

Tanzania 2024 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

The human rights situation in Tanzania declined during the year. The government abused a wide range of human rights.

Significant human rights issues included: arbitrary or unlawful killings; disappearances; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or detention; and serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists.

In some cases, the government took credible steps to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses, but impunity in police and other security forces and civilian branches of government was common.

Section 1. Life

a. Extrajudicial Killings

There were numerous reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year, most often at the hands of security forces, police, or prison guards.

On September 6, Ali Mohamed Kibao, a senior member of the opposition

Chama cha Demokasia na Maendaleo (CHADEMA) political party, was abducted by armed men in unmarked vehicles. His body was found the next day showing signs of torture, including severe beating and acid burns across his face. President Samia Suluhu Hassan and other ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi officials expressed condolences and called for an investigation into Kibao's killing, but according to a Human Rights Watch report released in October, no arrests were made.

b. Coercion in Population Control

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

Section 2. Liberty

a. Freedom of the Press

The constitution provided for freedom of speech but did not explicitly provide for freedom of expression for members of the press and other media. There were criminal penalties for libel and defamation, and authorities used these laws to stifle freedom of expression. The rights of free expression were further limited through several formal (legislative, regulatory) and informal (executive, government, and police statements) actions. These included laws that gave the government the authority to shut down media outlets.

Public criticism of the government resulted in punitive action in some cases. Authorities used the Cybercrimes Act to bring criminal charges against individuals who criticized the government on a variety of electronic media. At least 12 persons were arrested under the Cybercrimes Act during the year, including one who was sentenced to three years in prison.

The law prohibited a person from taking any action or making any statement with the intent of insulting the religious beliefs of another person. Anyone committing such an offense could be punished with a year's imprisonment. Blasphemy laws were in effect in areas governed by Sharia laws.

In October, one of Tanzania's major national daily newspapers, the *Citizen*, shared a video on its social media platforms depicting President Samia unfavorably. After 12 hours, the *Citizen* removed the video, and the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority suspended the *Citizen's* online content licenses for 30 days.

Physical Attacks, Imprisonment, and Pressure

Authorities arrested, harassed, and intimidated journalists during the year. In February, journalist Kazimbaya Makwega was arrested for allegedly publishing false information on his blog regarding the chancellor of the University of Dodoma, Stergomena Tax, who also held senior government positions. At year's end, Makwega's case was pending.

Censorship by Governments, Military, Intelligence, or Police

Forces, Criminal Groups, or Armed Extremist or Rebel Groups

Media reporting related to security matters was reportedly censored. Authorities required a permit for reporting on police or prison activities both on the mainland and in Zanzibar, and journalists needed special permission to cover meetings of the National Assembly or attend meetings in the Zanzibar House of Representatives. Anyone publishing information accusing a Zanzibari representative of involvement in illegal activities was liable to a monetary fine, three years' imprisonment, or both. The government could fine and suspend newspapers without warning. Journalists and media outlets frequently self-censored to avoid government retribution.

Online bloggers were required to pay to register as journalists, although this was mainly enforced against those who wrote on politically sensitive topics. The government of Zanzibar controlled content on the radio and television stations it owned but allowed discussions on media policy reform to take place. There were government restrictions on broadcasting in ethnic community languages, and broadcasts in Kiswahili or English were officially preferred.

b. Worker Rights

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The mainland and Zanzibar governments had separate labor laws. The

mainland's law provided for the right of workers to form and join independent trade unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes, except for workers in the categories of "national service" and prison guards. The law prohibited some forms of anti-union discrimination but did not require employers to reinstate workers fired for trade union activity nor prevent retribution against workers taking part in legal strikes. The law required trade unions in the private sector to consist of more than 20 members and register with the government, while public-sector unions needed a minimum of 30 members. Five organizations were required to form a federation. Trade union affiliation with nonunion organizations could be annulled by the Labour Court if it was obtained without government approval or if the union was considered an organization whose remit was broader than employer-worker relations. A trade union or employers association needed to file for registration with the registrar of trade unions in the Ministry of Labour within six months of establishment. The law, however, did not provide for specific time limits within which the government needed to register an organization, and the registrar had the power to refuse registration on arbitrary or ambiguous grounds. The government prescribed the terms of office of trade union leaders. Failure to comply with government requirements was subject to fines, imprisonment, or both.

The law required unions to submit financial records and a membership list to the registrar annually and to obtain government approval for association

with international trade unions. The registrar could apply to the Labour Court to deregister or suspend unions if there was overlap within an enterprise or if it was determined the union violated the law or endangered public security.

Collective bargaining agreements had to be registered with the Labour Commission. Public-service employees, except for limited exceptions, such as workers involved in “national service” and prison guards, could also engage in collective bargaining.

Employers had the right to initiate a lockout, provided they complied with certain legal requirements and procedures. For a strike to be declared legal, the law required three separate notifications of intent, a waiting period of at least 92 days, and a union vote in the presence of a Ministry of Labour official that garnered approval by at least 75 percent of the members voting. All parties to a dispute could be bound by an agreement to arbitrate, and neither party could then engage in a strike or a lockout until that process had been completed. Disputes regarding adjustments to or the terms of signed contracts needed to be addressed through arbitration and were not subject to strikes.

An employer could not legally terminate an employee for participating in a lawful strike or terminate an employee who acceded to the demands of an employer during a lockout.

The government sometimes enforced laws protecting freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike for workers. Penalties were regularly applied against violators, and commensurate with penalties for similar violations. Disputes concerning antiunion discrimination needed to be referred to the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration, a governmental department affiliated with the Ministry of Labour. There was no public information available regarding cases of antiunion discrimination. In January, some workers involved in railway construction in Tabora, Singida, Dodoma, and Dar es Salaam went on strike, demanding December 2023 wages from Yapi Merkezi. In May, some railway workers reported they had been sent home or suspended.

In Zanzibar the law required any union with 50 or more members to be registered. The law set literacy standards for trade union officers. The law provided the registrar considerable powers to restrict union registration by setting criteria for determining whether an organization's constitution protected its members' interests. The law applied to both public- and private-sector workers and banned Zanzibari workers from joining labor unions on the mainland. The law prohibited a union's use of its funds, directly or indirectly, to pay any fines or penalties incurred by trade union officials in the discharge of their official duties. In Zanzibar both government and private-sector workers had the right to strike, but the right to strike was strictly regulated, requiring a long prior notice and compulsory mediation. In addition, workers in essential sectors could not strike, and

picketing was prohibited. The law did not protect those taking part in legal strikes from retribution.

The law in Zanzibar provided for collective bargaining in the private sector. Public-sector employees had the right to bargain collectively through the Trade Union of Government and Health Employees; however, high-level public officials (for example, the head of an executive agency) were barred from joining a trade union. Zanzibar's Dispute Handling Unit addressed labor disputes. In Zanzibar judges and all judicial officers, members of special departments, and employees of the House of Representatives were excluded from labor law protection. In Zanzibar the courts were the only venue in which labor disputes could be heard. Enforcement of labor law in Zanzibar was inadequate, especially on the island of Pemba. In Zanzibar managerial employees did not have the right to bargain collectively on salaries and other conditions of employment.

The government did not effectively enforce the law protecting the right to collective bargaining on the mainland or in Zanzibar. On both the mainland and in Zanzibar, private-sector employers adopted antiunion policies or tactics, although discriminatory activities by an employer against union members were illegal.

Forced or Compulsory Labor

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at

<https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acceptable Work Conditions

Wage and Hour Laws

The law provided for a minimum wage, and 2023 regulations implementing this law applied it to 13 sectors across government and the private sector on the mainland. The minimum wage was above the government poverty line and was updated early in the year for the private sector, but in many industries it was below World Bank standards for what constituted extreme poverty. The government did not increase the minimum wage, citing global economic uncertainties, to which they attributed rising prices of petroleum products, fertilizer, steel, and food. The law allowed employers to apply to the Ministry of Labour for an exemption from paying the minimum wage. The labor laws covered all workers, including foreign and migrant workers and those in the informal sector. The minimum wage on Zanzibar was above the poverty line.

The standard workweek was 45 hours, with a maximum of nine hours per day or six days per week. Any work in excess of these limits was compensated with overtime pay at one-and-a-half times the employee's regular wage. Under most circumstances it was illegal to schedule pregnant or breastfeeding women for work between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The law prohibited excessive or compulsory overtime and restricted

overtime to 50 hours in a four-week period or in accordance with previously negotiated work contracts. The law required equal pay for equal work.

According to a survey by the nongovernmental organization (NGO) Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) taken during the year, workers reported exploitative behavior, including withholding or delaying wages and allowances, excessive overtime, and physical and sexual violence. Some workers in all surveyed regions indicated they were constantly promised increased wages, but the promises were never fulfilled. Violations occurred most frequently in the hospitality, transportation (bus and truck drivers), construction, and private-security sectors, according to the LHRC survey. All employees in the survey indicated they worked overtime at some point, but only 38 percent reported receiving overtime pay.

Occupational Safety and Health

Several laws regulated occupational safety and health (OSH) standards in the workplace. According to the Trade Union Congress of Tanzania, OSH standards were appropriate for the main industries and enforcement of these standards improved, but problems remained in the private sector. OSH standards, however, were not effectively enforced in the informal economy. The Occupational Safety and Health Authority did not employ sufficient inspectors. Most inspections were routine and planned, although inspectors had authority under the law to conduct unannounced inspections. OSH inspectors rarely identified unsafe conditions and seldom

responded to workers' OSH complaints. In dangerous industries such as construction, employees often worked without protective equipment such as helmets, gloves, and harnesses.

According to the 2008 Accident Notification Survey, the latest available data, the sectors with the highest rates of fatal accidents were construction and building, transport, and mining and quarrying. Domestic workers suffered injuries after being abused by their employers; physical abuse of domestic workers occurred frequently. By law workers could remove themselves from situations that endangered health or safety without jeopardy to their employment, but authorities did not effectively enforce this protection.

Workers could sue an employer if their working conditions did not comply with the Ministry of Labour's health and environmental standards. Disputes were generally resolved through the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration. There were no exceptions for foreign or migrant workers.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement

The government did not effectively enforce minimum wage, overtime, and OSH laws, both in Zanzibar and on the mainland. Minimum wage compliance was regulated through the Labour Administration and Inspection Services Department, which worked under the Ministry of Labour and Employment. On the mainland, labor officers working in the Ministry of Labour monitored employment contracts, wages, and working time. The

Division for Labour, Youth, Employment, and Persons with Disability in the Office of the Prime Minister reported there were 87 labor inspectors on the mainland. The Zanzibar labor commissioner reported 11 labor inspectors. The number of inspectors was insufficient to enforce compliance. In Zanzibar the Labour Commission had direct responsibility over labor inspection matters. On both the mainland and Zanzibar, labor officers could issue a compliance order to require employers to comply with labor laws under penalty of fines, imprisonment of up to three days, or both. On the mainland, labor officers working in the Ministry of Labour monitored employment contracts, wages, and working time. Most inspections were routine and planned, although inspectors had authority under the law to conduct unannounced inspections. In the case of a violation, inspectors could issue improvement notices with a deadline, issue a stop work order, or prohibit the use of dangerous equipment. There was no sanction or fine, however, that labor inspectors could directly apply on the mainland or in Zanzibar. Penalties for violations were sometimes applied against violators and not commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud or negligence.

The government did not adequately enforce labor standards, particularly in the informal sector, where most workers were employed, or for part-time workers. The International Labor Organization reported 76 percent of nonagricultural workers in the country were in the informal sector.

Approximately 5 percent of the working population (mostly women and

girls) was employed in informal domestic work. Domestic workers were covered by some laws setting minimum wages and some terms of employment, but Ministry of Health researchers indicated domestic workers were unaware of their rights and remained vulnerable to excessive working hours, extremely low pay or no pay, and exploitative conditions.

c. Disappearance and Abduction

Disappearance

There were many credible reports of enforced disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities, particularly against opposition leaders, critics of the government, journalists, and activists. The Tanganyika Law Society, a local NGO, published a report documenting 23 disappearances from January 1 to August 11. Other observers alleged between 60 and 90 persons, including CHADEMA members and civil society activists, disappeared in July and August alone. Authorities stated they were investigating this and other such incidents, claiming that many disappearances might have been perpetrated by nongovernment actors.

On June 23, prominent social media personality and outspoken government critic Edgar “Sativa” Mwakabela disappeared after giving an antigovernment speech. Social media influencers began an online campaign highlighting his disappearance, accusing police and government officials of involvement. Sativa was found in Katavi National Park on July 27, alive and with a gunshot

wound to the head. Mwakabela alleged he was abducted and tortured by police, although police maintained they were not involved. His representatives presented a demand for redress to authorities on September 12.

Prolonged Detention without Charges

The constitution prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention, although regional and district commissioners had the authority to detain a person for up to 48 hours without charge. This authority was reportedly used to detain persons criticizing the government.

The law allowed persons arrested or detained, regardless of whether on criminal or other grounds, the right to challenge in court the legal basis or arbitrary nature of their detention and obtain prompt release and compensation if found to have been unlawfully detained. The law, however, required detainees to file a civil case to make such a challenge, and detainees rarely made such filings.

The law required that an arrest for most crimes, other than crimes committed in the presence of an officer, be made with an arrest warrant based on sufficient evidence; however, authorities did not always comply with the law. Police often detained persons without judicial authorization. The law also required a person arrested for a crime, other than a national security detainee, be charged before a magistrate within 24 hours of arrest,

excluding weekends and holidays, but authorities failed to comply consistently with this requirement. There were reports of police detaining individuals without charge for short periods on the orders of local authorities.

