

# Tanzanian Affairs

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General Elections 2025  
Tourism Boom  
Obituary - Dr Jane Goodall

## Ben Taylor: FROM THE EDITOR

Dear reader,

Welcome to the latest issue of *Tanzanian Affairs*.

As you may have noticed, we have taken a slightly different approach to this issue. With the sad news that the editor of the Britain-Tanzania Society newsletter, Jennifer Sharp, passed away earlier this year, the BTS committee has decided, going forward, to incorporate some of what would previously have been included in the newsletter into *Tanzanian Affairs*. This is starting small, with two pages of news from BTS's charitable arm, Tanzania Development Trust (TDT). More will follow in future issues.

Of course, you will continue to find much the same type of news that *Tanzanian Affairs* has always covered. In this issue, this includes extensive coverage of the imminent general elections in Tanzania, as well as articles on Tanzania's expanding rail and road networks, progress (or lack of) with natural gas processing investment negotiations, the rising importance of tourism to Tanzania's economy, the challenges around regulation of ride-sharing services such as Uber, and some sporting success.

We also have reviews of some fascinating new books. In *Salama binti Rubeya: Memories from the Swahili littoral*, Dr Ida Hadjivayanis and Salha



*Presidential election - the three main party leaders: President Samia (CCM), Luhanga Mpina (ACT Wazelendo) and Tundu Lissu (Chadema)*

*Cover image is Dr Jane Goodall who died on 1st October (see Obituaries)*

Hamdani share the true life-story of their mother / grandmother: casting light on the social history of the Swahili coast from an important but often-neglected perspective. And there are two significant photographic books on Tanzania's history – the first on the life of Julius Nyerere and the second on the history of the Union.

We have also made a late change in response to the unfortunate news of the passing of Jane Goodall, including reflections from the BTS chair, Paul Harrison.

If you have ideas, stories, or resources you'd like to see featured in future issues, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Warm regards,

Ben Taylor (Editor)

Ben Taylor:

## GENERAL ELECTIONS

### **General elections in Tanzania: October 29, 2025**

Tanzania's forthcoming general elections represent a significant moment in the nation's democratic trajectory. These polls will determine the presidency, 393 seats in the National Assembly, and local government positions across the mainland and the semi-autonomous islands of Zanzibar, for the next five years.

With over 30 million registered voters, the elections occur against a backdrop of some political re-opening under President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who assumed office in 2021 following the untimely death of President John Magufuli. However, concerns remain over restrictions on critics, opposition participation and institutional disputes, raising questions about the credibility of the broader democratic rebuilding process.

In particular, it looks likely that President Hassan, seeking re-election as the candidate of the ruling party, CCM, will face no meaningful opposition candidate. Chadema's leader, Tundu Lissu, will miss the election, as he is in prison on charges of treason, and his party has refused to legitimise the elections by putting forward candidates. In any case, the electoral commission has blocked them from participating. The Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT Wazalendo), the only other

#### 4 *General Elections*

party with significant support, has had its campaign interrupted by the electoral commission's decision to block their proposed Presidential candidate, Luhaga Mpina, from standing – a move on which the High Court has (at the time of writing) not yet reached a final decision.

Voter turnout, which has historically fluctuated between 50%-70%, may be low, due to apathy or bans / boycotts. Meanwhile, a historic surge in female candidates – over 40% of parliamentary aspirants – highlights evolving gender dynamics.

#### **The legacy of 2020**

The 2020 general elections inevitably form part of the context for this year's polls. These were marked by widespread allegations of fraud and violence that eroded trust in Tanzania's electoral institutions. Incumbent President John Magufuli of CCM secured a landslide victory with 84.4% of the presidential vote, while his party claimed 365 of 393 parliamentary seats. Official turnout was reported at 50.7%.

Opposition parties, led by Chadema, rejected the results, alleging ballot irregularities, intimidation, and the disqualification of many candidates on questionable technical grounds. Chadema's presidential candidate, Tundu Lissu, garnered just 13%, but rejected the outcome, fleeing to exile amid arrests of party officials.

The polls unfolded under Magufuli's tightened political environment, including restrictions on independent media and political rallies, which stifled opposition campaigns. International observers, such as the European Union, were absent after being denied visas, leaving only limited Commonwealth and African Union missions that faced restrictions.

Critics argue these elections exemplified "electoral authoritarianism," where formal democratic processes mask one-party rule. Hassan's ascension promised reforms, but the 2020 legacy – including distrust in election authorities – persists, fuelling opposition demands for constitutional reforms and true independence for the electoral commission.

#### **Authoritarian drift?**

Tanzania heads to the polls amid what some analysts have described as a new narrowing of political space under President Hassan. Once hailed for tentative reforms post-John Magufuli's death in 2021, this

democratic re-opening been increasingly called into question. Freedom House downgraded Tanzania from “Partly Free” to “Not Free” in its 2025 report, citing manipulated voter registrations and broader erosion of electoral integrity. Similarly, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), says the ruling party’s approach has transformed what could have been a competitive democratic exercise into one of unchallenged CCM dominance.

UN human rights experts in June 2025 expressed concern over a “pattern of enforced disappearance and torture” against political opponents, urging the government to halt such practices. Amnesty International reports that four government critics have been forcibly disappeared and one killed in 2024-2025, attributing these to efforts to curb opposition ahead of the elections.

More recently, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) suspended the license of Jamii Forums, a major social media news platform on September 6, and has directed police to “patrol the internet” for election-related content since August. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports broader clampdowns, including bans and/or measures to block access to online platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter / X.

In response to such criticisms, President Hassan on September 17, 2025, urged unity and highlighted the preparedness of security forces to maintain order during the elections: “Peace and stability in our country are more important than anything else. Elections are not a war but a democratic process. Our defence and security organs, both in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, are fully prepared to protect this peace. Citizens must remain calm and united.” Earlier, in March, she said that “we have sworn to protect the rights and dignity of every Tanzanian, and we will not hesitate to act against anyone who exploits these freedoms to incite discord.”

The Tanzania Police Force, in an official statement released on June 18, in response to reports of abductions and disappearances, denied state involvement and attributed many cases to unrelated factors: “In the cases reported at police stations and thoroughly investigated – where the missing individuals were later found either alive or deceased – evidence in some instances has revealed causes such as self-staged abductions, jealousy in romantic relationships, superstitious beliefs, property disputes, acts of revenge, travel to foreign countries to learn

extremist ideologies, and fleeing from justice after committing crimes.”

The statement further defended the police’s role: “The government, through the Police Force, has the responsibility to protect people’s lives and property and not otherwise. Furthermore, all reported incidents involving the disappearance of various individuals are still under investigation until the truth is established about what happened to our fellow Tanzanians.”

Beyond Tanzania, the SADC Electoral Commissions Forum (ECF-SADC), which deployed a pre-election assessment mission to Tanzania from August 12-16, reported “no major issues flagged” in preparations for the elections. They recommended enhancements like increased voter education, framing the process as stable rather than flawed. The AU has offered similarly measured endorsement through a June 2025 pre-election assessment that “praised logistical preparations” while urging civic education and rights safeguards, avoiding outright criticism and focusing on constructive engagement.

### **Chadema’s ban and boycott stance**

Chadema, Tanzania’s largest opposition party, will watch this year’s election from the sidelines, facing a controversial ban and/or their own boycott. In April 2025, the (so-named) Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) disqualified Chadema from presidential and parliamentary contests, after party officials refused to sign the 2025 Election Code of Ethics. Chadema had said it would not sign the code until the government undertook electoral reforms. This followed the arrest of Tundu Lissu, Chadema’s recently-retuned leader, on charges that critics have described as politically motivated, and raids on party offices. Chadema, which polled strongly in 2020 in urban areas, also now faces exclusion from all by-elections until 2030.

Rather than a full boycott, Chadema has framed its response as a “No Reforms, No Election” campaign. They call for a truly independent electoral commission, revival of the stalled constitution writing process abandoned in 2013, and legal changes to allow independent presidential candidates and judicial review of presidential election results.

Party officials insist this is not disengagement but a fight for fairness. Nevertheless, the ban / boycott / protest effectively undermines the opposition challenge at the polls, handing CCM a much clearer path.

## **Zanzibar**

Zanzibar's elections are likely to be more competitive. As a semi-autonomous region, Zanzibar elects its own President, 85-member House of Representatives, and local councils under the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC), as well as casting votes for Tanzania's president and MPs in Tanzania's National Assembly. CCM's Hussein Mwinyi seeks re-election as President of Zanzibar.

Debates over the relationship between Zanzibar and the Union simmer, with many islanders supporting calls for independence referendums, or at least for constitutional reforms to give Zanzibar increased autonomy.

The opposition landscape on the isles is also somewhat confused. The decline of CUF after 2015 paved the way for ACT Wazalendo as a rising force on the islands. This left-leaning party blends social justice with anti-corruption rhetoric. Nevertheless, lingering elements of CUF threaten to weaken ACT Wazalendo's vote share and their potential post-election coalition role.

## **ACT on the national level**

Nationwide, ACT Wazalendo faces some similar challenges to Chadema. Their presidential candidate for Tanzania, Luhaga Mpina, was initially banned by INEC from standing. The ban stems from an objection by Attorney General Hamza Said Johari, who argued that Mpina lacks the necessary qualifications based on a prior ruling by the Registrar of Political Parties, citing irregularities in ACT Wazalendo's internal nomination processes.

Mpina was MP for Kisesa constituency, representing CCM, and served for three years as Minister of Livestock and Fisheries under President Magufuli. In August 2025 he left CCM and joined ACT Wazalendo.

The High Court overturned this decision on appeal, only for INEC to reinstate the ban. ACT Wazalendo immediately challenged the second ban through multiple legal avenues, culminating in a constitutional petition filed on September 19. At the time of writing, with less than one month remaining before the election, the court ruling is pending, thought to be imminent.

## **Election Monitoring Initiatives**

The EU has deployed a 100-member Election Observation Mission



(EOM), following Tanzania's invitation. The African Union conducted a June pre-election assessment, praising logistics but urging civic education. SADC's Electoral Commissions Forum visited in August.

### **Other Significant Developments**

Beyond core issues, the 2025 elections spotlight women's empowerment, with over 200 female parliamentary candidates – a 50% jump – driven in part by quotas as well as by Hassan's trailblazing example.

## **Ben Taylor: MANIFESTOS**

### **What do the Manifestos say?**

As Tanzania gears up for the elections, the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and opposition Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT Wazalendo) have unveiled their manifestos outlining their goals for 2025–2030. CCM's document, launched on May 31, 2025, emphasises continuity and alignment with the ambitious Tanzania Development Vision 2050, targeting a \$1 trillion economy. ACT Wazalendo's manifesto, released August 11, 2025, adopts a bolder, reformist tone, critiquing "elite capture" and pledging radical shifts toward equity and resource nationalism. Both prioritise economic transformation, job creation, and social welfare but differ in scope and ideology: CCM's business-friendly growth-focused approach versus ACT's interventionist, people-centered reforms.

### **CCM Manifesto: Building on Stability for Inclusive Growth**

CCM's manifesto for 2025–2030 emphasizes continuation and acceleration of economic transformation, infrastructure development, social services, and stronger institutions. Some of the highlights include:

- **Economic growth & industrial transformation:** A target to modernize the economy by adding value to local resources rather than exporting raw materials. Industry sector growth target of 9% annually by 2030.
- **Agriculture, livestock & irrigation:** Aim to improve agricultural production significantly: subsidies on inputs, better seeds, more modern farming, increased irrigation, increase grazing lands (livestock) and fishing sector improvements.
- **Employment & revenue:** Target to generate 8.5 million jobs in both formal and informal sectors. Strengthening revenue collection, aiming



revenue-to-GDP ratio of 15.6%.

