

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS - GENEVA**

Phone: +41 22 731 89 20
Fax: +41 22 732 82 55
Email: geneva@nje.go.tz
Web: www.ch.tzembassy.go.tz



47, Avenue Blanc,
1202 Geneva,
Switzerland.

In reply, please mention:

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2025**

08 December

██████████
Officer-in-charge
Special Procedures Branch
OHCHR
hrc-sr-freeassembly@un.org; ohchr-registry@un.org

Gabriella Citroni (Chair-Rapporteur),

Grażyna Baranowska (Vice-Chair),

Gina Romero,
Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful
assembly and of association

Ben Saul,
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of
human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering
terrorism

Irene Khan,
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the
right to freedom of opinion and expression

Mary Lawlor,
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights
defenders

Aua Baldé; Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez, and Mohammed
Al-Obaidi, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary
Disappearances

RE: NEWS RELEASE

Please refer to the heading above and your letter with the Ref. INT/MD/NWR/TZA/37512 dated 3 December 2025, and the preceding press release by the Human Rights Experts on 4 December 2025.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania registers its deep concern that the Press Release contains a series of assertions that questionably ignore

readily verifiable facts and, in critical respects, amount to serious misrepresentations of the situation on the ground. The Government regrets that these statements were issued without due regard to the official information already provided and without the benefit of objective, balanced, and corroborated evidence required for such far-reaching allegations.

On 29 October 2025, Tanzania experienced unprecedented organised violence in parts of the country, particularly in Dar es Salaam. Perpetrators targeted private homes, businesses, and critical public infrastructure, including police stations, local government offices, and public transport systems. Public and private vehicles, including ambulances, were attacked; shops, bars, and restaurants were looted; and ATMs were forcibly opened. The coordinated acts of violence and destruction were deliberately designed to destabilise the State, posing a serious threat to public order and the safety of citizens. Regrettably, when law enforcement officers intervened to restore public order, they were confronted with organised, violent, and dangerous resistance, necessitating the use of force to contain the situation and prevent further harm to lives and property.

The Government is deeply concerned by the omission of these facts in the press release of 4 December 2025 and the mischaracterisation of these violent actions as political “protests”. This description is factually incorrect and does not reflect the nature or intent of the incidents, nor does it represent a proper understanding of protests that may be allowed under any legal context in a modern society. Such acts of violence, destruction, and lawlessness clearly fall outside the ambit of peaceful political expression or lawful demonstrations. The Government categorically rejects the allegation by experts that officers were given orders to “shoot to kill” and wishes to emphasise that such allegations are entirely unfounded and regrettable. The Government urges consideration of the full context and nature of the events, recognising the Government’s duty to protect lives and property.

The Government does not condone extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, or arbitrary detentions under any circumstances. Allegations of this nature are treated with utmost seriousness. As reported in the Government’s response to previous statements and communications, relevant State institutions have already been directed to conduct thorough, transparent, and independent investigations into all reported incidents. Where wrongdoing is established, appropriate legal action will be taken in accordance with the Tanzanian law. Thus, the allegations of targeting the opposition are misleading.

The Government rejects the unverified assessment concerning the alleged deaths and treatment of the deceased and notes with concern the omission of any proof of allegations of such serious magnitude. The Government urges stakeholders to refrain from disseminating unverified information.

The Government rejects the allegation of widespread, arbitrary arrests and detentions. The Government is seriously alarmed by the non-acknowledgement of the fact that individuals for whom insufficient evidence of involvement in the criminal acts was established have since been released. While the Government refrains from attributing bias to the Experts, such an omission is nonetheless deeply questionable. The cases of those who remain in lawful custody proceed strictly in accordance with due process and the protections guaranteed by the law. The Government likewise dismisses assertions of “unidentified armed personnel”

making arrests. All law enforcement operations are conducted by recognised and accredited officers.

The Government regards the allegations of transnational repression, including claims of extensive surveillance targeting human rights defenders and civil society organisations monitoring violations in neighbouring countries, as entirely unfounded and calls upon the experts to provide strict proof in support of them. The Government further wishes to draw attention to a recent security incident in which an individual was apprehended attempting to enter Tanzania in possession of four CS M68 hand-grenades. The Government urges the exercise of caution in making allegations so as not to undermine the seriousness of genuine security threats or misrepresent the Government's commitment to upholding the rule of law and protecting all individuals within its borders.

Regarding restrictions on media coverage, the Government wishes to clarify that there are currently no media restrictions in place in Tanzania. The temporary Internet disruption following the events of 29 October 2025 was a temporary measure, in accordance with Article 19 (3) (a) and (b) of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, taken solely to safeguard public safety and protect the rights of others in the face of credible threats of violence and coordinated harmful actions. This intervention sought to prevent the dissemination of coordinated dangerous hate speech and misinformation that could have exacerbated tensions or jeopardised lives. It was implemented in accordance with the Government's lawful responsibility to maintain public order and ensure the security of all citizens. The Government wishes to remind that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression under article 19 (2) of the ICCPR carries special duties and responsibilities. Therefore, it may be subject to restrictions provided by law and necessary: (a) for respect of the rights or reputations of others; and (b) for the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals.

