a statement... The Olduvai Gorge bone tools were first spotted in 2018 during excavations carried out between 2015 and 2022... (5 March 2025)

**A forest the size of Mexico could store twice as much carbon as was thought. That makes its conservation even more valuable**

*(CNN online – USA) Extract:* ... Stretching from the northern tips of Tanzania, through to coastal Angola in the west, and all the way down to southern Mozambique, the Miombo covers 1.9 million square kilometres (734,000 square miles): an area about the size of Mexico. It's thought to

provide livelihoods and essential resources for over 300 million people, as well as sustaining much of Africa's most iconic megafauna, including some of the continent's largest remaining elephant populations. Despite its importance, the Miombo saw a decline in forest cover of almost a third between 1980 and 2020. However, recent research shed light on its ability to store carbon, which could mean that restoring the woodland has more economic value than cutting it down. A first-of-its-kind study published in July 2024 found that Miombo may be locking up more than twice as much aboveground carbon as was previously thought. This difference equates to an additional 3.7 billion metric tons of carbon stored across the whole forest—more than that emitted into the atmosphere by China in 2023. Professor Mathias Disney, of University College London, who co-authored the paper, explains that the oversimplified relationship between trunk diameter and tree mass (of which carbon makes up a fixed proportion) used in prior estimates, “kind of underpins everything we know about carbon and forests worldwide.” Instead, this new study predicted the aboveground biomass in the Miombo using a much more advanced method: lidar (light detection and ranging). Much as sonar relies on sound pulses, and radar on radio pulses, lidar builds up a 3D-map by firing thousands of laser pulses per second at an object and recording the reflected signals. The team deployed the imaging technique from the ground, from drones and from helicopters, over a 500-square-kilometer region of the forest in Mozambique. They then used their data to build the most accurate 3D-representation of the woodland to date and extrapolated to estimate the amount of carbon locked up across the whole Miombo... As far as the Miombo is concerned, although “nothing has actually changed on the ground ... if you double the amount of carbon that's stored across these woodlands ... you've essentially doubled their dollar value overnight,” says Disney. This means doubling the financial incentive for southern African nations to protect and restore the Miombo, but also doubling the financial cost of cutting it down... “In the carbon world, everything flows from policy, everything flows from regulation,” says Hannah Hauman, global head of carbon trading at Trafigura... Edwin Tambara, director of Global Leadership at the African Wildlife Foundation, says that compared to rainforests such as the Amazon and the Congo Basin, dry forests like the Miombo are systematically understudied, underappreciated and undervalued... (5 March 2025)



## **Massive, long-lived trees discovered in the Tanzanian rainforest are a new species**

*(Phys.org science news website – UK) Extract:* The Udzungwa Mountains, part of [Tanzania's] Eastern Arc Mountain Chain, are home to many wildlife preserves. Members of the team were hiking in the Uluti Village and the Boma la Mzinga Forest Reserves when they came upon a large tree back in 2019 that none of them recognized. Its flowers had thin white petals with tiny yellow bulbs on the tips. Intrigued by their find, they took pictures and collected leaf samples for study back in their lab. They have been able to confirm that the tree is a species that has not been recognized by the scientific community. The team named it *Tessmannia princeps*. In addition to its massive girth, the tree grows a little taller than others around it in the rainforest, which is why the team gave it the name "princeps"—a Latin word meaning "most eminent." More recently, team members returned to the site and found approximately 100 of the trees, one of which had fallen due to natural causes. That allowed them to collect wood samples for testing. The results showed that some of the newly discovered trees could be up to 3,000 years old. They are also slow growing, taking up to 15 years to add 1cm of girth. The researchers note that there are many scarce species of plants and animals found only in the Udzungwa Mountains and Udzungwa's Mngeta Valley. Because of that, the entire area has been designated a national park, which means trees cannot be cut down or harmed. That is good news for *Tessmannia pinceps*, the team notes, because of its slow-growing nature and low numbers mean it could very well disappear if disturbed by human activities. (21 March 2025)