- Infrastructure, trade & local industrial zones: Greater investment in roads, ports, railways (including a new/revamped line connecting Tanga, Arusha and Musoma on Lake Victoria), and logistics to boost trade and connectivity. Establishing district-level industrial zones to support localised industrialisation.
- Social sectors & human development: Free education from primary through secondary; more vocational training.
- Housing: formalising housing, surveying, granting ownership, improving access to decent housing.
- Constitutional reform & governance: CCM pledges to revive the constitution review process. Increased attention to inclusivity, participation of civil society, youth, community leaders in consultations.
- Debt, macroeconomic stability: Ensuring national debt remains sustainable and that external and domestic borrowing is used for productive projects.

### **ACT Wazalendo**

ACT Wazalendo positions itself more strongly on redistribution, governance reforms, social justice, and asserting community rights over land and natural resources. Key features include:

- Land, natural resources & resource nationalism: The party describes land as “life” and calls for bold reforms in how land is managed, reversing “arbitrary privatisations,” returning lands improperly converted (ie. to protected areas), allocating idle land to youth/vulnerable groups. They also propose greater transparency in extractive industries; ensuring citizens benefit from mining, oil, gas, forests.
- Social services, equality, human development: Universal health insurance; free education up to university level; improved access to clean water and electricity; stronger social protection, especially for informal sector and rural communities.
- Infrastructure & connectivity: Major infrastructure plans include a Southern Standard Gauge Railway (linking Lindi, Mtwara, Songea/Ruvuma and mining projects in Njombe), rehabilitation of regional rail lines, strategic roads, and improving ports (Mtwara, Tanga, Bagamoyo, Kigoma). Rural electrification and last-mile access to water, transport and communications networks.

- Governance, justice & constitution: Police and judicial reforms, repealing repressive laws, restarting constitutional review within six months for power limits and an independent electoral body, and a three-tier Union structure for Mainland-Zanzibar equity.
- Inclusive economy & empowerment of ordinary citizens: Reducing elite dominance in national resources; putting citizens at centre of economic planning; formalisation of informal businesses and support for small traders; fair markets and prices for farmers, herders, fishermen; removal of unfair levies etc.
- Environment, climate, tourism: Balancing development with environmental protection; more community-based conservation, protecting coastal areas, mangroves, reefs; implementing green growth; reform in tourism to ensure more of the value stays in Tanzania.

### **What about Chadema?**

Given that Chadema is boycotting the election / has been deemed ineligible, they have not published a manifesto. However, for completeness, their stated priorities include:

- “No Reforms, No Election” is Chadema’s central campaign slogan, calling for “fundamental” reforms in the electoral system. This includes a new constitution or significant constitutional reforms; reforms of electoral bodies and processes, to ensure elections are free, fair, and credible; equal opportunity for all political parties in elections; and fairness in how the rules are applied.

### **In conclusion**

Many of the promises (from both manifestos) are ambitious in scale. Implementation will depend heavily on financing, institutional capacity, corruption control, legal frameworks, and external economic factors (e.g. global markets, climate change). Both align with Vision 2050’s \$1 trillion goal but diverge on means: CCM via private partnerships, ACT through state assertiveness.

ACT’s proposals around land restitution and resource sharing may face pushback from existing stakeholders (private investors, communities that benefited under the old allocations, foreign investors). For CCM, sustaining high budget commitments (on infrastructure, jobs, agriculture subsidies) without increasing unsustainable debt or wasting resources will be a challenge.

## Dr Hildebrand Shayo: ECONOMICS

### **Tanzania's standing in the context of evolving global geopolitics**

Recently, an article in an English-language newspaper circulated in Tanzania suggested that Tanzania has been sleepwalking into global irrelevance. The author stated, among other things, that the relocation of UN offices to Nairobi, Kenya, serves as a significant indicator of Tanzania's declining prominence, given the previous experience from Arusha was a testimony that Tanzania was ready to accommodate such offices.

For Tanzanians, an explanation provided by Susan Ngongi Namondo, the UN Resident Representative in Tanzania, along with the reasons for choosing Nairobi, implied that the author should have reached a different conclusion about Tanzania's position.

Between 2022 and 2024, Tanzania experienced a significant increase in foreign investment inflows, mainly due to improved policy stability, regulatory reforms, and strategic infrastructure development. Sectors such as mining, energy, agribusiness, and manufacturing, have attracted heightened attention from international investors, bolstered by governmental initiatives aimed at refining investment processes via entities such as the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC). This positive trajectory has fostered job creation, facilitated technology transfer, and enhanced export diversification – essential components in fortifying Tanzania's economic foundation.

Under the current leadership, these efforts have strengthened the nation's economic resilience within the region. These investments align well with the nation's primary goals outlined in Development Vision 2050 (DV2050), which aims to develop into an upper-middle-income and globally competitive economy by promoting sustainable industrialisation and inclusive growth.

Another area mentioned was human capital and how Tanzania has neglected education. Based on the assessment of the budget approved by the National Assembly from 2022 to 2024, Tanzania has made notable advancements in enhancing human capital by augmenting government investment in education, elevating productivity in both public and private sectors.

Prominent initiatives have encompassed the broadening of access to

technical and vocational education, the elevation of teacher training standards, and the incorporation of information and communication technology within educational institutions. The initiatives in place are now yielding tangible results, as a growing workforce gains proficiency in relevant, job-ready skills.

Further, Tanzania made notable advancements in logistics efficiency between 2022 and 2024 by implementing strategic investments in its transport infrastructure. Recent advancements have positioned Tanzania as a key logistics hub in the region, enhancing its trade competitiveness and strengthening economic ties with neighbouring nations.

The procurement of a new fleet for Air Tanzania has significantly improved domestic and regional air connectivity. Implementation of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) has improved cargo transportation from Dar es Salaam Port to inland and landlocked nations, such as Rwanda, Uganda, and the DRC. At the same time, advances in port efficiency, such as digitized clearance systems and increased handling capacity, have reduced turnaround times and boosted throughput.

Those with insights and knowledge backed by data from government institutions such as BOT and NBS, and reviews conducted by the World Bank and IMF, can confirm how Tanzania is performing strongly on the regional and global stage, especially as Kiswahili continues to be a preferred UN language and enhances regional and international cooperation.

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

### **Tanzania tourism overtakes gold as top foreign exchange earner**

Tanzania's tourism sector has officially surpassed gold as the country's leading foreign exchange earner, marking a historic milestone for the nation. Latest figures from the Bank of Tanzania and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism show the industry generated \$3.92 billion in the year ending May 2025, outpacing both gold and agriculture for the first time.

"This is a clear signal that tourism is no longer just a leisure sector, it is a strategic pillar for national development," said Minister of Natural

Resources and Tourism, Dr. Pindi Chana. "Our reforms, combined with Tanzania's unique natural and cultural assets, have positioned the country as a top global destination."

Tourism now contributes over 17% of Tanzania's GDP and nearly 30% of Zanzibar's economy, supporting more than 1.6 million jobs. Its resilience, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, has underscored its potential to reduce poverty and diversify income away from extractive industries like gold mining. Key reforms have helped unlock this growth. The Bank of Tanzania's revision of foreign exchange regulations now allows tour operators to pay for services on behalf of international visitors and purchase specialized vehicles in foreign currency. Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO) Chairperson, Mr. Mussa Makame, noted, "These exemptions remove significant operational bottlenecks and make Tanzanian tourism globally competitive."

Tanzania's natural assets remain the sector's greatest draw. Mount Kilimanjaro, the Serengeti, and Zanzibar's beaches continue to attract global attention. The country swept the 2024 World Travel Awards, winning Africa's Leading Destination and World's Leading Safari Destination. Private sector collaboration has been pivotal. TATO has championed sustainable tourism, promoted underexplored circuits, and implemented guidelines to protect the Mara River migration crossings. "Responsible tourism is essential," said Makame. "We must balance growth with conservation to preserve Tanzania's heritage for future generations."

However, challenges remain, including infrastructure gaps, climate change, and over-tourism in key circuits. Yet with tourism revenues now exceeding gold, the country is better positioned to sustain reforms, strengthen partnerships, and deliver long-term economic and social benefits.

### **Zanzibar records historic tourism high**

Zanzibar has reached a historic milestone, welcoming over 106,000 tourists in July 2025, the highest monthly figure ever recorded on the islands. This surge highlights Zanzibar's growing reputation as a premier travel destination in the Indian Ocean, drawing visitors from Europe, the United States, and neighbouring African countries.

Improved flight connectivity, innovative travel packages, and the



*Tourists in the Stone Town, Zanzibar*

island's unique blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and vibrant marine life have fuelled this boom. From the white-sand beaches of Nungwi and Kendwa to historic Stone Town and the fragrant spice farms, Zanzibar offers experiences that are both authentic and memorable.

The tourism boom is already stimulating the local economy. Hotels, resorts, restaurants, and tour operators report unprecedented demand, creating jobs and supporting small businesses. The Zanzibar Commission for Tourism notes that this surge aligns with government efforts to position the islands as a world-class destination while emphasizing sustainable practices. Authorities stress that growth must go hand in hand with environmental conservation, especially the protection of coastal ecosystems and historical sites.

The record-breaking numbers also reflect renewed confidence in Zanzibar's tourism infrastructure, with improved facilities enhancing the visitor experience. Industry experts anticipate that momentum could continue in the coming months, reinforcing Zanzibar's status as a top destination in East Africa.

For Zanzibaris, tourism is more than numbers, it represents livelihoods, community development, and resilience. Sustaining growth responsibly, investing in infrastructure, and conserving the islands' unique natural and cultural assets will be key to maintaining Zanzibar's success on the global tourism map.

### **Tanzania's 2025/26 budget: what it means for climate action**

Tanzania's 2025/26 national budget, presented on June 12, 2025, by Finance Minister Dr. Mwigulu Nchemba, reflects a mix of ambition and challenges in tackling climate change. With a ceiling of TSh 56.5 trillion, the budget outlines how the government plans to support economic growth while strengthening resilience against floods, droughts, and other climate-related disasters. "Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it is affecting agriculture, health, energy, and livelihoods," Dr. Nchemba emphasised. "Our budget must address these risks while supporting economic growth." Yet, experts warn that allocations for climate adaptation, especially for vulnerable rural communities, remain insufficient.

Tanzania's economy is highly climate-sensitive. Agriculture, livestock, fisheries, energy, transport, and health sectors all face rising risks from erratic rainfall and prolonged droughts. The natural resources, environment, and tourism sector received TSh 317.4 billion – well below the TSh 441.8 billion requested highlighting a continued reliance on external grants and loans.

The budget includes measures to promote cleaner energy. The government aims to expand Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for cooking, boost Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) in transport, and continue oil and gas development. Tax incentives on electric and gas-powered vehicles, VAT exemptions for cleaner fuels, and excise duties on coal and gas emissions are intended to encourage greener practices and reduce deforestation. Agriculture and water sectors received substantial allocations of TSh 1.93 trillion and TSh 898.1 billion respectively, focusing on irrigation, climate-resilient crops, and infrastructure projects such as the Simiyu Climate Resilience Project, supported by the Green Climate Fund and KfW.

However, gaps remain. Many initiatives focus more on mitigation and revenue generation than on strengthening resilience for those most exposed to climate shocks. Analysts stress the urgent need for domestic financing, through green bonds, private partnerships, and careful allocation of carbon revenues to complement international support.

In a world of shrinking aid and rising climate risks, Tanzania's budget is both a step forward and a reminder: effective climate action must balance mitigation with adaptation, ensuring communities on the frontlines are not left behind.



## Sheila Farrell: TANZANIA DEVELOPMENT TRUST

### A good year for TDT

Tanzania Development Trust, the development arm of the Britain Tanzania Society, has just completed another good year, although revenues at £243,000 were £50,000 below their 2023-24 peak due to a reduction in legacies and large “one-off” donations.

