

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Tanzania Summary 14 May 2025

Following the arrest of opposition Chadema party leader Tundu Lissu on 9 April, Tanzania's political space has once again shrunk, with charges of treason brought against the opposition leader as well as his disqualification from the upcoming general elections. An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission visits Tanzania between 2 and 17 April to hold Article IV discussions as well as the fifth review of its Extended Credit Facility (ECF) and second review of its Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), recommending a disbursement of \$441m in financing. Mozambique's President Daniel Chapo (2025-present) begins a three-day state visit to Tanzania on 8 May at the invitation of President Samia Suluhu Hassan (2021-present), focused on strengthening bilateral ties and economic cooperation.

Chadema disqualified from upcoming election

Tanzania's political space has once again shrunk following the arrest of opposition **Chadema** party leader **Tundu Lissu**. Lissu was arrested for unknown reasons on 9 April after addressing a public rally in **Mbinga (Ruvuma Region)** (see *ARC Briefing Tanzania Apr 2025*). Prosecutors confirmed that the state would be pursuing treason charges against the opposition leader, alleging that he incited rebellion to prevent the upcoming general elections from taking place. Treason carries the death penalty in Tanzania and is a non-bailable offence.¹ The charges seem to be based on Chadema's 'No Reforms, No Elections' campaign, launched on 24 March, during which he said Chadema would "spread its defiance" and "disrupt" the election.²

Independent National Elections Commission (INEC) director **Ramadhani Kailima** confirmed on 12 April that Chadema had failed to sign a code of conduct by INEC's deadline and that the party would be disqualified from the 28 October elections. Chadema had previously noted it would not sign the code of conduct until election reforms were implemented.³ INEC's decision could also ban the party from being able to run in any elections until 2030.⁴ Chadema legal secretary **Regemeleza Nshala** has argued that the law does not stipulate that a ban should be placed on a party, adding that the code of conduct is effective a day after the sitting of a nomination court that is only scheduled for July or early August, so Chadema was not required to sign before then.⁵

The crackdown on the opposition has continued following Lissu's arrest. On 24 April, police detained Chadema deputy chairperson **John Heche** and secretary general **John Mnyika** alongside 11 other party members who were on their way to Lissu's court hearing.⁶ No comment was offered as to why they were arrested and they were reportedly held until midnight before being released. Police also arrested Chadema party member **Hilda Newton**, who had gained access to the courtroom and was posting updates on **X**. Chadema spokesperson **Brenda Rupia** confirmed Newton's release on 25 April but alleged that she had endured "serious torture".⁷

¹ Africanews, 13 Apr 2025

² Africa Confidential, 14 Apr 2025

³ Africanews, 13 Apr 2025

⁴ DW, 15 Apr 2025

⁵ DW, 15 Apr 2025

⁶ The East African, 24 Apr 2025

⁷ The East African, 24 Apr 2025

Lissu's arrest has drawn international attention. Notably, on 8 May, the **European Union (EU) Parliament** adopted a resolution stating that Tanzanian authorities had violated international conventions on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, urging the EU and member states to engage with Tanzania over the case.⁸ It added that member states should consider "*appropriate measures*" if the human rights situation continues to deteriorate.⁹ **United Kingdom**-headquartered **Amnesty International** has also called for Lissu's release, as has **United States**-headquartered **Human Rights Watch**.¹⁰ The **US Bureau of African Affairs** released a statement on 17 April questioning Tanzania's commitment to inclusive and peaceful elections after the recent political developments.¹¹

The case against Lissu is likely politically motivated and in line with the Tanzanian government's oppressive tactics, especially in the build-up to elections. Even if Lissu succeeds in having the charges dropped, and Chadema is reinstated on the voter's roll, the case is non-bailable and Lissu would have lost out on valuable campaign time, leaving the election completely open for a CCM victory. Lissu remains in custody and his next court date is 19 May.

President **Samia Suluhu Hassan's** (2021-present) initial reform agenda no longer seems to be a priority and the continuing clampdown on the opposition could see Chadema excluded from the election or a boycott by the opposition. This could lead to further condemnation by international partners but unless concrete action is taken, the government is likely to continue its clampdown.