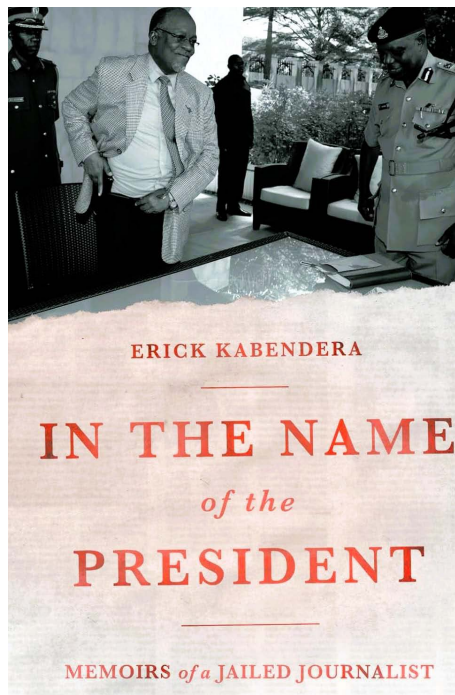
### **The blind man coaching a Tanzanian football club**

*(BBC.com news website video clip – UK) Tanzania will co-host the Africa Cup of Nations in 2027 alongside fellow East African countries Kenya and Uganda. It is hoped that the tournament will inspire a new generation of talent across the region. One football coach in Ruvumu in southern Tanzania is already helping players improve and has established himself as a role model in his community – despite being blind since birth. The BBC’s Alfred Lasteck visits Mfaranyaki City FC to attend one of Priver Ngonyani’s training sessions. Video transcription: Priver Ngonyani may be blind, but he still sees the game. [Ngonyani] “My ears are sharp and my senses are exceptionally strong. This allows me to recognize who is playing well and who is underperforming.” He has coached Mfaranyaki City FC in Tanzania for 10 years. His players believe in his abilities. [Rogatus Mbawala – Team captain] “We don’t use his disability to go against what the coach asks of us. When he gives instructions for the sessions, I act as a supervisor collaborating with my teammates.” [Ngonyani] “When I discipline a player one accepts it because they trust me. This trust has made us a family, both on and off the pitch.” The job is not lucrative but his passion keeps him on the pitch. Born blind, Ngonyani has to deal with societal stigma. [Ngonyani] “People assume I lack the ability to coach football. This makes it extremely difficult for me to secure opportunities and prove my skills with confidence.” It’s estimated there are 290,000 blind people in Tanzania. Ngonyani hopes to change attitudes towards them. [Ngonyani] “When given a chance, we can achieve a lot. I’m capable of helping many teams succeed.” (24 March 2025)*

Martin Walsh:

## REVIEWS

**IN THE NAME OF THE PRESIDENT: MEMOIRS OF A JAILED JOURNALIST.** Erick Kabendera. Staging Post (Jacana Media), Johannesburg, 2024. 354 pp. ISBN 9781991220929 (paperback). £18.95; also available as a Kindle Edition.



In 2019, Erick Kabendera was one of the most prominent victims of President John Magufuli's crackdown on critics. As one of Tanzania's most respected investigative journalists, his work had appeared in leading national and international newspapers – including *The Economist* and *The Guardian*. Under President Magufuli he served seven months in prison on unconvincing charges, following his investigations into several matters that caused or promised considerable embarrassment to the President – his state of health, his family relationships and multiple cases of apparent corruption and mismanagement.

In this book, Kabendera tells his story. It has three interwoven strands: Kabendera's personal experience,

Magufuli and his presidency, and Tanzania's wider history. He tells the first of these in straightforward terms, never over-dramatising or self-pitying, though the experience was clearly harrowing. The dire state of Tanzania's police service and prison estate and the extent of political manipulation of the police, justice system, immigration service and tax authorities are laid bare.

On the country's wider history, Kabendera explores the background to President Magufuli's rule, looking back as far as President Nyerere's heavy-handed approach to critics, but devoting most attention to the corruption that was seen to thrive under President Kikwete and the efforts of CCM big-wigs to ensure that Edward Lowassa did not become the party's presidential candidate in 2015. We get a deep dive into the IPTL corruption scandal and its consequences at

the highest political levels. And the manoeuvring to push John Magufuli's candidacy, despite the reservations of those who knew him best, is presented in some detail.