Just over half of our general income comes from individual donations, with BTS members providing around half of these. A further 10% comes from BTS members using TDT as a tax-efficient way of sending money to their own projects in Tanzania. Although we have diversified our sources of income in recent years, attracting more external grants and non-BTS donations, it is ultimately your generosity that determines the number of projects we are able to undertake each year. So please think about whether you might be able to donate a little bit more now, or remember us in your will.

TDT has completed some truly inspiring projects in 2024-25 in its core areas of clean water, girls' education, and small income-generating activities, benefitting an estimated 110,000 people. Most of the projects are small (under £6,000) but provide the seed capital needed to help people to help themselves.

In the water sector, we have on-going programmes for the construction of shallow boreholes and spring protection works. These are great value for money. Costing around £1,500 each, they provide clean water to small villages of around 1,500 people who previously relied on dirty ponds or streams at risk of disappearing during the dry season. The public health benefits have been immediately apparent, and many of the schemes also reduce the time spent fetching water. Around half of our income was spent on clean water projects last year, allowing us to bring clean water to over 60 villages.

In education, we provided 13 schools with hostels, computer technology or help in growing their own food, as well as a boarding school for teenage mothers in Tabora. TDT is also closely involved with a vocational training centre and school for deaf children near Dodoma.

Small income generating projects help people to set up sustainable businesses that add value to local agricultural outputs, make use of local



*Elidetha and friends who benefited from an Mboni ya Vijana project with TDT funding to provide a borehole in her village in Kigoma region.*

raw materials, or supply regular local demands for things like school uniforms. Pass-a-pig (or goat) schemes remained popular, and last year we became involved for the first time in a plastics recycling project offering commercial incentives for better waste management.

TDT is run entirely by volunteers, so 100% of the money we raise goes directly to projects in Tanzania. Our UK-based Project Officers are responsible for ensuring that all projects are properly vetted before any funding is approved and follow up on projects after they have been completed to check how effective they have been. However, our big success in recent years has been in building up a 17-strong team of Local Representatives who act as our eyes and ears on the ground. Local knowledge is the key to effective development assistance, and they have been invaluable in providing it. So a big Thank You to our Tanzanian volunteers.

*If you would like to read TDT's Annual Report in full, you can find it at <https://www.bit.ly/TDTAR25>*

Ben Taylor:

# TRANSPORT



## **Mwanza: John Pombe Magufuli Bridge**

On 19 June 2025, President Samia Suluhu Hassan inaugurated the 3.2 km John Pombe Magufuli Bridge, spanning an inlet of Lake Victoria in Mwanza. This cable-stayed bridge, East Africa's longest, connects Kigongo to Busisi, slashing travel time across the lake from 35-minute ferry rides to a five-minute drive.

Costing TSh 682 billion (approximately US\$280m), the Chinese-funded project includes a 35km approach road, enhancing connectivity for over one million residents in Mwanza and Geita regions. It will support enhanced trade with Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi by linking to key highways, potentially boosting agricultural and mineral exports. The bridge, with a 32m clearance for maritime traffic, supports 3,500 daily vehicles, easing congestion and cutting logistics costs by up to 20%.

President Samia hailed it as a “game-changer” for regional integration, projecting 5,000 direct and indirect jobs.

The bridge took approximately six years to construct. Construction began in 2019 following the signing of a contract in 2018 with a Chinese consortium led by the China Railway Major Bridge Engineering Group and China Railway No. 8 Engineering Group. It was originally envisaged to be completed in 2022, as outlined in early government announcements and contractor agreements, but delays due to logistical challenges, including land acquisition for the 35 km approach roads,



and technical complexities extended the timeline by approximately three years.

### **SGR developments – and further promises**

In July 2025, President Samia Suluhu Hassan launched electric freight services on the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma, a 460 km stretch. Kwala Dry Port, located inland about 80km west of Dar es Salaam has also been opened, serving landlocked countries including Rwanda, DRC, Uganda and Malawi and aiming to reduce cargo transit times from several days by road to under 12 hours by rail, with trains carrying up to 10,000 tonnes.

The SGR expansion will comprise 2,561km of electrified standard gauge rail by 2027, connecting Dar es Salaam to Lake Victoria and to Rwanda's border, also enhancing trade with the DRC and Uganda.

The 2025/26 budget increased railway funding by 29% to TSh 2.28 trillion, supporting electrification and rolling stock acquisition. The Mwanza section, with 14 trains and 249 wagons, is expected to support 1.2 million tonnes of cargo yearly, cutting transport costs by 40% for minerals and crops. Total investment to date exceeds US\$10 billion, primarily funded by Chinese loans and development partners like the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Building on the success – and popularity – of the new networks, CCM has included several new plans in their 2025 manifesto.

### **Completed SGR stages**

- Dar es Salaam to Morogoro (300 km): Operational since 2022; electric trains cut travel time to two hours.
- Morogoro to Dodoma (/Makutupora, just outside Dodoma, 200 km):

Completed and operational since March 2025; integrates with the full Dar-Dodoma route (total 541 km).

### **SGR Stages underway:**

- Makutupora to Tabora (368 km): 14% complete as of June 2025.
- Tabora to Isaka (165 km): 7% complete; early civil works ongoing.
- Isaka to Mwanza (341 km): 63% complete; freight trials started in June 2025, full operations expected by late 2026.
- Tabora to Kigoma (506 km): 15% complete; US\$2.2 billion contract with Chinese firms targets 2026 completion.
- Tanzania-Burundi Extension (Uvinza to Musongati, 282 km): Construction launched in August 2025 under a US\$2.15 billion contract with China Railway Engineering Group.

### **New pledges:**

- New northern corridor (Tanga to Musoma via Arusha/Moshi, 1,028 km): Announced January 2025 and included in CCM 2025-2030 manifesto; feasibility studies underway, lacks confirmed financing.
- Southern route (Mtwara to Mbamba Bay via Songea and Ludewa, ~500 km): Conceptual stage to serve mineral-rich areas like Liganga-Mchuchuma; no financing secured.
- Broader regional links (eg. to Rwanda/DRC) depend on Burundi completion; AfDB has pledged US\$3.05 billion overall but gaps remain for extensions.
- Urban / commuter rail networks for Dar es Salaam and Dodoma: included in CCM manifesto.

### **Ongoing Air Tanzania plans**

The CCM manifesto also includes further expansion plans for Air Tanzania. This includes the acquisition of 10 new wide-body aircraft (eg. Boeing 787 Dreamliners) by 2028, funded through public-private partnerships and loans from development banks like the African Development Bank. This builds on recent deliveries of three Boeing 787-8s in 2024.

CCM also pledged to establish a dedicated aviation fund (TSh 500 billion initial allocation) for ATC's restructuring, including debt relief and performance-based incentives. This also includes improving on-time performance from 65% to 90% via digital booking systems and staff training for 1,000 employees.

## Ben Taylor: **ENERGY & MINERALS**

### **Fifth oil and gas licensing round delayed**

Tanzania's Petroleum Upstream Regulatory Authority (PURA) first announced the fifth oil and gas licensing round in February 2025, targeting an opening on March 5 with 26 blocks (23 offshore in the Indian Ocean and three in Lake Tanganyika). This was then deferred to May to maximise investor visibility, aligning with events like the Africa Energies Summit in London on May 13. Pre-launch promotions emphasised the blocks' potential, backed by over 57 trillion cubic feet of known gas reserves and extensive seismic data (132,000 km<sup>2</sup>), positioning it as the first major bidding process in over a decade.

However, updates through mid-2025 consistently described it as "poised to launch" or "preparing to offer" opportunities, without crossing into active status. By June and July, industry analysts still framed it as an upcoming event tied to broader natural gas expansion goals.

At the time of writing, the official licensing round website ([tanzanialicensinground.com](http://tanzanialicensinground.com)) states that PURA "hopes to make a pre-announcement soon" on the fifth offshore round, with full guidelines, data packages, and deadlines still pending as of late September. No bid submissions have been solicited or received, and requirements for technical/financial proposals remain outlined but not activated.

In a meeting at Africa Oil Week in Accra (late September), PURA Director General Victor Bujuba invited Chevron to participate, explicitly noting "plans to launch a bidding round" for the blocks – indicating it's not yet live.

No official explanation for the hold-up has been detailed, but contextual factors include aligning with LNG negotiations and ensuring investor reassurance under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's administration. Global energy market volatility and the need for streamlined processes may also play a role. Analysts remain optimistic, viewing it as a "very important moment" for Tanzania's energy future, potentially unlocking upstream investments and bolstering exports.

### **LNG negotiations remain stalled**

The lengthy negotiations for the proposed \$42 billion onshore liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant in Lindi, Tanzania, remain in advanced but unresolved stages. The project, led by a consortium including



Equinor (35% stake), Shell (25%), ExxonMobil (20%), and partners like TotalEnergies and Pavilion Energy, aims to process up to 25 million tonnes of LNG annually from offshore gas fields such as Likomba, Lavani, and Mtwara. The core sticking points – local content requirements, tax incentives, and domestic participation – persist, delaying the Host Government Agreement (HGA) and final investment decision (FID).

Government officials, including President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Energy Minister Doto Biteko (also Deputy Prime Minister), continue to describe talks as “nearing completion,” with an FID targeted for late 2025, potentially enabling construction to start in 2026 and first exports by 2032. However, no binding agreements have been publicly confirmed, and the process appears intertwined with Tanzania’s October 28 general election, where project momentum is being leveraged for political support.

In January, investors had expressed confidence in wrapping up talks “early this year,” citing agreement on key HGA elements from prior framework deals (signed in 2022). This built on a 2023 preliminary HGA but addressed outstanding issues like profit-sharing.

Around April and May, Minister Biteko acknowledged delays due to local content disputes but pledged resolution of three core issues (taxes, participation, incentives) for a 2025 signing. By May, the government reported “significant progress,” aligning with a broader push for gas monetisation amid global LNG demand.

A tantalising near-breakthrough came in July, when officials announced the HGA could finalise “within two weeks” (i.e. by early August), following Attorney General consultations on revisions. Mr Biteko attributed this to President Samia’s direct involvement, positioning it as a pathway to FID by year-end. Industry analysts viewed this as a pivotal shift, potentially unlocking \$5-7 billion in initial investments.

However, no follow-up confirmation emerged. August passed without announcements, and Global Energy Monitor’s June assessment noted ongoing delays from financial agreement tweaks. This pattern echoes historical stalls under previous administrations, where investor concerns over resource nationalism halted progress.

Recent updates have clustered around President Samia’s southern campaign tour (September 25-28), reiterate “nearing take-off” without



new milestones. In Lindi rallies, she described negotiations as “sensitive and costly” after two years, vowing immediate implementation post-signing if re-elected, and highlighting a new LNG training college as a local benefit. Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa echoed this, framing the project as a CCM triumph after 12+ years of delays. The ruling party’s manifesto also “reignites” the initiative, promising economic transformation.

Critically, these statements are all aspirational, with nothing to indicate meaningful breakthroughs. Analysts suggest that the election is inflating rhetoric, with real progress likely deferred until after the elections.

Key hurdles include balancing investor returns (amid volatile LNG prices) with Tanzania’s local content mandates. If resolved, the plant could add an estimated 10% to GDP and create 8,000 jobs, per government estimates. Yet, without HGA closure soon, slippage to 2026 – or beyond – is probable.

### **Gold: refining and expansion**

Gold mining, Tanzania’s extractive cornerstone, reported robust growth. The sector earned USD\$700 million in the first half of 2025, fuelled by higher output and prices. In July, the government mandated large-scale miners to refine and trade at least 20% of output locally, aiming to build national reserves – the Bank of Tanzania acquired 4.8 tonnes by May.