IMF concludes Article IV consultations and reaches staff-level agreement

An **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** mission visited Tanzania between 2 and 17 April to hold **Article IV** discussions as well as the fifth review of Tanzania's **Extended Credit Facility (ECF)** and the second review of its **Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)**, recommending a disbursement of \$441m in financing. The executive board still needs to approve the disbursement but it usually agrees with staff-level agreements. This will bring the IMF's total disbursements under the ECF to \$907.4m and to \$343.6m under the RSF.¹²

IMF staff team leader **Nicolas Blancher** said in a release following the mission that Tanzania recorded strong growth of 5.5% in 2024, which is expected to increase to 6% in 2025, while inflation – registered at 3% in March – remains under control and below the **Bank of Tanzania's (BoT)** (central bank) target of 5%.¹³ The current account deficit narrowed from 3.8% of GDP in 2023 to 2.6% of GDP in 2024 due to strong mineral and agricultural exports and increased tourism. The current account deficit is expected to decrease further in 2025 as the mining sector continues to expand alongside high gold prices.¹⁴

The IMF lauded the central bank's foreign exchange intervention policy, noting that exchange rate flexibility and interventions in line with this policy are key reforms to improve the foreign exchange market's functioning and have already helped to increase foreign exchange flows into the formal market.¹⁵ Under the RSF, the IMF team noted that government has started to strengthen frameworks for climate policies and climate risks but that accelerating implementation of them is necessary.

Blancher cited a favourable economic outlook but warned of risks including the upcoming elections, conflict in **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, global economic and trade issues, and reduced foreign development assistance.

⁸ The East African, 8 May 2025

⁹ The East African, 8 May 2025

¹⁰ Amnesty International, 11 Apr 2025; HRW, 15 Apr 2025

¹¹ Ujasusi, 18 Apr 2025

¹² The East African, 18 Apr 2025

¹³ IMF, 16 Apr 2025

¹⁴ IMF, 16 Apr 2025

¹⁵ IMF, 16 Apr 2025

As part of the Article IV consultations, focused on the longer term trajectory of the economy, the IMF recommended that the government ensure enough budget is allocated to the education and health sectors, while focusing on a business-friendly environment and job creation.¹⁶

Overall, the IMF's satisfaction with Tanzania's reform progress under the staff-monitored programmes, as evidenced by its approval of financing, is a positive indicator for investors. The additional IMF financing will allow the government to continue its reforms and cushion the economy against external shocks that could impact growth and inflation.

Mozambique and Tanzania bolster ties

Mozambique's President **Daniel Chapo** (2025-present) began a three-day state visit to Tanzania on 8 May at the invitation of President Hassan, focused on strengthening bilateral ties and economic cooperation. At a press conference held on 8 May, Chapo and Hassan confirmed their countries would establish a **Joint Economic Commission (JEC)** as well as a one-stop border post at **Negomano** (Mozambique), close to **Mtambaswala** in Tanzania, to promote cross-border trade.

Other areas of future cooperation include the maritime sector, port security, and bolstering aviation ties by adding a flight path from Dar es Salaam to **Pemba** in northern Mozambique, in addition to flights already running between Dar es Salaam and Mozambique's capital, **Maputo**.¹⁷ Chapo highlighted that political ties between the two countries remain "*excellent and extraordinary*" while emphasising that defence and security ties are also strong.¹⁸ Tanzania has assisted Mozambique in fighting **Ahlu Sunnah Wa Jamaah (ASWJ)**, the Islamist insurgent group that has been operating in Mozambique's **Cabo Delgado Province** since 2017. This assistance was first as part of the **Southern African Development Community (SADC) Military Mission in Mozambique** and then as a bilateral agreement between the two countries.¹⁹

Prior to Chapo's arrival, businesspeople from Tanzania and Mozambique held preparatory meetings, led by Mozambique's economy minister, **Basilio Muhate**. Muhate noted that Mozambique has a trade deficit with Tanzania and would like to encourage more Mozambican businesses to export to Tanzania to rectify this.²⁰

Chapo also travelled to **Zanzibar** on 9 May to meet with Zanzibar's President **Hussein Ali Mwinyi** (2020-present), which Mwinyi highlighted as indicative of the longstanding ties between the two countries.²¹ During their meetings, the two presidents agreed to focus cooperation on the blue economy, oil and gas, deep sea fishing, tourism and investment.

Positive ties between Tanzania and Mozambique benefit both countries. Aside from bolstering political and economic ties, Tanzania has been a key military ally for Mozambique in its fight against ASWJ. Tanzania has benefited from assisting Mozambique, largely as it has attempted to contain the threat to northern Mozambique and prevent it from spilling across their shared border. Tanzania's planned \$42-billion LNG project is located in the **Lindi Region**. The administrative capital of the region, Lindi, is located only 272km from **Mocomboa da Praia** in Cabo Delgado, which was the site of an attack in 2021 that led to **France's TotalEnergies** declaring force majeure on its project in Cabo Delgado. Mozambique also serves as an example for Tanzania's burgeoning oil and gas industry, a likely driver of the strengthening relations between the two countries.