The book makes a strong implicit case that a Magufuli-like figure was bound to emerge at some point: the history of authoritarian tendencies, lack of strong democratic norms, and highly centralised power structure combined to create the opportunity for a strong-man to take charge. The particular dynamics of CCM in the first half of the 2010s then thrust Magufuli forward into the role, which he was only too happy to fill.

Kabendera does not pull his punches. The charges he lays at the President's door are wide-ranging and serious in the extreme. He accuses Magufuli of incompetence and mismanagement, nepotism and extensive corruption in his role as President. He accuses him of extreme misogyny and spousal abuse – and hints at more – in his personal life. He avers that the late President suffered not just from serious heart disease, but also from schizophrenia and extreme superstition, which he claims at one time prompted “a fear of being ensnared by ghosts purportedly sent by his predecessor, Jakaya Kikwete and the CCM Secretary General Abdulrahman Kinana.”

Shockingly, Kabendera alleges that Magufuli personally committed murder, shooting Ben Saanane, a senior opposition party figure, in the grounds of State House, in retribution for having publicly cast doubt on the President's academic qualifications. He argues that the President's belligerent attitude towards his perceived opponents fostered a determination among acolytes to curry favour by anticipating his desires and acting even without receiving directions. There is a suggestion that this lay behind the attempted assassination of opposition leader Tundu Lissu.

Putting all this and more together, Kabendera paints a picture for us of an intensely paranoid, thin-skinned and venal President, who lacked the political skill (and inclination) to play the game by democratic means, but who resorted instead to authoritarianism, manipulation and brutality. In this view, Tanzania had a lucky escape in the manner of the President's premature exit from the stage, which Kabendera unambiguously attributes to Covid-19 and pre-existing heart problems.

More worryingly, however, the conditions that gave rise to President Magufuli are said to remain largely unchanged. The manner in which an incompetent leader – in Kabendera's description – was able to seize control of key organs

of the state and manipulate them to his own ends should be a major concern.

Before concluding, it would be remiss not to mention some of the book's evident shortcomings. First, there are extensive inconsistencies and factual inaccuracies. Some dates given in the author's personal story are incorrect, as is the year in which Prime Minister Edward Sokoine died in an apparent car crash. The sequence of events when opposition leader Zitto Kabwe paid a visit to the Director of Intelligence Services has been corrected by Kabwe himself. And there are several misspelled names. These may be little more than typos and proof-reading errors, but they do not inspire confidence.

Second, given the seriousness of the accusations laid out in the book, the minimal supporting evidence presented in some cases is problematic. Protection of sources is a key journalistic imperative, but so too is the need to demonstrate the credibility of such explosive claims. It will be much easier for Magufuli's supporters to challenge Kabendera's account than it might have been otherwise.

Third, the author's writing style often gets in the way of the narrative. A tendency to jump around in the timeline and to omit important details until a story is well-underway left this reader repeatedly flicking back-and-forth through the pages to look for something that had been missed, and several times unable to work out what was actually being said.

And lastly, it is odd that Kabendera did not engage at any length with the incontestable fact that Magufuli remained – and remains – popular with many Tanzanians. This is an important element of the Magufuli story for how it enabled his excesses, for what it says about the state of the country's democracy, and for how it emboldened (and continues to embolden) his followers. For many in CCM, Magufuli still stands as a model to be emulated.

That said, this book will be difficult to ignore. It may not be perfect, but it is essential reading for anyone with more than a passing interest in Tanzania's recent history and near future, and the ways in which these are being contested. Under the circumstances, Kabendera's courage and commitment to telling the truth as he sees it is admirable. It will be interesting to see how the debate over Magufuli's legacy develops, and whether Kabendera's warnings are borne out or heeded.