Major projects progressed: Perseus Mining’s \$700 million Nyanzaga gold project, greenlit in April, advanced construction in May, marking Tanzania’s first major gold development in 17 years and promising 220,000 ounces annually. Lake Victoria Gold secured a free carried interest agreement with the government in September, easing fiscal hurdles for its operations. Infrastructure bolstered output; Hitachi Energy connected the Geita gold mine to the national grid in late September, enhancing efficiency at one of Africa’s largest operations.

### **Helium and critical minerals**

Helium extraction has emerged as a bright spot in Tanzania’s extractives sector. Helium One Global advanced its Southern Rukwa project, finalising license terms in June and securing equipment for well development. An independent report in late June validated reserves, with pilot plant commissioning targeted for December 2025. Neighbouring Noble Helium upgraded its North Rukwa resource estimate by 28.5% in

July, boosting prospective volumes and drawing investor interest amid global helium shortages.

Base metals and other minerals gained traction. Lifezone Metals closed a \$60 million bridge loan for the Kabanga nickel project in September, targeting first production in 2025 and positioning Tanzania as a key supplier for EV batteries. A July-August report highlighted Tanzania's "bold copper leap," with innovations to process low-grade ore into high-purity concentrates locally. East Africa Metals updated its Magambazi gold-tantalum project in August, partnering for development and license renewal. August's minerals value-addition report identified 14 opportunities across gold, graphite, copper, and fertilizers, worth billions. Uranium extraction preparations advanced in July, with 139 million tonnes of deposits promising a 22-year mine life. Rising prices for base metals in 2025 amplified these prospects.

## Ben Taylor: **HEALTH**

### **Tanzania pushes for medical tourism leadership**

In late September 2025, Tanzania launched a comprehensive strategy to position itself as Africa's leading medical tourism destination, building on recent infrastructure investments and policy reforms. This initiative aims to capitalise on the country's growing healthcare capabilities and natural attractions to attract high-value international patients. The plan emphasises upgrading facilities, fostering public-private partnerships, and enhancing specialist services, with an eye on generating substantial foreign exchange – medical visitations already yielded a reported TSh 166.5 billion (approximately US\$64 million) in the 2024/2025 financial year.

Central to the reforms is the Benjamin Mkapa Specialised Hospital in Dar es Salaam, which exemplifies the upgrades: state-of-the-art equipment, expanded oncology and cardiology units, and a cadre of internationally trained specialists. The government has allocated funds for similar enhancements at regional hospitals, including Zanzibar's Mnazi Mmoja facility, which is undergoing a major overhaul to include advanced diagnostics and wellness retreats blending medical care with tourism. These efforts align with broader goals to reduce outbound medical travel – Tanzanians currently spend over US\$200 million

annually abroad – while drawing patients from East Africa, the Middle East, and Europe for cost-effective procedures like orthopaedics and fertility treatments.

International collaborations are key: partnerships with Indian and Turkish firms will introduce telemedicine hubs and training programmes, targeting a 20% annual growth in medical tourists by 2030. Health Minister Ummu Mwalimu highlighted the potential during the launch, noting that combining world-class care with Tanzania's safari heritage could create 10,000 jobs and boost GDP by 1-2%.

Challenges remain, including regulatory harmonisation and quality accreditation, but this strategic pivot has much potential. It not only addresses domestic healthcare gaps but positions Tanzania as a regional healer, leveraging its relative stability and affordability in a global market projected to reach US\$200 billion by 2030.

### **Artificial Intelligence in healthcare delivery**

On 10 September 2025, Tanzania announced pioneering initiatives to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) into its healthcare system, spotlighted at the 26th Medexpo Africa trade exhibition in Dar es Salaam. Themed "Digital Solutions for Healthcare Transformation," the event reportedly gathered over 300 exhibitors to showcase AI's role in diagnostics, efficiency, and patient outcomes. This would mark a major leap for a sector where only an estimated 40% of facilities had digital records pre-2025, aiming to bridge urban-rural divides through tools like predictive analytics and remote monitoring.

Key components include deploying AI-powered imaging software in 50 public hospitals for faster tuberculosis and cancer detection, reducing diagnostic times by up to 70%. Partnerships with IBM and local startup AfyaTech will pilot chatbots for maternal health consultations in Swahili, targeting 5 million rural users by 2027. The US\$10 million seed funding, drawn from the national health budget and donor support, also funds training for 2,000 clinicians in AI ethics and data management.

Experts at Medexpo, including WHO representatives, praised the move as "revolutionary" for resource-limited settings, where AI could cut administrative burdens by 40% and improve outbreak responses, as seen in COVID-19 simulations. President Hassan, addressing the forum virtually, linked it to Vision 2050's digital economy goals,

envisioning AI-driven telemedicine to achieve 90% health coverage. Hurdles like data privacy and infrastructure (such as limited internet accessibility) persist, but pilot successes in Arusha (e.g. AI triage in emergency wards) signal promise. By embedding AI, Tanzania is not just modernising healthcare but fostering innovation hubs, potentially exporting solutions to neighbouring nations and positioning itself as Africa's AI health pioneer.

### **Mpox outbreak**

Tanzania is experiencing a notable outbreak of mpox (formerly monkeypox, or MPV), which began in March 2025. Tanzania confirmed its first two cases on March 10, 2025, in Dar es Salaam, both clade Ib (a more transmissible and severe variant driving the African epidemic). By June 22, 2025, the total reached 64 confirmed cases with no deaths. This rose to 111 cases by July 31, 2025, still with zero fatalities, indicating community transmission primarily among adults via close contact.

The outbreak aligns with the broader African mpox emergency, declared a continental concern by Africa Centres for Disease Control (CDC) in September 2025, though global cases have declined 52% since peaks in May-June elsewhere.

Response efforts include vaccination drives (prioritising high-risk groups), contact tracing, and public awareness campaigns by the Ministry of Health and WHO. As of September 2025, mpox remains a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security according to the Africa CDC, with Tanzania's cases contributing to over 40,000 reported across Africa this year.

Mpox is a viral zoonotic disease caused by the monkeypox virus that typically presents with symptoms like fever, rash, swollen lymph nodes, and muscle aches. It spreads mainly through close physical contact, contaminated materials, or respiratory droplets during prolonged face-to-face exposure.

Ben Taylor:

# EDUCATION

## **Basic Education Skills Initiative unveiled**

On 1 September 2025, President Samia Suluhu Hassan unveiled the Basic Education Skills Initiative during a campaign rally, aiming to ensure that every Tanzanian child can read, write, and perform basic calculations by the end of Standard Three. This plan forms part of a broader vision for early childhood development (ECD) and educational reform, prioritising foundational literacy and numeracy to address longstanding gaps in primary education. With Tanzania's literacy rate hovering at around 78% and significant disparities in rural areas, the initiative seeks to equip young learners with essential skills for lifelong learning and economic participation, aligning with the country's Vision 2050 goals.

Key objectives include transforming primary education through curriculum reforms that integrate practical, skills-based learning from the earliest stages. The plan emphasises interactive teaching methods, incorporating digital tools and play-based approaches to make lessons engaging and effective. Teacher training is a cornerstone, with commitments to upskill 7,000 educators in science, mathematics, and literacy pedagogy within the first 100 days of a potential re-election. This builds on the February 2025 launch of the updated Education and Training Policy, which extends compulsory education and enhances vocational elements.

Implementation strategies involve partnerships with organisations like UNICEF and KOICA for STEM integration and resource provision, targeting 1.2 million children with school meals and digital learning aids. Infrastructure upgrades, such as shifting to single-shift schooling nationwide by year's end, will reduce overcrowding and improve access. Expected outcomes include boosted enrolment rates, reduced dropout figures, and a more skilled workforce ready for Tanzania's digital economy.

Challenges, however, persist: funding constraints and teacher shortages in remote regions could hinder rollout. President Hassan has tied the initiative to her re-election manifesto, vowing to prioritise ECD classrooms and vocational centres, potentially creating thousands of jobs while fostering inclusive growth. If successful, this could mark a pivotal shift in Tanzania's educational landscape.

**ACT Wazalendo also make ambitious promises**

ACT Wazalendo's election manifesto for 2025–2030 positions education as a cornerstone of inclusive development and economic empowerment, emphasising universal access, quality, and relevance to job creation. The party pledges “truly free education up to university level – no hidden contributions,” aiming to eliminate informal fees that burden families and ensure equitable opportunities for all Tanzanians, regardless of location or income. This builds on their 2020 commitments to free pre-school, primary, secondary, and vocational training, but extends it comprehensively to higher education, with subsidies for tuition and a shift in loans to cover only subsistence costs like meals and accommodation.

A key focus is skills-based learning to address youth unemployment, with education designed to equip graduates for productive sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. The manifesto promises enhanced vocational and technical training, including establishing innovation hubs in colleges and launching new technical schools in underserved regions, covering tuition, materials, and field studies. It also calls for increased research funding – allocating 40% of university budgets to innovation – and the construction of five new national universities (three on the mainland in Mtwara, Kigoma, and Tanga; two in Zanzibar), each with at least 20,000-student capacity.

**Ben Taylor: DEVELOPMENT VISION 2050**

Tanzania's Development Vision 2050, commonly known by its Swahili name, Dira 2050, is a set of ambitious, long-term goals for Tanzania, centred around the aim of transforming the country into an industrialised, knowledge-driven upper-middle-income economy by mid-century. The targets are audacious: a national GDP of about US\$1 trillion (which would require annual growth of over 10% for 25 years) and a per-capita income near US\$7,000 by 2050, underpinned by structural change from low-productivity agriculture toward diversified manufacturing, services and high-value digital sectors.

To gather input from citizens into the drafting process, the government organised face-to-face meetings, public workshops, symposia, and stakeholder dialogues in regions around the country. These allowed

people, local leaders, civil society organisations, private sector and religious / cultural / community leaders to make submissions. A nationally-representative survey of citizens was also conducted.

Dira 2050 organises its aims around three interlinked pillars. The first is “A Strong, Inclusive and Competitive Economy,” focused on macroeconomic stability, fiscal sustainability, private-sector dynamism, value addition and export-led industrialisation. The second pillar, “Human Capabilities and Social Development,” prioritises health, education (especially STEM skills), social protection and inclusive access to services so that citizens are ready to work in higher-productivity sectors. The third pillar, “Environmental Integrity and Climate-Change Resilience,” commits Tanzania to safeguard biodiversity, manage wetlands and water resources, and build climate-resilient infrastructure. Together these pillars are driven by five strategic enablers: integrated logistics, energy, science & technology, research & development, and digital transformation.

The Vision emphasises public-private partnerships, deliberate sector prioritisation, and leveraging Tanzania’s geographic advantages to become a regional trade hub through improved ports, rail and digital trade systems. It also sets concrete targets, for example, raising national research and development investment toward at least 1% of GDP, expanding digital literacy (targeting a high percentage of citizens), and shifting the energy mix toward renewable sources while keeping energy reliability central to industrial expansion. The document stresses that coherent policy sequencing, predictable regulation and stronger institutions will be needed to translate ambition into sustained investment and jobs.

At the launch event in July, President Samia Suluhu Hassan congratulated the drafters of the Vision. “But now,” she added, “let us implement it in action, not just in words. ... It is clear we won’t reach these goals if we continue with business as usual. We must change our thinking, our outlook, and our actions.”

Analysts and civil-society experts have broadly welcomed the Vision’s scope but warn that it will only succeed if implementation gaps are closed and crucially if funding, governance and climate risks are taken seriously. A common concern is that the targets are technically feasible



only with sustained reform, clear accountability and large financing flows, both domestic and international, that cannot be assumed. The World Bank's climate analysis, for instance, warns that climate impacts could push millions into poverty unless adaptation and mitigation are prioritised.

Writing in *The Chanzo* online newspaper, Martin Hockey, Benjamin Foster, Brian Cooksey and Deus Valentine Rweyemamu noted that Tanzania has frequently missed earlier development targets. They expressed concern that the Vision's environmental commitments are under pressure due to excessive extractive ambitions (mining, large-scale agriculture, fossil fuels). They also emphasised that governance and accountability challenges, weak institutions, and insufficient civil society participation could undermine success.