¹⁶ The East African, 18 Apr 2025

¹⁷ Club of Mozambique, 9 May 2025

¹⁸ Club of Mozambique, 9 May 2025

¹⁹ AIM, 3 May 2024

²⁰ Club of Mozambique, 8 May 2025

²¹ Daily News, 9 May 2025

Planner

13 – 15 May 2025 **London (United Kingdom)** Tanzania to auction 26 oil and gas exploration blocks

12 Jun 2025 **Dodoma (Tanzania)** 2025/2026 budget presentation

27 Jun 2025 **Dodoma (Tanzania)** President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** to dissolve parliament

Oct 2025 **(Tanzania)** General elections

Dec 2025 **(Tanzania)** **Labour Mobility Dialogue** between **African Union (AU)** and **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**

2025 **(Tanzania and Uganda)** Completion of **East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)**

Chronology

12 May 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** announces the creation of eight new parliamentary constituencies and five new wards ahead of the 28 October general election, bringing the total to 272 constituencies and 3,960 wards;

8 May 2025 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *Club of Mozambique*. As part of President **Daniel Chapo's** first state visit to **Tanzania**, the two countries sign a bilateral agreement to establish a **One Stop Border Post** at **Negomano** (Mozambique) and **Mtambaswala** (Tanzania), aimed at simplifying cross-border trade and the movement of goods and people;

7 May 2025 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *Club of Mozambique*. President **Daniel Chapo** arrives in **Tanzania** for his first state visit since taking office on 15 January, at the invitation of President **Samia Suluhu Hassan**, marking a key step in strengthening bilateral relations and diplomatic ties between the two nations;

6 May 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** appoints **Lazaro Jacob Twange** as the new managing director of **Tanzania Electric Supply Company (TANESCO)** amid continuing power rationing in Tanzania, attributed to a 400-megawatt shortfall caused by aging infrastructure, low water levels in dams, and increased electricity demand;

2 May 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *BBC*. Police confirm that two people attacked prominent Catholic priest and government critic Father **Charles Kitima** after an all-day religious meeting, raising concerns ahead of the general elections;

30 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Bloomberg*. Deputy prime minister and energy minister **Doto Biteko** says the government is aiming to ratify the terms of the long-delayed \$42-billion LNG project by October as negotiations continue, including the government's request that at least 3% of the gas from the project be reserved for domestic utilisation;

29 Apr 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Daily Maverick*. **South African, Tanzanian and Malawian** troops begin withdrawing from their bases in eastern DRC after being trapped for three months, with the hope of a complete withdrawal by the end of June;

29 Apr 2025 **Kigali (Rwanda)** *Reuters*. Rwanda escorts troops of a **Southern African** force through Rwandan territory to **Tanzania** as it pulls out of eastern DRC as part of a phased withdrawal by the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**;

29 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **Australia-based Perseus Mining Limited** has confirmed a final investment decision (FID) to proceed with the development of the **Nyanzaga Gold Project (NGP)** in Tanzania, committing approximately \$523m to bring the project into production;

26 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Reuters*. Tanzania lifts a ban on imports from agricultural produce from **Malawi and South Africa** to allow for diplomatic discussions over the trade dispute;

24 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The East African*. Police detain two senior **Chadema** opposition figures on their way to the court hearing for Chadema's leader, **Tundu Lissu**, who is facing charges of treason;

24 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Business Live*. Tanzania bans the import of agricultural products from **South Africa** and **Malawi** in retaliation for similar trade measures from both countries;

19 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Africanews*. Opposition party **Chadema** says it has failed to meet with its leader, **Tundu Lissu**, as well as his family and lawyers;

17 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *News24*. Agriculture minister **Hussein Bashe** says Tanzania will impose trade barriers on agricultural imports from **South Africa** and **Malawi** if the two countries do not lift restrictions on imports from Tanzania;

16 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Reuters*. Opposition **Chadema** party calls its disqualification from the 28 October elections "unconstitutional";

14 Apr 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *FT*. **India** launches its largest-ever joint naval exercise, co-hosted by Tanzania and including **Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius** and **South Africa**;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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