Ben Taylor

*Ben Taylor is the Editor of Tanzanian Affairs.*



**THE OVERHEAD LOCKER: TALES OF TRAVEL, TANZANIA AND TRYING TO KEEP IT TOGETHER.** Phil Double. Independently published, 2025. 158 pp. ISBN 9798314381182 (paperback) £4.99; also available as a Kindle Edition.

In this book, Phil Double covers two themes – he talks about a family holiday to Tanzania, and the account is overlaid by his struggles with anxiety which affect many of his actions.

He starts the book by discussing in detail his descent into anxiety, over nearly a decade – how it started, how he was unaware of what was happening to him and wondered why he suddenly was unable to eat and was tired all the time, how he sought help and how finally he developed some coping strategies which began to help him with situations such as those he encountered on his month-long visit to Tanzania. Although he found being with people difficult, he was determined not to hide away, and this was one of the reasons he decided that the family must go to Tanzania.

Double was born in Tanzania, of missionary parents, in a remote village near Singida. He is also married to a Tanzanian, and since leaving as a child, he has visited Tanzania on other occasions. Although familiar with all matters Tanzanian, he found even planning the journey triggered feelings of anxiety.

However, the family – his wife, three children and his mother – made it safely to Tanzania, after some anxious moments on the journey, and immediately went to stay with family in a village on the slopes of Mt Meru. There are some vivid descriptions of village life and Double understands that he is able to find peace in adjusting to the very different way of life, new routines and a slower pace, making the most of each day.

He describes in detail how people in Tanzania access water in their homes, and how difficult it is for many people throughout the country, for a variety of reasons. The family embark on a project to improve the water system in this village, by repairing a tank higher up the mountain. Double hikes up with his father-in-law, through Maasai villages, to investigate the source of the problem, and he is able to gain an understanding of the water issues faced by several communities and individual households. Through the charity he works for, he can donate funds to this project. He is particularly struck by seeing small children struggling to carry heavy water containers to their homes, and is relieved that they will now have extra time and energy to spend on more profitable pursuits as a result of the improvement of the water system.



There are other trips – one to nearby Moshi where his parents worked, a week in Dar es Salaam in a hotel to spend time with other family members and his wife’s friends, and of course, a safari, to Tarangire, where they see all the necessary wildlife. Despite his anxiety, particularly when they have to make journeys, Double enjoys much of their visit. He ponders on the connectedness he feels spending time with his wife’s family, sharing meals, getting to know the children, the older people, and how this turns out to be one of the best ways to counterbalance his anxiety. But he also encounters negative aspects, lamenting the amount of rubbish in the sea along the beach where they are staying, and an example of corruption at the airport - this fills him with frustration as he wonders what new visitors to the country would make of such a blatant display of dishonesty, and he worries that it would influence their view of the country as a whole.

There are many descriptions and incidents in this book that will conjure up familiar images to those who live in Tanzania or those who, like me, have spent time there in the past – the airports, road travel, Dar es Salaam streets clogged with traffic, rural villages with their stunning greenery and busy lives. Plagued as Double is with anxiety, he is brave to have embarked on this journey, although much of it was facilitated by family members, and he comments at the end ‘You can’t reach the end if you never take a step’.

Kate Forrester

*Kate lived in Tanzania for 15 years, working as a freelance consultant chiefly in social development, and carrying out research assignments throughout the country. She now lives in Dorchester, where she is active in community and environmental work.*

**A TRAINING SCHOOL FOR ELEPHANTS.** Sophy Roberts. Doubleday, London, 2025. 432 pp. ISBN 9780857528377 (hardback) £22.00; ISBN 9781473597471 (eBook) £9.99.

At its simplest level this is a tale of four Indian elephants (two female and two male) acquired in Pune (Poona), crammed into the hold of a ship in Bombay and shipped to Zanzibar via Aden. These four animals were craned into the water in Msasani Bay, adjacent to the future colonial capital of Dar es Salaam, and swam to shore making East African landfall for the first time. Seven weeks after leaving Pune, on 2 July 1879, the animals and their Indian mahouts, set off in a caravan towards the interior.