Development specialist Rutashubanyuma Nestory notes that the Vision is "transformative in scope" but warns it "faces execution hurdles," pointing to vague accountability mechanisms and heavy reliance on political will for follow-through.

In all, Dira 2050 is a broad, ambitious and technically detailed roadmap that places industrialisation, human capital and environmental resilience on equal footing. However, its success will hinge less on drafting than on hard choices: mobilising finance, enacting institutional reforms that lock in transparency and accountability, prioritising climate resilience in sectoral plans, and sequencing investments so growth creates broad-based employment. If those implementation challenges are met, the Vision could reshape Tanzania's economy; if they are not, the plan risks becoming yet another well-crafted national statement whose reach exceeds its delivery.

## Matteo Rizzo: **UBER IN TANZANIA**

### **The politics of digital regulation in Tanzania: Uber, its drivers and the state**

Uber launched in 2016 in Dar es Salaam and quickly established itself as the main ride-hail app in the city, controlling an estimated 70 per cent of its ride-hail market. Uber also became a significant source of livelihood to its drivers, the number of which was estimated to be 1,300 in August

2018. This article focusses on the decision by Uber to halt its operations in Tanzania in April 2022, and its subsequent resumption in January 2023, to explore the complex interplay of political, economic, and social dynamics related to the regulation of the digital economy within Africa. This article highlights some of the challenges of integrating global tech giants into local economies, and how different players, such as Uber, its drivers and the Tanzanian state attempted to defend their interests, and their differential power to fulfil them.

At the root of Uber's withdrawal was a regulatory dispute with the Tanzanian government, specifically the Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA). In March 2022, LATRA issued a new fare-setting order. This regulation introduced a fixed fare per kilometre (TSh 900) and per minute (TSh 100), a minimum fare (TSh 3,000), and, most critically for Uber, capped the commission ride-hailing platforms could charge drivers at 15%. LATRA also removed the 3% booking fee that Uber charged its drivers for each ride. This was a drastic reduction from Uber's previous commission rate, which was reportedly around 25% to 33%.

A key political pressure for the new order by LATRA, and in particular of the lower commission for drivers, was the protest by Uber drivers earlier in 2022, when for two days drivers held a digital walk-off / log out, which was decisive in forcing LATRA to intervene. LATRA's actions can therefore be viewed as an assertion of state control over a burgeoning sector, which crucially came about due to pressure from ride-hail drivers. The imposition of fixed fares and commission caps reflects a common regulatory impulse in many countries to protect consumers from potential price gouging and ensure fair earnings for drivers.

In Tanzania, this also aligns with a broader political narrative of safeguarding national interests and ensuring that foreign companies operate within a framework that benefits local stakeholders. By limiting the commissions of international players like Uber and Bolt, LATRA's regulations could theoretically level the playing field for local ride-hailing companies, which tended to operate with lower commission rates (e.g. Ping and Little). This aligns with a desire to foster domestic economic growth and reduce reliance on foreign-dominated services.

On 14th April 2022, following unsuccessful negotiations between

LATRA and Uber, the techno giant suspended its operations, stating that “We will only return if the regulation is addressed”. Uber argued that these new rates and the commission cap created an “unfriendly business environment” that made it financially unsustainable to operate. However, Uber’s decision to suspend services was a strategic move, leveraging its market presence to pressure the government into reconsidering the regulations. For its drivers and car owners who relied on the platform for income, it meant immediate uncertainty and a loss of livelihood. This made it impossible for drivers to sustain their protest. Riders, who had grown accustomed to the convenience and often cheaper pricing of ride-hailing services (compared to non-digital taxis), faced reduced options, though competitors like Bolt and Ping continued to operate. The pressure on both Uber and especially the government to find an agreement rapidly built up.

The eventual resolution of this political stand-off, and the modalities of Uber’s return to operations in January 2023, underscore the political economy of negotiation and the power of each party. After months of dialogue, and a change in leadership, LATRA softened its stance: it allowed ride-hailing companies to charge up to 25% commission and a 3.5% booking fee additionally. This new total commission, at 28.5%, was almost a full U-turn, away from the 15% commission brought about by the March 2022 order, and towards the 33% level before then.

The resolution of this regulatory stand-off shows how the Tanzanian state attempted, due to significant pressure from drivers, to lower the commission rate charged by the app. However, this move was met by Uber’s strong opposition, which took the form of the halting its operations. This in turn weakened drivers’ capacity to sustain their protest, and also caused riders’ complaints about the loss of the service. Under pressure and without the power to respond differently, the new level of commission which was agreed, was an almost total abdication to the demands of Uber. As such, it was also a potent demonstration of the ongoing political struggle between global tech platforms and national governments seeking to assert regulatory control and protect local interests.

## Leah Mwainyekule: **SOCIAL MEDIA CLAMPDOWN**

### **Tanzania's social media clampdown and the elections: what's at risk?**

Social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and X have transformed political dialogue and activism in Tanzania. The democratisation of political expression has especially empowered young voters and activists to challenge government actions and champion causes such as human rights, the release of political prisoners, and electoral reforms.

This is significant in a country politically dominated by one ruling party since independence in 1961. The government has responded by frequently clamping down on social media through arrests, mass content removals and platform-specific shutdowns. This is in addition to direct controls over media outlets. Media and communication scholar Leah Mwainyekule examines Tanzania's social media landscape ahead of elections in October 2025.

### **What is the history of Tanzania's social media curbs?**

Tanzania's political system is dominated by the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, which has held power continuously since independence in 1961. The ruling party has kept in place a political structure headed by a powerful president in a tightly controlled political space. Opposition parties have faced suppression marked by restrictions on rallies, arrests, violence and exclusion from electoral processes. This worsened under former president John Magufuli, who clamped down on political dissent, persecuted opposition figures and imposed legal curbs against media and civic debate.

While President Samia Suluhu Hassan has recently introduced moderate reforms – restoring some rights, easing bans and facilitating dialogue – opposition leaders still confront severe charges or incarceration. The main opposition party – Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema) – still can't contest major elections.

Tanzania's social media curbs are embedded in this political environment. The government claims to be controlling digital content to maintain political and social stability. This strategy is often justified by concerns about national security, misinformation and public order.

Laws and regulations govern the digital space. The landmark legislation

is the Cybercrimes Act of 2015, which introduced provisions about online activities.

- It is illegal to share or receive unauthorised information, even if truthful or publicly available.
- Police have extensive powers to conduct searches and seizures.
- Secret surveillance and interception of communications can happen without judicial authorisation or proper due process.

The law has been condemned for provisions which limit political expression through blogs, online media and mobile platforms like WhatsApp. People have been arrested for criticising government officials or the president on WhatsApp and Facebook.

Further controls relate to obligations for internet service providers, social media platform owners, and expanded categories of prohibited content. They are contained in another law which was amended in 2025.

Critics highlight provisions that undermine online anonymity. Internet service providers and online content service providers have to be able to identify the source of online content. Internet café operators are required to register users through recognised IDs, assign static IP addresses, and install cameras to monitor users' activities.

The laws are vague about defining what's not allowed. It might be:

- content which "offends individuals or groups"
- sharing "evil content"
- promoting material "likely to mislead or deceive the public".

The lack of clear guidelines enables officials to target critics or unwanted content as they please.

Finally, critics have pointed to unrealistic deadlines for content removal. The 2018 regulations said platforms must remove prohibited content within 12 hours of notification. The 2020 update reduced this deadline to just two hours. This made it one of the most stringent requirements globally.

The two-hour removal window applies mainly to content flagged by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority. But it could also relate to complaints from affected users. Platforms must also suspend or terminate accounts of users who fail to remove prohibited content within this period. This short deadline makes it nearly impossible to

check whether content is legal before removal.

These regulations are widely perceived as politically motivated. They appear designed to suppress government critics, media and opposition voices. They stifle legitimate public discourse.

### **What are the government's most recent actions?**

The most recent example is the government's suspension of the country's most popular online forum, Jamii Forums, for 90 days in September 2025. The government cited the publication of content that "misleads the public", "defames" the president and undermines national unity.

The government has also resorted to blanket bans of platforms like X (formerly Twitter). The most recent followed the hacking of official police accounts in a cyber attack. Although some users access X through virtual private networks (VPNs), the ban remains officially enforced by internet service providers across the country.

The timing of the shutdown echoes similar action in 2020 in the run-up to the previous general election. Tools to bypass national network restrictions are illegal and punishable by law. Traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers face growing government censorship and surveillance pressure.

### **What is the effect on social and political debates?**

Tanzania is set for general elections on 29 October 2025. The restrictions on social media will doubtless be felt. The restrictions reduce the platforms available for open discussion of government policies, political ideas and election choices. This shrinking digital space undermines public participation and limits access to diverse viewpoints critical for democratic debate.

Social media also play another important role. Social media users are known to expose electoral fraud, misinformation and government misconduct. The scales are tilted against dissent, opposition narratives and minority voices. At the same time, misinformation and hate speech may grow. This can increase the risks of polarisation and identity-based tensions.

The expanding restrictions reflect a governance model favouring information control over transparency and accountability. This can normalise censorship, arbitrary detentions and media suppression. In

essence, Tanzania's social media curbs are likely to weaken governance. They undermine transparency, increase tension, and erode public trust, limiting democratic accountability.

*Leah Mwainyekule is a lecturer at the University of Westminster. This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article at <https://theconversation.com/tanzanias-social-media-clampdown-and-the-elections-whats-at-risk-265215>.*

Philip Richards:

## SPORT



### **Athletics: Marathon win for Alphonse Simbu**

Tanzanian sport recently made history at the World Athletics Championships held in Tokyo between 13-21 September 2025. Congratulations to Alphonse Simbu, who won the Men's marathon event in sensational style by dipping ahead of Petros, his German competitor, at the finish line by a mere three-hundredths of a second.

Simbu has been a prominent athlete at marathon level for some time, having won a bronze medal at the 2017 World Athletics Championships, followed up by a silver medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, but has now taken his career to new heights. He is quoted as saying, "Today means celebrations in Tanzania. We have written new history as a country. It was my dream. I am at peace. It is about discipline, training and never giving up. After 2017 I have been trying to win another medal

but failed at it. Last year Paris [Olympics] was a challenge and this year I told myself: I will try my best. I did different types of training under different weather conditions.”

Born in Singida, an area famous for Rift Valley lakes, flamingos and sunflower oil, Simbu will surely be awarded a heroic welcome when he returns to the country. This journal has often expressed frustration, but also hope, that another Tanzania athlete would emulate the success of Filbert Bayi in the 1970s. It has been a long time in coming, but we hope that the country builds on Simbu’s success and this is the start of a new golden era of Tanzanian athletics and sport in general.

### **Football**

Less positive news from the football pitch where Taifa Stars, the men’s national team, exited the 2026 World Cup qualifiers with a surprise 0-1 home defeat to Niger. Niger’s forward Daniel Sosah silenced the home crowd at the New Amaan Complex, Zanzibar, with a strike in the 58th minute. The team have now slipped to 107th in the FIFA world rankings.

### **And finally, for something different...the Goat Races**



September sees the annual running of the goats in Dar es Salaam! The Rotary Goat Races is a charity event conducted by the Rotary Club of Dar Es Salaam Oyster Bay. The charity’s focus includes literacy and education, water and sanitation and many others.

The beginning of goat racing in Tanzania started in 2001 following a similar event held in Uganda. In 2017, the original Charity Goat Races came to an end. The committee of the goat races decided to take a break despite the achievements and the decision left all the followers of goat racing in sorrow and wondering why it ended. However, Rotary Club of Dar es Salaam revived it in 2018 and also included competitions for the spectators such as best dressed couple. From then on, it has been a mainstay in the Dar calendar of sporting and social events. The 2025 event had 7 sponsored races in its schedule.



## Donovan McGrath: TANZANIA IN THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

### **Tanzania Commits to Guarantee Sea Access for Landlocked Neighbours**

*(Fana Media (FMC) online – Ethiopia)* Tanzania has reaffirmed its commitment to providing uninterrupted sea access to landlocked neighbouring countries through the Port of Dar es Salaam, underscoring its role in advancing regional connectivity and trade facilitation. Extract continues: In his recent speech at the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Awaza, Turkmenistan, Tanzania's Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Prof. Godius Kahyarara, said the government is removing operational bottlenecks to ensure efficient cargo handling for partner states. He noted that the Standard Gauge Railway network and one-stop border posts are being expanded to speed up the movement of goods to and from the port, benefiting countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. According to the Permanent Secretary, these measures are in line with Tanzania's obligations under regional and international frameworks to facilitate transit trade for landlocked states... (10 August 2025)

### **X restricted in Tanzania after police targeted by hackers**

*(BBC News online – UK)* Extract: Access to the social media platform X [formerly Twitter] has been restricted in Tanzania after some official accounts of government and private institutions were targeted by hackers... [The] official police account was compromised, with sexually explicit material and false information that the president had died being posted. The police dissociated itself from the information and said an investigation was under way to identify those responsible. Hours later data from the internet monitoring organisation Netblocks showed that X was "unreachable on major internet providers" across the country. Users in Dar es Salaam, the country's biggest city, could still not access the site ... unless they use virtual private networks (VPNs), which is illegal without a permit, although some people in other regions indicated they were able to log on. The authorities have not commented on whether they are blocking access to X. But information Minister Jerry Silaa has acknowledged the hacking and assured MPs in parliament that the affected government social media accounts had since been secured... (21 May 2025)

**Tanzania lifts ban on agriculture imports from South Africa, Malawi**  
(Reuters online – UK) *Extract:* Tanzania has lifted a ban on imports of agricultural produce from Malawi and South Africa ... days after imposing it in retaliation for similar measures imposed by the two southern African nations. Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority (TPHPA)'s director general, Joseph Ndunguru, said that Tanzania was lifting the ban effective immediately to allow for "a diplomatic ministerial discussion." The two countries had reached out separately seeking to resolve the trade dispute through dialogue, he said... The three countries all belong to a regional economic bloc, the Southern African Development Community (SADC). South Africa's Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola welcomed Tanzania's move to lift the ban, saying it underscored the strong relations between both nations... Malawi recently banned imports of Tanzanian agricultural commodities like maize flour, rice, ginger, and bananas, among other products, while South Africa has also stopped imports of bananas shipped by Tanzania. (26 April 2025)

**Unlikely country emerges as hidden Blue Zone as doctors say switch to Kilimanjaro diet NOW**

(Daily Mail online – UK) *Extract:* The Mediterranean diet has long been hailed as the healthiest way to eat. Emphasizing lean fish, leafy green vegetables and healthy fats like avocado and olive oil, the diet has roots dating back to ancient Greece and Rome, which are now dubbed Blue Zones. Blue Zones are places lauded as longevity hotspots with low rates of chronic disease and significant amounts of people living well into their 90s and beyond. Though the Mediterranean diet has earned the title of healthiest fare year after year, the cuisine a nation in Africa could soon take its place. Dutch researchers ... found people in Tanzania ... are far healthier than western nations due to a focus on unprocessed, traditional foods. The Tanzanian Kilimanjaro diet, named after the volcano Mount Kilimanjaro, focuses on foods like okra, plantains and beans, and drinks like mbege, made with fermented banana and the grain millet. The researchers found men who followed the Kilimanjaro diet had significantly lower levels of inflammation and stronger immune systems. Experts behind the study believe it's the diet's lack of processed food that keeps inflammation at bay, lowering the risk of chronic diseases and possibly extending

lifespan. 'Our study highlights the benefits of these traditional food products for inflammation and metabolic processes in the body,' said Dr. Quirijn de Mast, lead study author and infectious disease specialist at Radboud University Medical Center in the Netherlands. 'At the same time, we show how harmful an unhealthy Western diet can be.' The researchers recruited 77 healthy Tanzanian men with an average age of 25. Of those, 23 men who normally followed the Kilimanjaro diet were asked to switch to a typical western diet for two weeks, which included foods like processed sausages, white bread and fries. Meanwhile, 22 who typically ate western meals followed the Kilimanjaro plan for two weeks. This included eating corn, okra, plantains, kidney beans and avocados. Another 22 on the western diet also were asked to drink one serving of mbege every day of the week. Five men who maintained their normal diets were used as controls. The researchers found people who switched from the Kilimanjaro to the western diet had higher levels of inflammatory proteins in their blood. Their immune cells were also less effective in warding off pathogens... Those who switched to the Kilimanjaro eating plan, however, saw the opposite effect... However, while diet seems to have similar effects as the one that came out of the Mediterranean, Tanzania itself is not considered a Blue Zone. The average life expectancy is 67 – in the US, it is 77. Greece and Italy – two countries that adhere to the Mediterranean diet – have an average life expectancy of 82 and 84 years old, respectively... (25 April 2025)

### **Play dead! Footballers suddenly hit the deck as match is suspended for bizarre reason**

*(Daily Mail online – USA) Extract:* A football match was suspended due to an emergency in the middle of play that saw players forced to lie on the ground and take cover due to a swarm of bees. Players, referees, and a cameraman were forced to take evasive action in Babati, Tanzania during an encounter between City FC Abuja and JKU FC. The two teams were level at 1-1 in the 78th minute at Kwaraa Stadium when the match was stopped to ensure the safety of the players... It is not the first time such an incident has disrupted a major sporting event, with Carlos Alcaraz and Alexander Zverev forced to run for cover during their Indian Wells quarter-final in 2024 after a swarm of bees invaded the court... (19 May 2025)

### **Tanzanian lawmaker's church shut down after he accuses government of human rights abuses**

*(AP News online – USA) Extract:* Tanzanian authorities deregistered a church owned by a ruling party lawmaker after he accused the government of human rights violations ahead of October elections. Parliament member Josephat Gwajima's Glory of Christ church in the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam, was cordoned off by police ... after hundreds of congregants turned up to protest the closure announcement. Tanzania's registrar of societies wrote a letter deregistering Gwajima's church, saying his sermons contravened acceptable conduct of religious organizations. Gwajima ... called out the government for what he called detentions and enforced disappearances, warning his congregants to be wary. His message came days after a Kenyan activist and his Ugandan counterpart accused the Tanzanian police of torturing them after arresting them ahead of opposition leader Tundu Lissu's treason case court proceedings... (4 June 2025)

### **Perilous journey: A gay Tanzanian man's quest for freedom across the English Channel**

*(AP News online – USA) Isaac stared down at his sandals and wondered out loud how suitable they'd be for the ordeal ahead: A perilous crossing of the English Channel, where scores of desperate people before him have drowned trying to reach the U.K. Extract continues:* The 35-year-old from Tanzania never expected, or wanted, to be here, surviving hand-to-mouth in a makeshift woodland camp in northern France, with dozens of other migrants... "I wouldn't be sitting here if I had a choice," Isaac said. "I didn't know what to expect. I didn't even bring a jacket or sweater." All Isaac wants is to live freely as himself, a gay man. That aspiration is denied in Tanzania, where homosexuality is taboo and criminalized. A ferocious beating by a group of men that left his shoulder with permanent pain convinced him that his East African homeland, where he'd worked to put himself through school, would never accept him. So he left. Three years later, Isaac now finds himself sitting on dirt and pine needles, hungrily chewing a boiled-egg baguette sandwich provided by men that he paid for a place on a flimsy inflatable boat. When it will leave, whether French police will stop it from setting off from a nearby beach, whether Isaac and other men, women and children waiting with

him will reach the U.K. or die trying – all these are unknowns. (9 July 2025)

### **How tech-savvy Tanzanians are shaping elections**

*(Deutsche Weller News online – Germany)* Growing frustration, rising political awareness, and ever-present social media are influencing the run-up to Tanzania's October election. And young people are stepping into the spotlight – online and on stage. Extract continues: Tanzania's electoral process faces unprecedented scrutiny, particularly after the arrest of Tundu Lissu, the outspoken leader of the main opposition party CHADEMA (Party of Democracy and Development). His detention on treason charges has ignited a powerful, youth-led national debate centered around the party's provocative slogan: "No Reform, No Election." This heated atmosphere saw DW's Kiswahili-language program "Maoni Mtaani" hold an open debate at St. Augustine University in Mwanza on the shores of Lake Victoria... The theme for this debate – "Click. Like. Vote: Can social media influence your choice during elections?" – was especially topical considering the current political climate, even though the timing was coincidental. "There is a misconception that politics is a dirty game," said Edwin Odemba, one of the four panellists and host of the Star TV program "Medani za Siasa" ("The World of Politics"). He urged young Tanzanians to reject this notion and instead "participate in the political process through their vote, so that they can be involved in shaping reforms that prioritize their interests." Tanzania's October general election is shaping up to be a one-horse race. The ruling CCM party – in power since Tanzania gained independence over 60 years ago – is expected to face no serious challengers. The Tanzanian Electoral Commission disqualified Tundu Lissu's CHADEMA party from the 2025 presidential and parliamentary elections, citing the party's failure to sign a mandatory electoral code of conduct agreement by the required deadline. This episode of the "Maoni Mtaani" discussion also gauged the progress young people have made since previous elections – demonstrating greater discernment by voting based on issues rather than the persuasive tactics of politicians. "It's not the same as it was during the last elections," remarked a user of DW Kiswahili's Facebook channel, saying social media now serves both as a key source of information and a space where he can freely share his opinions. "The rise of social media platforms has shifted control of the narrative

away from politicians, opening the door for young people to shape and share their own stories online,” said panellist Charles Maganga from Jamii Africa, a Dar es Salaam-based digital platform that promotes transparency, digital rights, and civic engagement across Africa. In Tanzania, young people have been criticized for not participating fully in the electoral process ... (11 June 2025)

### **The Egyptians finding a ‘second home’ after migrating south to Tanzania**

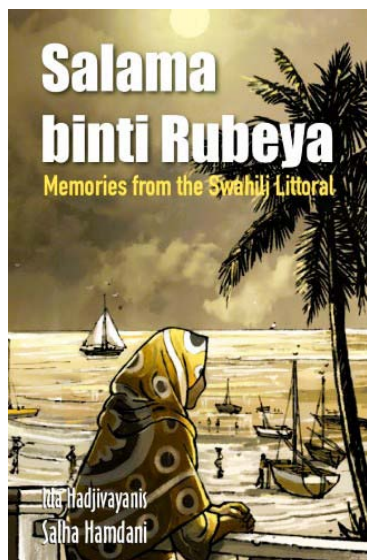
*(Aljazeera online – Qatar) As Europe fortifies its borders, growing numbers of North Africans are moving southwards into other African countries. Extract continues:* When Ahmed Ginah first left his village in Egypt’s northern delta for the Tanzanian capital in 2017, it was with little more than a dream. Four years later, he named his company after that dream. “When I first came to Tanzania at 28, no one imagined why I would head south,” Ginah, who is lightheartedly called the “Mayor of Egyptians in Dar-es-Salaam”, told Al Jazeera, saying that in the minds of many of his friends and family back home, countries in sub-Saharan Africa are tainted by stereotypes of famine, poverty and disease. But when Ginah arrived, what he found were opportunities – and a chance to build something new. “In 2021, I established my company, Dream [Trading],” he said, in recognition of his “dream” to be a success. He set it up with savings of \$3,000, tapping into a growing market importing and exporting aluminium household goods. As the years progressed, he expanded into the steel business. But beyond work, the 36-year-old is also somewhat of a benevolent godfather figure for other North African migrants making the journey southward... Typically, Egyptians who move to Tanzania already have a relative or friend living there. For those who don’t, Ginah helps them find a place to stay, sometimes offering them a job at Dream and helping cover their rent if they’re an employee. He also introduces them to the work system in Tanzania, and gives them a lay of the land about cities where they can potentially work. “However, the most important thing I provide,” said Ginah, “is a trusted, guaranteed translator.” In urban centres in Tanzania, people speak English. But many village residents only speak Swahili. This could lead to misunderstandings and expose newcomers to “fraud or scams”, Ginah said, so he lends a helping hand... (23 July 2025)

**At least 38 people killed in Tanzania bus collision, subsequent fire** (*Aljazeera online – Qatar*) Extract: Nearly 40 people have been killed after a bus and a minibus collided in Tanzania, sparking a fire that engulfed both vehicles. The crash occurred ... in Sabasaba in the Kilimanjaro region after one of the bus's tyres was punctured, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle. "A total of 38 people died in the crash, including two women," a statement by the presidency said... "Due to the extent of the burns, 36 bodies remain unidentified." The nationalities of the victims were not immediately known. Twenty-eight people were injured, six of whom were still in hospital for treatment, the presidency added. President Samia Suluhu Hassan expressed "heartfelt condolences" to the bereaved families and wished a "quick recovery" to those injured. She also called for stricter adherence to road safety as deadly vehicle crashes are frequent on Tanzania's roads... (29 June 2025)

Martin Walsh:

## REVIEWS

**SALAMA BINTI RUBEYA: MEMORIES FROM THE SWAHILI LITTORAL.** Ida Hadjivayanis and Salha Hamdani. Mbiu Press, Dar es Salaam, 2025. ISBN 9789912752238 (paperback). TSh 15,000. Also available to rent as an e-book: <https://lantern.co.tz/books/salama-binti-rubeya-memories-from-the-swahili-littoral-9789912752238>.



*Marriage. A word that once meant nothing but love to me, noble, selfless, pure. As I grew older, I began to see the cracks in that simplicity. Marriage, I've come to realise, is layered, complicated, and never just about romance.*

Reading *Salama Binti Rubeya: Memories from the Swahili Littoral* by Dr. Ida Hadjivayanis and Bi. Salha Hamdani deepened that understanding. In its pages, marriage becomes more than love. It is a symbol of freedom, independence, and a transition from girlhood into womanhood.

We follow Salama binti Rubeya's life in the

1910s, as remembered by her daughter, Salha Hamdani, and her granddaughter, Dr. Ida Hadjivayanis. These memories, some drawn directly from recorded interviews, others recalled through family stories, create an intimate portrait of a resilient woman whose life carried the weight of history.

“Salama’s narrative lets us into a world that once was and allows us to see a retelling of a certain event in history through the eyes of a woman.”

East African history has often been recorded by academics, with little space for the voices of ordinary citizens. This book shows that powerful narratives can also emerge from women like Salama, whom Dr. Ida refers to as “an unassuming woman” in the coastal story.

The book bridges formal history with lived memory, demonstrating how family stories intersect with those of scholars. It does not reject the work of historians but complements it by placing Salama’s memories alongside academic research. In this way, it demonstrates how personal experience can add depth to written history, providing readers with a fuller understanding of the past.

Salama’s childhood highlights how gender roles defined daily life. As a girl in Kilwa, she was free to move within the world of women, listening to her grandfather’s conversations with guests until age forced her behind a curtain. It was from that hidden corner that she first saw Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Hamdani, the man who would become her husband and the father of her children.

“She was free to roam the world of women, indoors, but it is through a curtain that she gets glimpses of the world of men. To her, it feels almost revolutionary because she did get to hear more than what most women around her ever did.”

Within this world, women were barred from school and excluded from social life unless they were wives or accompanied by men. Marriage and divorce became some of the few routes to freedom and self-determination. It was not unusual for women to marry multiple times without shame. Salama’s mother, Binti Mbwana, remarried after her husband’s death. As a widow, she lacked the liberty of a married woman or even a divorcee.

“Salama believes that she remarried because she missed her social life and the liberty that came with marriage rather than falling in love with the man.”

Stories like Salama Binti Rubeya’s show how marriage has evolved. Today, it carries a different meaning, raising questions about whether those changes have improved or worsened it. This makes the book a compelling read for anyone



interested in social issues.

Race, identity, class, and ethnicity also run through these pages. When Salama moved to Zanzibar, a cosmopolitan port shaped by the Indian Ocean trade, she encountered rigid hierarchies. Arabs from Oman controlled most of the land, and Salama observed how wealth and privilege were unequally distributed.

Another theme is the importance of female friendship and sisterhood. Such relationships offer women a safe space to heal, to share their struggles without fear of judgment. From Salama's mother to Salama herself, we see how friendship provided a sense of belonging and a vital outlet. For Salama, sisterhood took shape in her neighbourhood, built on common interests such as food, fashion, and art.

"In fact, women used to walk together and return home together as they discussed the film they had just watched. For a week or so following the screening, women would discuss the film, link it to reality, and draw new conclusions."

*Salama Binti Rubeya: Memories from the Swahili Littoral* sheds light on the struggle for independence, the Zanzibar Revolution, and its aftermath for Salama's family. Her son, Abdulrahman Guy, the primary breadwinner, bore the brunt of this turbulent period. His fate was another testament to Salama's resilience and endurance.

A reminder that history is not just a collection of dates and events, but the choices and struggles of people like Salama. It is for anyone who wants to understand the Swahili littoral through the lived experience of a woman who was curious, multicultural, and unapologetically herself. It takes us through Zanzibar and Kilwa before colonialism, into the revolution, and its aftermath. Above all, it reminds us why telling our stories matters.

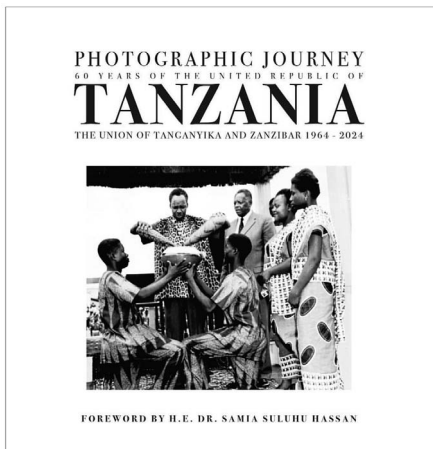
(This review was first published in *The Citizen* newspaper: <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/magazines/success/-salama-binti-rubeya-memories-from-the-swahili-littoral-by-ida-hadjivayanis-salha-hamdani-5193638>.)

Jane Shussa

*Jane Shussa is a Tanzanian writer, digital communications specialist, and weekly book reviewer for The Citizen newspaper. A storyteller committed to sharing and amplifying East African stories and perspectives, she invites readers to discover new books. Outside the pages, she enjoys hiking, savouring coffee, caring for her plants, and watching the sky.*

**MWALIMU JULIUS KAMBARAGE NYERERE: PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY.** Mama Maria Nyerere (introduction), Palamagamba Kabudi, Kumail Jafferji, Mahmoud Thabit Kombo, Ali Sultan (text), Adarsh Nayar (photographs), Javed Jafferji (photo editor). Print Plus Media Ltd, Zanzibar, Zanzibar, 2024. 350 pp. ISBN 9789912989917 (hardback) US\$40.00. Available from TPH Bookshops in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, and Zuri Rituals Boutique in Zanzibar.

**PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY: 60 YEARS OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, THE UNION OF TANGANYIKA AND ZANZIBAR 1964-2024.** Mahmoud Thabit Kombo Jecha and Kumail Jafferji (eds.). Print Plus Media Ltd, Zanzibar, 2024. 232 pp. ISBN 9789912416321 (hardback) US\$40.00. Available from TPH Bookshops in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, and Zuri Rituals Boutique in Zanzibar.



These two remarkable books constitute a photographic reflection on first the life of Julius Nyerere and second the history of the Union. Whilst the numerous photographs spread between the two books are an excellent historical archive the text in both cases constitutes an authoritative exposition of both Tanzania's modern history and also of many aspects of Nyerere's life from student days to his death in 1999. Both books include a foreword by President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan which are an eloquent statement of how much she

and many Tanzanians owe to his example and inspiration.

The book devoted to Nyerere embraces a host of photographs which capture the long arc of his life, whilst containing some surprising nuggets. These range from the fact that he wrote and published a book whilst in his second year at Makerere entitled *Uhuru wa Wanawake*, translated into English as *Women's Freedom: Women are Eagles Not Chickens*. The proceeds from the book were used to establish a scholarship fund for female students at Makerere (which is still active). Secondly, the hard-won victory in the war with Uganda in 1979 was assisted by the supply by Algeria of Russian missiles.

The photographic highlights of the book include:

- A handshake with Mao Zedong in 1965, a subsequent address to a rally in Beijing, a walk hand-in-hand with Zhou Enlai, and a tea party with Mao, Zhou Enlai and Liu Shaoqi;
- Formal and informal meetings with all the heads of the ‘Frontline States’, each of which owed a debt to Tanzania for her support before they achieved independence;
- Meetings surrounding the making of the Union in 1964, notably with both Abeid Karume (who became his Vice President) and Sheikh Thabit Kombo (who is described as a key link for Nyerere into Zanzibar’s Revolutionary Council);
- Joan Wicken, Nyerere’s personal secretary who shared his political ideals and drafted some of his key speeches;
- An address to the parliament in Cape Town, the rewarding consequence of more than 30 years of support for the ANC and its military wing based in Tanzania;
- A visit with Fidel Castro to a training farm at Ruvu in 1977.

The text of the book is greatly strengthened by a description of 40 “key relationships” which ranges from his close associates in government (including the first women cabinet ministers), including his long-standing VP Rashidi Kawawa and highly-regarded Foreign Minister Salim Ahmed Salim, and extends to twenty heads of state, with a clear discussion of their relationships with Nyerere.

Whilst there are now many biographies or semi-biographies of Nyerere, this amalgam of text and the photographic record are a unique tribute to the life of this extraordinary man and leading statesman.

It is balanced by a photographic history of the Union, which is an update of an earlier book that covered 50 years rather than 60, first published in 2014. The new edition points out that nearly 70% of today’s Tanzanians were born after the Union of 1964, making records of this kind particularly important. Its photos range from a celebration by ivory traders of a large set of elephant tusks to the railway train to Bububu opened in 1905. It neatly captures the fragility of the newly-elected Sultan’s government of December 1963 with a picture of Karume being presented to Sultan Jamshid. It does not flinch from a fairly unvarnished account of the subsequent revolution, although it downplays the role of that most elusive figure, John Okello. It captures the ‘western’ response

to the revolution by quoting the *New York Times* declaring after the revolution that “Zanzibar was on the verge becoming the new Cuba”.

The text is far from sycophantic and accurately describes both the enthusiasm surrounding the Arusha Declaration in 1967, and its quasi-reversal in the Zanzibar Declaration of 1991.

The combination of photographic history and the text make this both an excellent record of the Union and a valuable summary of many of the cornerstones of its story. It is unfortunate that for the time being the books are only available in Tanzania, a situation hopefully to be corrected before long.

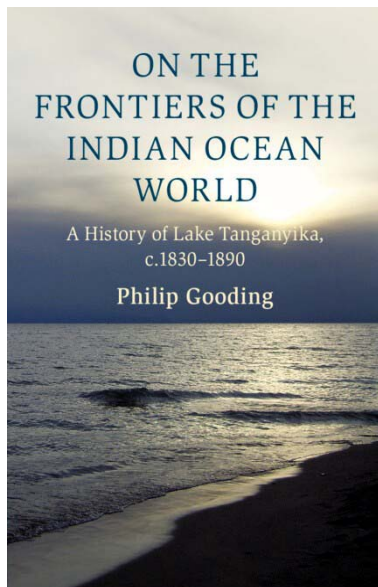
Laurence Cockcroft

*Laurence Cockcroft is a development economist who worked in Tanzania (at ‘Devplan’ and TRDB) from 1970-72 and subsequently helped to establish the Tanzania Gatsby Trust where he was a Trustee from 1985 to 2015. He is also a co-founder of Transparency International and has written and spoken widely on questions surrounding global corruption.*

Also noticed:

**ON THE FRONTIERS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD: A HISTORY OF LAKE TANGANYIKA, c. 1830-1890.** Philip Gooding. Cambridge

University Press, Cambridge, 2022. xiii + 251 pp. ISBN 9781009100748 (hardback) £78.00. ISBN 9781009114189 (paperback) £29.99; ISBN 9781009122023 (online) £29.99.



This welcome and well-received book by Philip Gooding at McGill University in Montreal is published by Cambridge University Press in the Cambridge Oceanic Histories series and described by them as follows:

“This is the first interdisciplinary history of Lake Tanganyika and of eastern Africa’s relationship with the wider Indian Ocean World during the nineteenth century. Philip Gooding deploys diverse source materials, including oral, climatological, anthropological, and archaeological sources,

to ground interpretations of the better-known, European-authored archive in local epistemologies and understandings of the past. Gooding shows that Lake Tanganyika's shape, location, and distinctive lacustrine environment contributed to phenomena traditionally associated with the history of the wider Indian Ocean World being negotiated, contested, and re-imagined in particularly robust ways. He adds novel contributions to African and Indian Ocean histories of urbanism, the environment, spirituality, kinship, commerce, consumption, material culture, bondage, slavery, Islam, and capitalism. African peoples and environments are positioned as central to the histories of global economies, religions, and cultures."

There's a lot for other researchers to build on here, as well as gaps to fill, for example in considering the impacts of the above on language use around the lake and beyond, and by using linguistic evidence itself as a historical source. While we can't expect all historians to be linguists, an understanding of the basics does help, as Gooding illustrates by his eccentric decision to anglicise Swahili and other vernacular terms by chopping off their noun class prefixes. Unfortunately, he does this inconsistently and sometimes wrongly. The result is a muddle of conventional usage and unfamiliar neologisms that make little sense without the glosses supplied. It's embarrassing that the examiners and other readers of the author's work as it evolved from doctoral dissertation (SOAS, 2017) into book did not pick this up, and it detracts from the author's otherwise fine scholarship.

Martin Walsh

*Martin Walsh is the Book Reviews Editor of Tanzanian Affairs.*

**KENYA'S SWAHILI COAST: FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO 1888.**

Judy Aldrick. Old Africa Books, Naivasha, Kenya, 2024. 256 pp. ISBN 9798320843643 (paperback) £13.99.

Although its primary focus is on Kenya, there's much in this book that's relevant to the history of the East African coast as a whole. It's been written for a general audience by Judy Aldrick, whose work will be familiar to many with an interest in the region's past (see <https://www.historyofeastafrika.com/>, where her regular newsletter on Kenyan coastal history can also be found). Here's her own summary of what's in store for readers of her latest book:

"The story of the Swahili Coast is full of drama and adventure, unexpected twists and turns and visitors who came and went and left their mark. As far

back as Roman Times the East African Coast was part of a well organised trade network. The Islamic era brought in wealth and settlement, then came the Portuguese and a period of disruption. Swahili civilisation hung in the balance, until Arabs from Oman moved in revitalising the Coast but also bringing in petty squabbles as ruling families and towns fought for power. Zanzibar emerged victorious and wealth started to flow back into the region, until Europeans began to interfere.

There are facts and dates but also tales of myth and magic, of unsolved mysteries, tragic heroes and cruel villains. In a brutal age, life was lived in the raw. Treachery and betrayal and reckless action caused dangerous moments of peril, while expediency and pragmatic diplomacy often saved the day. Throughout the narrative the resilience and survival of the Swahili people shine through.

The cut-off point is set at 1888 when modern history of Kenya begins, and there is no longer separation between Coast and hinterland.”

Martin Walsh

**SWAHILI FOR DUMMIES.** Seline Okeno and Asmaha Heddi. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey, 2024. xii + 352 pp. ISBN 9781394191567 (paperback) £18.99; ISBN 9781394191574 (e-book) starting at £14.99.

According to the publisher’s blurb, “*Swahili For Dummies* will teach you the basics of Swahili, so you can start conversing in Africa’s language of commerce. This book introduces you to the foundations of Swahili grammar and enables you to engage in basic conversations. With the simplified Dummies learning process, you’ll quickly get a grasp on the language, without complex terms and confusing explanations. You’ll also move through the book at a comfortable pace, so you’ll be familiar with what you’ve learned before moving on to more complex stuff. Focus on communication and interaction in everyday situations, so you can actually use the language you’re studying — right away.

- Understand the basics of Swahili
- Learn everyday words and phrases
- Gain the confidence to engage in conversations in Swahili
- Communicate while traveling and talk to Swahili-speaking family members

“*Swahili For Dummies* is for readers of all ages who want to learn the basics of Swahili in a no-stress, beginner-friendly way. Swahili teachers will also love sharing this practical approach with their students.”

Moreover, if you reach page 287, you’ll find your vocabulary being enriched by “Ten Words You Should Never Say in Swahili”, including words and phrases that are only rude when used to describe humans rather than animals. You’ll also learn some up-country misspellings. But providing this kind of list isn’t a bad idea, especially for those hapless tourists who are trained to utter insults by beachboys pretending to teach them everyday Swahili greetings. As well as such greenhorns, the book as a whole might also be of value to those needing to brush up on basics like the structure and use of noun class prefixes.

Martin Walsh

Ben Taylor:

## OBITUARIES

Former Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, **Job Ndugai**, has died at the age of 62. He passed away on August 6, 2025, while receiving treatment at a hospital in Dodoma.

Born on January 21, 1963, Job Ndugai served as Member of Parliament for Kongwa and held various senior positions in Parliament, including Deputy Speaker from 2010 to 2015. He was elected Speaker in 2015, a position he held until his resignation in January 2022.

His resignation came amid public consternation following controversial remarks he made about Tanzania’s borrowing and national debt, which drew criticism both within and outside his party. He had warned against mounting debt levels saying it risked the country being “auctioned”. In stepping down, Ndugai said he was acting in the best interest of the country and Parliament. Later, after a stern public rebuke from President Samia Suluhu Hassan, he apologised for his remarks and said he had been wrong.

As Speaker, Ndugai often faced criticism for appearing overly compliant with the government at the expense of parliamentary independence. Some analysts criticised him for presiding over what they considered the weakest parliament between 2015 and 2020, during President John

Magufuli's first administration. He dismissed the criticism, telling a local publication that those faulting him did not understand parliamentary democracy.

In a statement, President Hassan said she "received with sorrow" the news of Ndugai's death, and has sent condolences to his family and friends.

World-renowned primatologist and conservationist, **Dr Jane Goodall**, died on October 1, 2025 at the age of 91. Best known for her work studying wild chimpanzees, Jane Goodall's discoveries would not just revolutionise our understanding of animal behaviour but reshape the way we define ourselves as human beings.

Born in London in 1934, Goodall became fascinated by animals as a child after reading Dr Doolittle. She began researching free-living chimpanzees at Gombe in western Tanzania in 1960. It was to be the beginning of a sixty-year study of wild chimpanzees.

She learned to communicate with them – the embracing, playing and patting – even the kisses. She was the first person to record witnessing an animal using a tool; a male chimpanzee digging termites out of a mound with a stick. Until then, it was thought only humans had sufficient intelligence.

When she first went to Africa to study chimpanzees at the age of 26, Jane had no formal scientific training but managed to win the trust of the primates. She won the respect of the scientific establishment, too: in the 1960s she was just the eighth person admitted to Cambridge University as a PhD candidate without an undergraduate degree.

In 1977 she founded the Jane Goodall Institute, which works to protect the species and supports youth projects aimed at benefiting animals and the environment. It now has officers in more than 25 countries around the world. In 1991, the institute launched the Roots and Shoots project to involve young people in conservation – now a network of active young people across nearly 100 countries.

Earlier this year, Goodall received America's highest civilian honour – the Medal of Freedom – from outgoing President Joe Biden. Previously, in 2004 she received a damehood, the title of Dame Commander of the



Order of the British Empire (DBE), as well as Japan's Kyoto Prize in 1990, a Unesco Gold Medal Award in 2006 and France's Legion d'Honneur the same year. She was a Messenger of Peace for The United Nations.

She was honoured too by toy companies Barbie and Lego. In 2022, the Barbie Inspiring Women Series created a doll depicting Goodall wearing khaki and binoculars and paired with chimpanzee David Greybeard. Lego's toy comprises a mini figure showing her among trees, surrounded by chimps. It was also released in 2022, in commemoration of International Women's Day.

English naturalist and photographer Chris Packham described Goodall "revolutionary" and "remarkable". "She loved life, she was fascinated by life," he said, which was an "enormous motivating force" for her work.

Right up until her death, he said, she was still speaking in a "calm, calculated, deliberate way... to make sure that we can do everything we can to protect life on earth".

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, wrote in a tribute that he was "deeply saddened" by her passing. "She is leaving an extraordinary legacy for humanity and our planet".

### **Remembering Dr Jane Goodall: thrilling chimpanzee hoots, deep inspiration and a profound commitment to people and nature**

*Paul Harrison, Chair, Britain Tanzania Society, 1st October 2025*

The news of Dr. Jane Goodall's passing was a shock, even though it came after a life lived so fully, so actively, and with such dedication to the very end. Having only just seen her briefly last week, greeting her and having a moment to reflect with her, it feels like a final gift from a woman who was always giving. Jane was, quite simply, a unique human being – a legend in the conservation world, a force of nature and a beacon of hope who worked harder than most in her nineties to the very end.

I first had the privilege of meeting Jane in Uganda back in 1994. The setting was a hotel conference room, yet the air was charged with her singular presence. I vividly remember sitting in a packed room, utterly captivated as she spoke. Then, to everyone's delight, she broke into her

now famous, resonant chimpanzee calls. The sounds filled the room, a wild and authentic echo of the forest, instantly transporting us to Gombe. It was electrifying, and a moment when her deep connection to the chimps was made utterly tangible. I met her afterwards. From there I went onto my first conservation role, in the southwest of Uganda, utterly inspired.

Our paths crossed again in 1998 in Dar es Salaam when I was living there. I had the great fortune of spending time with her at her place, a quiet evening that allowed for a more intimate conversation. I remember us sharing a wee dram – a perfect setting to listen to her wisdom and her quiet determination, as well as get a sense of her humour. I also took on board some of her profound serenity, was steered by it.

Jane Goodall's life was one of utter determination. She never rested, tirelessly travelling over 300 days a year, carrying the message that every single person can make a difference. Sometime later, at Gatwick airport, I was able to help her with her luggage upon her return to the UK. It was a brief, unremarkable moment, yet it perfectly sums up Jane: always on the move, always travelling the globe for the cause, and always humble and gracious.

Jane managed to bring nations and people together around the conservation and community development cause, particularly playing her part in forging strong bonds between the UK and Tanzania, the country that became the stage for her life's work. Her influence moved far beyond science and into education and advocacy: she inspired global policy and catalysed a generation of young conservationists through her Roots & Shoots programme.

Reflecting on her final days, the way she went – full of faculties, active, working and travelling to the end – is the perfect narrative for her life. She never stopped fighting for chimpanzees and the environment they call home as well as for the people who live amongst nature and the wild. Jane has left this world having given whole life for people, nature and our closest relatives.

The world is a quieter, sadder place without her physical presence, but the hoots of the chimps, and the inspiration she gave to me and so many others, including my daughter, will live on.



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