The law did not allow bail for suspects in cases involving murder, treason, terrorism, drugs, armed robbery, human trafficking, money laundering, other economic crimes, and other offenses where the accused might pose a public safety risk. In some cases, courts imposed strict conditions on freedom of movement and association when they granted bail. In primary and district courts, persons sometimes reportedly bribed officials to grant bail.

On August 11 and 12, police arrested more than 520 persons, mostly opposition party CHADEMA leaders and youth wing members as well as journalists and lawyers, as they traveled to a planned rally in Mbeya. Although all were released within 48 hours, many were reportedly beaten while in custody. On September 23, 14 individuals were arrested, including CHADEMA leaders and journalists. According to media, the journalists were later released, and no reason was given for their detention, although police claimed CHADEMA leaders were detained for defying a ban on protests.

d. Violations in Religious Freedom

See the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom*

Report at <https://www.state.gov/international-religious-freedom-reports/>.

e. Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Section 3. Security of the Person

a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The constitution prohibited such practices; however, the law did not reflect this constitutional restriction nor define torture. There were reports police officers, prison guards, and soldiers abused, threatened, or otherwise mistreated civilians, suspected criminals, and prisoners. These abuses often involved beatings. In July, investigations by the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance, a governmental entity, found certain police stations showed a pattern of subjecting detained individuals to whipping and other forms of torture during interrogations.

On December 1, officials of ACT-Wazalendo, the main opposition party in Zanzibar, alleged authorities abducted their youth wing leader Abdul Nondo at a bus station in Dar es Salaam. Later that day, onlookers reportedly discovered Nondo at a Dar es Salam public beach with signs of injury from

beatings.

There were reports government officials engaged in sexual violence. In May, a girl age 17 was subjected to gang rape by six police officers, who filmed and disseminated video of the assault. Dodoma police arrested four perpetrators in August and charged them with offenses that carry the possibility of life in prison.

Impunity in police and other security forces and civilian branches of government was common.

The law prohibited female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) from being performed on girls younger than 18, but it did not provide for protection to women 18 or older. Enforcement of this law was ineffective. Anti-FGM/C NGOs reported perpetrators were increasingly targeting children younger than 12 months to evade enforcement of the law.

b. Protection of Children

Child Labor

See the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

Child Marriage

The law set the legal age for marriage at 18 for boys and 14 with parental

consent for girls. The law made it illegal to marry a primary or secondary school student. The law was not always enforced effectively, as individuals reportedly bribed police or paid a bride price to the family of the girl to circumvent these laws and avoid prosecution. Zanzibar had its own law on marriage, but it did not specifically address child, early, and forced marriage. The government provided secondary school-level education campaigns to prevent sexual violence, which included information on child, early, and forced marriage. During the year, the LHRC documented 14 incidents of child marriage. Drivers of child marriage included poverty, social acceptance of child marriage, FGM/C, discriminatory customs and traditions, child neglect, and gaps in the legal protection of girls' rights.

c. Protection to Refugees

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern. The government, however, steadily increased pressure and denied essential services to refugees within camps to coerce them into repatriating to Burundi. The government announced plans to close Nduta camp without consulting UNHCR, although the camp remained open at year's end. There were reports of refugees found outside the camps being detained, beaten, abused, raped, or killed by officials or citizens, as well as reports of refugees being abducted within the

camps. Service providers identified 1,469 women survived sexual violence in the Nduta and Nyarugusu camps.

Provision of First Asylum

The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government had an established system for providing protection to refugees; however, the National Eligibility Committee, which made determinations on asylum applications, reportedly had not convened since 2022, stalling the status determination process. The asylum rejection rate was more than 85 percent. The protection environment for refugees, particularly from Burundi, was a concern. Additionally, the government did not grant UNHCR or diplomatic missions access to the southern border to assess the status of refugees entering from Mozambique. The government denied asylum seekers crossing into the country from Mozambique.

UNHCR intervened in cases of irregular migrants in need of international protection following their arrest by authorities in Dar es Salaam or other urban centers to ensure the migrants had access to national asylum procedures and were protected from forced return to their country of origin.

Resettlement

The government focused on repatriation as the only durable solution for Burundian refugees, and it did not support naturalization or local integration

as a durable solution. The government denied exit permits for Burundian refugees to depart the country for third-country resettlement, arguing conditions in Burundi were conducive to voluntary repatriation. UNHCR assisted voluntary returns under the framework of a tripartite agreement among the governments of Burundi and Tanzania and UNHCR, while stressing conditions inside Burundi were not yet conducive for large-scale returns because many Burundian refugees remained in need of international protection. There were reports of officials seizing refugee's documents to force them to repatriate.

d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement

The Jewish population was very small, and there were no reports of antisemitic incidents.