Who triggered this operation and for what reason? Leopold II of Belgium,

who had in 1865 personally acquired the space of what is now roughly the Democratic Republic of Congo, was the primary instigator. But the fact that he was purchasing and moving these animals through areas of British direct and indirect control, stirred wider official and unofficial interest. Operational leadership was entrusted to an Irishman, Friederich Falkner Carter, who had the advantages of marine logistical experience, as well as a fluency in Arabic acquired during long-term residence in Basrah at the head of the Persian Gulf. He also had a background in trading Mesopotamian fauna into a European market. The overall goal, it could be argued, was to create an equivalent of the Pune elephant breeding centre in an African space utilising African elephants. Those trained elephants would then be used in a variety of commercial contexts, in many cases replacing the role of African labourers.

The expedition absorbed the death of their senior male elephant near Mpwapwa, probably through the strain of overloading the animal. It was at this stage they were joined by a secondary Belgian caravan, adding some confusion as to who was in overall control. Within several days of leaving Mpwapwa, traversing the area of Gogo control, the second male elephant died. After ostentatiously parading through the Nyamwezi centre of Tabora, the caravan angled in a southward direction to Karema on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika. Within sight of that destination the third (female) elephant died of infections. Stranded in Karema, with one elephant, and starved of reserves, Carter eventually made the decision to return to the coast in order to rejuvenate his mission. Shortly after his departure in June 1880, he was inadvertently caught up in a local African conflict and lost his life; the last remaining elephant in Karema died shortly afterwards.

A unique African elephant training school in the northeast Congo did eventually come into existence some two decades after Carter's death; its last habituated graduate died in 2010. The book has minimal detail on the initial training structure and mechanics of that later enterprise.

The author, who would see herself as a travel journalist with a sense of history, alternates chapters of the historical journey with her own quest for background in archives and on the ground in Tanzania. She occasionally hints at the wider global story of elephant exploitation in a European and North American context. She briefly mentions the aborted attempt to electrocute an elephant ('Jumbo II') in Buffalo NY in 1901 yet fails to mention the more successful public execution of another elephant ('Topsy') at Coney Island in 1903 by a combination of electrocution, strangulation and poisoning.

The initial hurried quest by King Leopold for elephants in Europe namechecks the Hagenbeck Zoo in Hamburg but the author makes no further mention of Carl Hagenbeck, arguably the greatest exotic animal entrepreneur of the period before the First World War, a merchant with a preference for female elephants from Ceylon. Several decades later, after Germany had acquired the colonial territory in which our story takes place, the metropolitan German government approved a budget to allow several German contractors to again test the idea of animal transport (not elephants), this time in the south of the East African colony. It was an exercise that produced no practicable results.

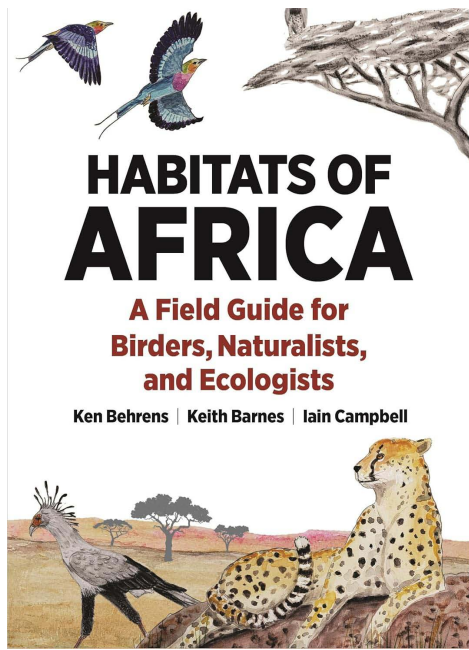
Lorne Larsen

*Lorne Larson was one of the first doctoral graduates in history from the University of Dar es Salaam. He has taught East African history in Tanzania and Nigeria. He specialises in the German colonial period and is most interested in the history of southern Tanzania.*

**HABITATS OF AFRICA: A FIELD GUIDE FOR BIRDERS, NATURALISTS, AND ECOLOGISTS.** Ken Behrens, Keith Barnes, and Iain Campbell. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2025. 448 pp. ISBN 9780691244761 (paperback) £30.00; ISBN 9780691244778 (e-book) £30.00.