The Government notes with grave concern the experts' allegation that "legislative changes undermined the fairness of the electoral framework" without identifying any purported changes that undermine the fairness of the electoral process or acknowledging solutions to previous challenges. For clarity, the Government wishes to state that prior to the October 2025 elections, the Parliament enacted the Independent National Electoral Commission Act, 2004 (Act No. 2 of 2024), and the Political Parties Affairs Laws (Amendment) Act, 2024 (Act No. 3 of 2024), which introduced significant reforms to enhance electoral fairness and transparency. These reforms were the result of a consultative process involving political parties, media, religious groups, civil societies, including organisations of persons with disabilities, and a special task force formed to assess challenges to multiparty democracy in Tanzania.

Among the key reforms are the transparent appointment of returning officers with public disclosure and stakeholder objections, the extension of voting rights to prisoners serving six months or less, and the removal of automatic declarations of unopposed candidates as elected. Other matters, such as those touching on presidential powers, disputing presidential elections in court, and allowing independent candidates, require constitutional amendments, and the Government has publicly signalled its intention to pursue a constitutional review. The proposal by one opposition party to postpone the election would have created an

unnecessary constitutional crisis. In this regard, the assertion that “legislative changes undermined the fairness of the electoral framework” is particularly regrettable. This is unsubstantiated and appears not to be informed by the state of the law in Tanzania and risks presenting a reckless and misleading impression in the absence of concrete references or evidence to support it.

The Government notes with concern the presentation of untrue or misleading information by experts, the interpretation of which attributes fault to the Government regarding the non-participation of two opposition leaders in the election. First, the opposition party, CHADEMA, acting on its own internal resolutions, elected not to participate in the polls. Pursuant to that decision, the party neither submitted nominations nor completed the procedures required under the applicable electoral laws and regulations. The persistent allegation that CHADEMA was barred from participating in the election while ignoring the party’s own resolutions is surprising and unfounded. Second, the matter concerning the ACT Presidential Candidate stemmed from internal party disagreements. The candidate exercised his rights within the established legal framework and pursued the matter through lawful, fair, and independent judicial processes (Misc. Civil Cause No. 21692 of 2025; Misc. Civil Cause No. 25307 of 2025; Miscellaneous Civil Cause No. 23617 of 2025; and Miscellaneous Civil Cause No. 24027 of 2025).

In response to the call for a prompt, impartial, and thorough investigation, President Samia Suluhu Hassan established the Independent Commission of Inquiry on 18 November 2025 under the Commissions of Enquiry Act, 2023 (Chapter 32). The establishment of the Commission demonstrates Tanzania’s commitment to transparency, accountability, and rule of law in the electoral process. The Government urges experts and stakeholders to respect the Commission’s independence and allow national mechanisms to complete their work. The Commission’s findings will provide an understanding of the unfortunate events that occurred and will form the basis for future constructive engagement.

For all matters not explicitly mentioned herein, the Government respectfully urges the experts to ensure that future communications adhere strictly to verified information and objective analysis. The Government calls upon experts to exercise the highest standards of diligence and impartiality in discharging their mandates.

Under these circumstances, we would like to know the following:

- (1) whether the Experts, based on their own professional assessment, consider deliberate and coordinated violent acts, such as arson and looting, to fall within the scope of conduct protected under the right to peaceful assembly as provided for under international human rights law;
- (2) whether the Experts regard the right to peaceful assembly as extending to situations that pose demonstrable risks to public safety, public order, or the rights and security of other persons;
- (3) whether the Experts recognise the State’s lawful authority, and indeed its positive obligation under the law, to adopt measures to safeguard life, public order, and essential infrastructure in circumstances involving imminent and serious threats, and whether, before issuing their conclusions, they undertook any assessment of the serious nature and risk of the events of 29 October 2025;

- (4) whether the Experts had carefully considered the history of legislative reforms on electoral laws and reviewed the electoral reforms enacted by Parliament in 2024, particularly the Independent National Electoral Commission Act and the Political Parties Affairs Laws (Amendment) Act, and in their opinion, how the transparent appointment of returning officers with public disclosure and stakeholder objections, extension of voting rights to prisoners serving six months or less, and the removal of automatic declarations of unopposed candidates as elected, undermined electoral fairness.
- (5) whether the Experts considered the fact that CHADEMA, by its own internal resolution, elected not to participate in the 2025 elections and therefore refused to submit nominations and complete other steps under the applicable legal framework, and how this fact aligns with the experts' assertion that opposition leaders were "barred" from contesting; and whether CHADEMA's decision overrides the right of other parties to participate in the election.
- (6) whether the Experts examined the judicial proceedings concerning the ACT presidential candidate, including the multiple cases filed before independent courts and the legal consequences thereof, before concluding that the candidate had been disqualified or unlawfully prevented from participating in the election; and
- (7) the basis upon which the Experts express doubts regarding the competence or independence of the recently established Independent Commission of Inquiry, and whether they undertook any assessment of its statutory mandate, membership competence, or procedural guarantees under the law, and the practice in various common law jurisdictions;

The Government values its longstanding cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms and remains firmly committed to maintaining this engagement in the spirit of mutual respect, good faith and constructive dialogue.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania reiterates its unwavering commitment to safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, as guaranteed under the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania and in full conformity with the country's international obligations.

The Government avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the esteemed Experts the assurances of its highest consideration.



Dr. Abdallah S. Possi

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE