

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AND UNREST THAT TRANSPired DURING AND AFTER THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 29TH OCTOBER 2025 IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

1. Background

The United Republic of Tanzania held its General Elections on 29th October 2025, for the President, Members of Parliament and Councillors. The Government undertook several preparatory measures, which were in line with the Constitution and legal mandates, to ensure peaceful, transparent and inclusive elections. While seventeen (17) of the eighteen (18) political parties complied with the electoral requirements, including signing the Electoral Code of Conduct and thenceforth engaged actively and fully in the electoral processes, CHADEMA, the main opposition party refused to sign the Code of Conduct and completely boycotted the electoral process. The events that transpired on the election day and a few days that followed are partly a consequence of actions and utterances of the leaders of CHADEMA and political activists as well as government critics located within and outside Tanzania, who employed the social media platforms to incite hatred against the government and encourage a boycott to the elections as well as violence.

The following is a compendium of events that transpired prior, during and after the general elections in Tanzania.

2. Measures that Preceded the General Elections

As alluded herein above, the Government took several measures to prepare for the General Elections. The measures include the implementation of the 4R (Reform, Reconciliation, Resilience and Rebuilding) philosophy, that was initiated by H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania soon after assuming office in 2021. Pursuant to the 4R initiative, restrictions on political activities were lifted, politicians in exile were given amnesty and allowed to return to Tanzania and a Presidential Task Force for engaging political parties and gathering their views on how to improve the democratic environment in the country was setup. The Task Force made several salient proposals, including the reform of the electoral regulations; electoral laws; and the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania. The Government acted swiftly to implement the first two recommendations by enacting the Independent National Electoral Commission Act No. 2 of 2024 and the Presidential, Parliamentary and Councillors' Elections Act No.1 of 2024. Both acts came into force in time for the Local Government Elections and the General Elections held in 2024 and 2025, respectively.

The enactment of the two laws did not require the amendment of the Constitution, which is a lengthier process, necessitating the establishment of the Constitutional Assembly and holding a referendum to adopt the said reforms. Despite the impracticability of undertaking Constitutional reforms before the General Elections of

2025, the ruling party, that is Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), pledged in its manifesto to embark on and conclude the said reforms before 2030. In fact, Her Excellency President Samia, while inaugurating the 13th Parliament on 14th November 2025, committed to commence the process for reforming the Constitution within the first 100 days of her second term in office.

So, plainly speaking the Government had put in place a positive environment for the conduct of free, fair and peaceful election. These efforts however were dented by the reluctance of CHADEMA to sign the Electoral Code of Conduct that all other political parties signed on the 12th April 2025 and CHADEMA's "**No Reform, No Election**" campaign, which not only called on its members and adherents to boycott the election but also incited them to violence, as witnessed on the 29th October 2025 and a few days after.

3. Violence and Unrest during the Election Day

While the general elections commenced peacefully with a high voter turnout of 87.13% across the country, incidents of violence and unrest began to emerge in several regions, notably Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Arusha, before spreading to Mbeya, Iringa, Kilimanjaro, and Songwe. These unprecedented events involved extensive destruction of public infrastructure such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and roads, attacks on police posts, arson against public and private property, looting, road blockages and threats against citizens who exercised their right to vote. The situation quickly worsened over the following days, generating mass panic due to the scale and nature of the violence, which Tanzania had never previously experienced. The situation was more intensified by the participation of individuals from neighbouring countries and the absence of a clear agenda, rendering the events criminal rather than demonstrative in character. Further, the situation resulted to loss of lives and injuries of some people.

4. Government Response to the Post-Election Violence and Unrest

As the violence unfolded, it became clear that those who partook it had intended not only to disrupt the electoral process but also to destabilize the country. Facing a real threat to national security, the Police Force, in collaboration with other security and defence apparatus acted swiftly and with unmistakable resolve to curb the violence and restore calm in all affected regions of Mainland Tanzania. The priority was to protect the citizens, public as well as private property. In this regard, a curfew was imposed in regions such as Dar es Salaam, restricting movement after 6:00pm; internet and social media was also restricted; public servants were directed to work from home; employers in the private sector were also advised to adopt similar security precautions; and primary, secondary and tertiary students were directed to study at home. The Police Force also apprehended individuals involved in the criminal acts and later brought them to justice. These include some foreign nationals, who collaborated with nefarious Tanzanians in the violent acts. Despite the restrictions, emergency services continued to render essential services such as health, water, and electricity to the citizenry.

5. Measures Adopted Since the 3rd November 2025

Her Excellency President Samia was sworn into office on the 3rd November 2025. During her maiden remarks, the President instructed that all restrictions put in place following the post-election violence be lifted and everything return to normal. The President also promised to elaborate the Government measures and plans during the inauguration of the 13th Parliament. Subsequently, on the 14th November 2025, while inaugurating Parliament, the President expressed deep concern over the loss of life and destruction of public and private property due to the violence, and urged all citizens to maintain peace, unity and national cohesion. Further, the President instructed the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) to revisit the charges against the perpetrators of post-election violence, with the view to make necessary adjustments or even dropping the charges for those without ill motivations. The President also pledged to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the incidents of violence and unrest that transpired on the election day and few days later. As pledged, on the 18th November 2025, the President established a Commission of Inquiry, comprised of six eminent personalities and led by Retired Chief Justice Mohamed Chande Othman. The Commission is expected to conclude its work in 90 days. The President has also appointed a new cabinet, whereby she has established a specific docket for Youth Development under her immediate supervision. The establishment of the youth docket demonstrates the Government's determination to effectively respond to youth's needs, who makes the largest chunk of the population in Tanzania and Africa.

6. Other Impending Measures

Looking ahead, the Government plans to establish a National Reconciliation Commission to provide citizens a platform for open dialogue on issues affecting national unity, complementing the ongoing 4R philosophy. A review of the Constitution is also planned within the next five years (2025 – 2030), incorporating citizen input and stakeholder engagement, with the aim of strengthening democratic governance, social cohesion, and ensuring that the nation is better prepared to prevent similar disruptions in the future. The Government has an ambitious development agenda to be implemented for the next five years, in line with the National Development Vision 2050, which would transform Tanzania from its current low-middle income country into a middle-income country during the said period. Achievement of that development agenda requires the country to maintain peace and tranquillity. As such, the Government will continue to invest in peace, unity and other national values in the medium to long-term.

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