Let me review this book from the eyes of a birder widely travelling in Tanzania with a general interest in nature.

Why should we study habitats when the target of most visitors will be birds and mammals? Well, first of all you will discover in this book that Tanzania is home to many different habitats, far more than a first-time visitor will imagine to see. Even on the most classical Northern Tanzania safari tour from Arusha to Ngorongoro and Serengeti you will pass through many different habitats holding their special birds and mammals' assemblages. Now with just a little bit of preparation (and the book is really very easy to use) you will recognise the *Tropical Montane Cultivations* around Arusha followed by the *Northern Dry Thorn Savanna* (Maasai Steppe) when driving to the Rift and arriving either at Lake Manyara or Lake Natron with its *salt pans*. Climbing the road to Ngorongoro Crater you will pass through the most beautiful *Moist Montane Forest* with its extraordinary and specific avifauna. When descending on the other side of Ngorongoro you will first enter a very dry area in its rain shadow called *Afrotropical Grassland*. At this very place you will encounter the millions of wildebeest calving around February when the grass is green, before



# HABITATS OF AFRICA

**A Field Guide for  
Birders, Naturalists,  
and Ecologists**

Ken Behrens | Keith Barnes | Iain Campbell

leaving in March, April to the north-west into the *Moist Mixed Savanna* called here Serengeti.

Maybe next time you will do the Southern Circuit with a whole different set of habitats, leaving Dar Es Salaam surrounded by *East Coast Forest Matrix* but soon entering a mosaic of *Afrotropical Grassland* and a different forest type, the *Miombo* holding a very different avifauna and mammals difficult to find in other habitats like the African painted dog or greater kudu.

But how easy is it to recognise these different habitats? Two main criteria were used by the authors: their visual distinctiveness with species of vegetation present, e.g. grass versus

trees, that even the most narrow-sighted birder or first-time safari visitor will recognise, and their assemblage of wildlife, primarily mammals and birds.

To get the maximum information out of the book, you only have to read the very short introduction to the main text (11 pages) which includes nice and easy to understand climate descriptions and graphs. Every single habitat is introduced by a map, a climate diagram, and a beautiful black-and-white illustration showing the vegetation and including a human for scale. The habitat is then described in a way that everybody, birder or naturalist and even the novice safari tourist will understand, including numerous very high-quality photographs of the habitat, mammals and birds present and characteristics of the place with a special section explaining why these species of mammals and birds are present. Not to forget the numerous sidebars presenting great information about various topics.

But why is this book so interesting for birders? Well, with more than 1,000 different bird species present in Tanzania, it is essential to know the habitat of the different species. Let me explain with a specialised raptor, the Eastern chanting-goshawk (*Melierax poliopterus*), often confused with the Dark chanting-goshawk (*M. metabates*). Looking in your brand-new bird guide and

studying the tiny maps you will get an erroneous picture of the distribution of the Eastern chanting-goshawk in Tanzania, although an almost perfect distribution map can be found on the Tanzania Bird Atlas website (<http://tanzaniabirdatlas.net/start.htm>). But as an owner of *Habitats of Africa* you can simply look at either page 37 in the East Africa chapter or at page 227 in the Savannas chapter, and knowing that the Eastern chanting-goshawk is a Northern Dry Thorn Savanna bird, you will have a perfect map of its distribution in Tanzania. The habitat as defined by the authors is clearly working!

And this is true for many bird species in Tanzania, especially in the very difficult families with tens of closely related species like sunbirds and cisticolas. Without knowing their habitat, identification, especially when they're not singing, is an almost impossible task.

Thus this book is perfect for planning your trip, learning much more than you will ever get out of an ordinary field guide, putting your observations in a broader ecological context. By the sheer fact that you will start to understand African biogeography in relation to birds and mammals, your trip will be even more fun.

