

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Tanzania Monthly Briefing October 2025

Tanzania Summary 13 October 2025

Tanzania prepares for general elections on 29 October as its democratic ideals continue to come under international scrutiny. In the latest enforced disappearance, former ambassador Humphrey Polepole's family confirms unidentified men broke into his residence and abducted him. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) concludes a staff visit to Tanzania on 24 September, highlighting strong economic growth, low inflation and a positive outlook. Zambia's government signs an agreement with Tanzania's government and China to refurbish the Tanzania-Zambia railway (also known as the Tazara railway) under a \$1.4 billion rehabilitation exercise.

Democracy under fire

As general elections on 29 October approach, **Tanzania's** democratic ideals have continued to come under scrutiny. The ruling **Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)** and incumbent President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** (2021-present) will largely be unchallenged after the disqualification of the main opposition parties – **Chadema** and **ACT-Wazalendo** – for reasons that are widely viewed as political interference.

This decline in democratic fundamentals is impacting voter [behaviour](#), which undermines the legitimacy of Tanzania's democracy. Voter turnout has been low – 42.7% in 2010 and 50.7% in 2020 – as elections are largely a 'ceremonial' event marking an extension of the CCM's rule, which has been in power since **Tanganyika's** independence from the **United Kingdom (UK)** in 1961.

The build-up to this election has once again been marred by political repression and heavy restrictions on the opposition. **United States (US)**-based nonprofit political advocacy organisation **Freedom House** in its [2025 report](#) downgraded Tanzania's status from "partly free" to "not free" with a score of 35/100. This score is based on political rights and civil liberties in the country. Freedom House noted in its 2025 update that the enforced disappearances of political activists, repression of opposition protests and continued efforts to forcibly evict **Indigenous Maasai** communities, led to its rank declining further.

Emphasising this, on 6 October, the family of former ambassador and politician with the CCM, **Humphrey Polepole**, [reported](#) that unidentified individuals broke into his residence in **Dar es Salaam** and abducted him. Polepole resigned from his role as ambassador to **Cuba** in July, raising concerns over what he [called](#) an administration that disrespects justice, the rule of law and constitutional principles. He went on to become increasingly critical of Hassan and her administration ahead of the election. Police have [confirmed](#) they are investigating the case, but no further details have been released. His location remains unknown.

US-headquartered non-governmental organisation **Human Rights Watch** released a [statement](#) on 29 September, raising concerns over suppression of the opposition, critics of the government and the media. The statement details several incidents of abductions. The Tanzanian government rejected the allegations and [called](#) the incidents of abduction a "major source of concern". The **United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR)** [reported](#) in June that UN human rights experts had recorded over 200 cases of enforced disappearances in Tanzania since 2019.

Democratic erosion has a negative impact on the business environment. Under late former president **John Magufuli** (2015-2021), the US [imposed](#) visa restrictions on officials responsible for or complicit in undermining the October 2020 general election, while partners such as the **European Union (EU)**

[reviewed](#) financial support and the [World Bank froze a \\$300m loan](#). Corruption has also been allowed to continue unchecked, and ARC source report it has thrived under Hassan as a way to keep CCM party members happy to tow the party line.

While there was hope that Hassan would bring change to Tanzania's democracy, any gains have been eroded in the build-up to the election, raising concern over what her second term will hold.

IMF concludes staff visit highlighting strong growth

The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** [concluded](#) a staff visit to Tanzania on 24 September, reviewing economic and financial developments, Tanzania's economic outlook and performance under its **Extended Credit Facility (ECF)** and **Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)**. The IMF highlighted Tanzania's strong economic growth this year, which reached 5.4% in the first quarter driven by the mining, agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The strong activity in these sectors, plus tourism, helped narrow the current account deficit to 2.5% of GDP in the 2024/2025 financial year. Inflation has remained low, and measured 3.4% in August, within the **Bank of Tanzania (BoT)** (central bank) target range of 3% to 5%.

The IMF [noted](#) that Tanzania's economic outlook is positive but warned of risks, including global economic and trade slowdown, geoeconomic fragmentation, reduced foreign aid and increased fiscal pressures from the October general election. Possible poor weather patterns may also impact the agriculture sector, which would increase inflation and negatively impact economic growth.

The IMF staff encouraged the government to continue accelerating reforms under the ECF and RSF, which may have slowed in the build-up to the election, and emphasised other critical factors including ensuring adequate resources are spent on education and ensuring job opportunities for the youth. Under the current budget, [approximately](#) 4% of GDP is spent on health and education combined.

The IMF projects Tanzania will achieve GDP growth of 6% this year, while inflation will average 4%. Growth has [averaged](#) 5.5% over the last ten years and the country has emerged as a powerhouse in the region and across the continent. However, despite the positives, the trickle down is not being felt. The **World Bank** [estimates](#) that 29.5 million of Tanzania's 68.6 million population are living on less than \$3 per day – the international poverty rate – and that based on the lower middle-income poverty rate of \$4.20, poverty levels will only moderately decrease in coming years, from 69.3% in 2022 to 67.2% in 2027. This highlights that Tanzania's economic growth is not inclusive and is concentrated in some sectors, not supporting poverty reduction.

Tanzania, Zambia and China officially sign Tazara revitalisation agreement

Zambia's government [announced](#) on 29 September that it had signed an agreement with Tanzania's government and **China** to refurbish the **Tanzania-Zambia** railway (also known as the **Tazara** railway) under a \$1.4 billion rehabilitation exercise. Part of the \$1.4 billion will be spent on purchasing new locomotives, wagons and passenger coaches as well as setting up other systems, including staff training and building maintenance workshops. This agreement comes after the three parties signed an initial memorandum of understanding (MoU) during the **Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)** in September 2024, committing to the revitalisation of Tazara (*see ARC Briefing Tanzania Sep 2024*).

The Tazara railway runs 1,860 km and was built between 1970 and 1975. It was built by China to offer landlocked Zambia a mineral export route via Tanzania. It has never been rehabilitated and has deteriorated significantly since it was built. The railway could now be a strategic export route for critical minerals from Zambia and Tanzania to China.

China has proposed using a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model for the revitalisation. Under the new [agreement](#), the **China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC)** will have a 30-year concession: three years will focus on reconstruction, upgrades, safety improvement and restoration, and the remaining 27 years will be operational management. This new concession reflects China's more cautious approach to infrastructure projects, after some massive loans made

under its ambitious **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** were misused or led to debt issues for some **African** countries.

The signing of the agreement comes as plans appear to be moving forward with the **Lobito Corridor**, which is backed by the US and the EU, and will run from Zambia to the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** to **Angola**. After the re-election of US President **Donald Trump** (2017-2021; 2025-present), there was concern that the US would pull funding for the corridor, but the US has dismissed these concerns. ARC experts have opined that the Tazara refurbishment is a direct challenge from China to the Lobito Corridor and US influence in the region.

Planner

29 Oct 2025 (**Tanzania**) General elections

18 – 21 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** 19th Annual Conference of the **African Cashew Alliance (ACA)**

19 – 21 Nov 2025 (**Tanzania**) 7th **Tanzania Mining and Investment Conference**

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

13 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Chanzo*. **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** announces significant changes to electoral boundaries, nullifying 10 wards and relocating 292 polling stations, which results in the disqualification of seven councillor candidates from the ruling **Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM)**;

9 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Daily News*. A delegation of **Japanese** investors arrives in Tanzania for an investment mission aimed at exploring existing opportunities within Special Economic Zones (SEZs), with a particular focus on advancing the manufacturing sector;

8 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Daily News*. Industry and trade ministry permanent secretary **Hashil Abdallah** advises exporters to explore opportunities within regional markets following the expiration of the **African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)**;

7 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **Tanzania Special Economic Zones Authority** reports that the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has overtaken **China** as Tanzania's top source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the third quarter of 2025;

6 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **Bank of Tanzania** (central bank) reports gold reached a record high of \$4.3 billion in the year ending August 2025, driven by soaring global gold prices;

5 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Chanzo*. **Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF)** warns against attempts to involve the army in politics after an individual identifying himself as a captain in the air force posted a video on social media criticising the government and political environment;

4 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** holds a rally in **Babati (Manyara Region)** as part of her re-election campaign, pledging equitable development for all regions, emphasising inclusivity in economic growth and infrastructure expansion;

2 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. Experts warn that the banking sector is heavily reliant on two major banks – **CRDB Bank** and **NMB Bank** – raising concerns about financial stability and economic resilience, increased systemic risk and limited competition, potentially affecting lending, innovation and service quality;

1 Oct 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. Foreign affairs minister **Mahmoud Thabit Kombo** notes that Tanzania's farm exports to **China** are gaining momentum, reflecting growing demand in the Chinese market;

30 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. Tanzania signs a partnership with **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**-headquartered **Streit Group FZ-LLC** to manufacture, repair and sell armoured vehicles;

30 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Global Trade Review*. **African Development Bank (AfDB)** approves a \$10m trade finance transaction guarantee for **Exim Bank Tanzania** to support trade deals;

29 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **Hungary** and Tanzania sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cooperate on digital innovation;

25 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *IMF*. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** concludes a staff visit to Tanzania, highlighting robust economic growth of 5.4% in the first quarter of 2025 and a low inflation rate of 3.4% in August, but warns that several risks remain, including the upcoming elections, geoeconomic fragmentation and trade slowdowns;

24 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. Contractors involved in the construction of the **East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)** project offer Tanzanian businesses supply chain training in an ongoing week-long programme;

23 Sep 2025 **Johannesburg (South Africa)** *Business Day*. The 9th instance of the **South Africa-China Trade and Investment Promotion Conference** takes place, resulting in signing of several memoranda of understanding (MoU) between various business bodies;

22 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. The **Bank of Tanzania** (central bank) completes its study on introducing a digital currency and is now awaiting a government directive on the next steps;

18 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **Alliance for Financial Inclusion** awards the **Bank of Tanzania** (central bank) the **Espenilla Jr. Financial Inclusion Innovation Award**, recognising its innovations in digital financial inclusion;

16 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. Opposition leader **Tundu Lissu** refuses to proceed with his treason trial, insisting that the hearing be adjourned until his supporters are allowed back in the courtroom;

15 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. Tanzanians airlines are set to resume flights to **Europe** after meeting the **European Union's** safety standards, signalling compliance with international aviation regulations;

15 Sep 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** upholds attorney general **Eliezer Mbuki Feleshi's** objection barring opposition candidate **Luhaga Joelson Mpina** from the October presidential election;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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