What else makes this book so appealing? A wealth of information not readily available elsewhere, written for birders and naturalists, explained by first class diagrams and maps and filled with hundreds of excellent photographs. So, from my point of view as a keen birder interested both in African birds and mammals, this is essential guide to prepare a trip and to understand distribution of the avifauna of Africa. It is even more useful with its complementary information about a topic not readily available to birders and others until now. Everybody interested in Tanzanian nature needs this book!

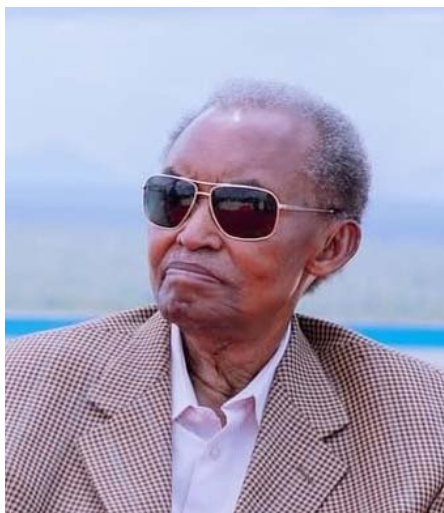
Tom Conzemius

*Tom Conzemius is a veterinarian by profession and birder by passion, living in Luxembourg. When he first visited Tanzania back in 2005, he found his Garden of Eden. Since then, he has returned many times visiting the different regions and national parks. He's especially interested in raptors and for many years has conducted a raptor road count on each trip, an activity which is both enjoyable and may one day be useful as a reference.*

Ben Taylor:

## OBITUARIES

Former Vice President and Prime Minister, **Cleopa Msuya**, died in May at the age of 94. In a decades-long political career, he held nearly every major economic portfolio apart from the presidency, serving as the country's first Vice President from 1990 to 1994, as Prime Minister for two separate periods in 1980-1983 and 1994-1995, as well as Minister of Finance at critical moments in the country's economic history.



Mr Msuya had been receiving treatment for a prolonged illness both locally and abroad, including at the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI), Mzena Hospital and in London.

Born in January 1931 in Mwanga District, Kilimanjaro Region, Mr Msuya was a prominent civil servant and politician. After studying at Makerere University from 1952 to 1955, he began his career in rural community development before rising through the ranks of public service. From 1964 to 1972, he served

as Permanent Secretary in several key ministries, including Community Development and Culture, Lands and Water Development, Economic Affairs and Planning, and Finance.

He was appointed Minister for Finance in 1972, later serving as Minister for Industry before being named Prime Minister for the first time in 1980. Mr Msuya went on to hold multiple cabinet positions, including Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs and Planning and Minister for Industry and Trade.

Msuya was perhaps best known for his role in steering the country through an economic crisis after Julius Nyerere stepped down as President in 1985. Tanzania's \$3 billion debt at the time and reliance on foreign aid necessitated painful concessions. Together with the late Prof Benno Ndulu and Prof Ibrahim Lipumba, Msuya played a major role in

guiding the government towards a solution.

President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Nyerere's immediate successor, has applauded these three economists for how they helped the government to break the deadlock. As Finance Minister under President Mwinyi, Msuya was tasked with initiating the painful but necessary reforms that would pivot Tanzania toward a market-driven economy, and guiding the country's difficult negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He championed the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1986, which included currency devaluation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, and deep fiscal restructuring. These reforms, while controversial, were seen as unavoidable in the face of mounting economic pressures.

"We must face economic realities," Msuya said in 1987. "Our loyalty to socialism cannot blind us to the need for efficiency and global integration."

Msuya's reforms were a double-edged sword; they stabilised the macroeconomy but deepened disparities, revealing the limits of IMF-prescribed solutions," said Prof Amon Mwambene, a historian.

Speaking at the funeral, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa said Tanzania had lost a leader whose advice was always rooted in ethical and professional execution of government duties. "His service to the country remains a mark of excellence that current and future leaders should aspire to," said Mr Majaliwa.

As if to emphasise Msuya's historic significance to Tanzania, his funeral took place at grounds that bear his name: the CD Msuya Grounds in Mwanga, Kilimanjaro. In a show of respect, local authorities closed all nearby primary and secondary schools, allowing students and teachers to attend the ceremony, an acknowledgment of Msuya's enduring contributions to the education sector, where he was regarded as an architect of academic progress in Mwanga.

"The nation has suffered a great loss," said President Samia Suluhu Hassan. "I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family, relatives, friends and all Tanzanians." She declared seven days of national mourning.

**Charles Hillary Nkwanga**, renowned journalist, passed away on May 11, 2025, at age 66.

Hillary worked with top-tier media organisations, including Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD), IPP Media, the BBC, Deutsche Welle and Azam Media. His voice was for many years a prominent and authoritative presence on the Kiswahili broadcasts of the BBC World Service.

In 2021, Hillary left the media to take up an appointment as Zanzibar's Director of Presidential Communications, and later served as chief spokesperson for the Government of Zanzibar, his birthplace.

His death marks the end of a distinguished career in journalism and public service that left a lasting impact both locally and internationally. He had a reputation as a sharp, ethical, and passionate journalist. His reporting and editorial leadership earned him wide respect across East Africa and beyond.

News of his death prompted an outpouring of grief and tributes from across the region. Leaders, journalists, and citizens alike remembered him not just for his professional contributions but for his humility.

"The late Charles was not only a good inspirational friend and a mentor, but also a visionary leader who inspired many generations. What a life and what a humble and nice guy," said his close friend, Abdulswamad Abdulrahim.

**Ahmed Rajab**, who died in February aged 79, was a journalist and political analyst whose views on Tanzanian and wider African politics and economics were highly respected.

Rajab's career began in broadcasting, where he worked in various production roles at the BBC World Service in London before serving within the Unesco communications office in Kenya and then, in 1984, returning to the BBC as a producer.

In the 1990s he switched to print journalism as editor of *Africa Analysis*, a fortnightly magazine dedicated to African politics and economics. Around the same time, he became a go-to commentator on African affairs for broadcasters, including the BBC, Channel 4 News and CNN. In later years, before his retirement, he served as head of the



newsroom at the Middle East/Asia bureau of Irin, the United Nations' Humanitarian News Agency.

Born in Vuga, Zanzibar, Rajab's early life was shaped by the revolutionary upheaval of 60s Zanzibar. He escaped this, moving to the UK to study philosophy at Birkbeck, University of London, and then a master's in African studies at Sussex University. After that he went straight to the BBC World Service.

Throughout his career, he rode a parallel track as a human rights activist, including calling for the freedom of Zanzibari's who were detained following the Zanzibar revolution. In this case, from London he worked closely with a small committee of progressives in East Africa such as Aishura Babu, Issa Shivji, Walter Rodney, and Abdul Sheriff, using human rights platforms in London to press their cause.

Renowned surgeon, medical educator and former cabinet minister Prof **Philemon Sarungi** died peacefully in Dar es Salaam in March at the age of 88.

Prof Sarungi led a life dedicated to public service and excellence. His academic journey was distinguished, beginning with a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Medicine in Szeged, Hungary, in 1966. He went on to earn a Master of Arts degree in Surgery from the same institution in 1970, a Diploma in Orthopaedics and Trauma from the University of Medicine in Vienna in 1973, and a Diploma in Replantation Surgery from the University of Shanghai in 1975.

Returning to Tanzania, Professor Sarungi embarked on a long and distinguished career in medical education at the University of Dar es Salaam, where he shaped the future of the country's healthcare system. He served as professor and head of the University's department of surgery from 1971 until 1984, then as the director general of Muhimbili Medical Centre from 1984 to 1990.

Alongside this, Prof Sarungi served as the Member of Parliament for the Rorya constituency, representing CCM. From 1990 he held several key cabinet positions, including as minister of Health, minister of Communications and Transport, minister of Defence and National Service and minister of Education and Culture.



# TANZANIAN AFFAIRS (ISSN 0952-2948)

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