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Tanzania Summary 5 December 2025

President Samia Suluhu Hassan's (2021-present) second term starts with significant challenges following significant international backlash against Tanzania's controversial 29 October presidential election that led to large-scale post-election violence. The European Union (EU) Parliament unanimously votes on 27 November to suspend any direct aid to Tanzania and asks the EU Commission to withdraw €156m (\$182m) in funding in response to the post-election violence. Chief government spokesperson Gerson Msigwa confirms on 23 November that Tanzania will start construction of the long-delayed Bagamoyo Port in December, making progress on a large-scale special economic zone (SEZ) just outside of Dar es Salaam.

Hassan faces international backlash as she begins new term

President **Samia Suluhu Hassan's** (2021-present) second term has started with significant challenges following significant international backlash against **Tanzania's** controversial 29 October presidential election that led to large-scale post-election violence. The **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** [declared](#) on 1 November that Hassan had won 97.66% of the vote, a result that sparked widespread protests in several cities across the country, including **Dar es Salaam** (see *ARC Briefing Tanzania Nov 2025*).

In the wake of the violence, several **European** embassies in Tanzania have called for a **United Nations (UN)** investigation while two **United States (US)** senators who sit on the **US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations** called for the US to reassess its relations with Tanzania considering its democratic backsliding.

Tensions have remained, with the opposition and other civil society parties calling for protests on 9 December – Tanzania's **Independence Day**. Prime minister **Mwigulu Nchemba** on 24 November [cancelled](#) Independence Day celebrations in response, adding that the money saved would be redirected to repairing damage caused during the post-election unrest. Prior to this, a group of civil society organisations [submitted](#) a petition to the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** to open an investigation into the government, alleging that it is guilty of crimes against humanity.

Adding to Tanzania's declining reputation, US-headquartered media company **CNN** [published](#) an investigation on 21 November providing evidence of the brutality in the post-election violence, including that security forces fatally shot unarmed protestors. The investigation cites geolocated videos, forensic analysis of audio and first-hand accounts. CNN reported that there was evidence of mass graves where protestors killed were buried, as well as videos of morgues overflowing. The US senate foreign relations committee subsequently [posted](#) on **X**, calling for an independent investigation into the events, citing CNN's investigative report. The Tanzanian government on 23 November [rejected](#) the investigation, calling it one-sided, a breach of journalistic ethics, and an attempt to damage Tanzania's reputation abroad.

In a bid to try to redirect the conversation, Hassan gave an [address](#) on 2 December, presenting the government's perspective of the events around the election. She called the post-election violence an attempt to overthrow the government, and defended security forces' response, calling it necessary to counter the attempted overthrow. It should be noted that an official death toll has been difficult for organisations to confirm as the internet shutdown negatively impacted flow of information. However, the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** has [said](#) the

information it has obtained points to hundreds of people killed. Opposition party **Chadema** [has](#) alleged that over 2,000 people were killed. In the ICC submission, the group of civil society organisations has estimated 3,000 were killed. Hundreds more were also arrested.

During her address, Hassan attempted to shift blame, [stating](#) that youths protested in high numbers because they are unpatriotic, being paid to do so as well as being manipulated by social media:

“Our young people were led into the streets and made to sing a song they don’t understand. They claim they were demanding their rights. Which rights? Pull aside just one young person and ask, ‘You went out to demand rights, what rights exactly?’ They cannot explain.”

Hassan also addressed the lack of opposition in the election, [noting](#) that Chadema did not participate in the election due to internal problems and not because of government challenges to the party. Chadema leader **Tundu Lissu** has been in jail on treason charges since April and the party’s activities were suspended in June after it refused to sign an ethics declaration in April.

Referring to the international backlash to the election, Hassan [called](#) the international community “colonizers” who were interfering in Tanzania’s domestic issues. Before Hassan’s address, foreign affairs minister **Mahmoud Thabit Kombo** [met](#) with foreign diplomats on 28 November, cautioning them to not comment on the post-election violence as the government undertakes an inquiry into the events, stating that it may disrupt or distort the inquiry.

Despite these efforts, the damage has been done. Several European embassies alongside the **British** and **Canadian** high commissions in Dar es Salaam released a joint [statement](#) on 5 December, expressing concern over the recent events and calling for the government to address issues identified in election observer reports and emphasising that the government’s inquiry into the events be “independent, transparent, and inclusive”. This followed a **European Union (EU) Parliament** vote on 27 November to suspend direct aid to Tanzania and withdraw pending aid under an annual programme (see below).

In a more damning statement, the US **Department of State** [announced](#) on 4 December that it was reviewing its relationship with Tanzania following the post-election violence:

“The Government of Tanzania’s ongoing repression of religious freedom and free speech, the presence of persistent obstacles to US investment, and disturbing violence against civilians in the days leading up to and following Tanzania’s October 29 elections, required this reconsideration of our ties.”

These developments do not bode well for Hassan’s new term. Her administration will either need to work to reverse this damage – which her 2 December speech did little to mitigate – or look inward and to other partners for greater support when it comes to investment and development aid, two things that could decline following these events.

EU suspends financing over post-election violence

The European Union (EU) Parliament unanimously [voted](#) on 27 November to suspend any direct aid to Tanzania in response to the post-election violence, urging for an **African**-led commission of inquiry to be established to investigate not only the post-election violence, but also allegations of enforced disappearances, torture and other human rights violations. In addition to this, the European Parliament asked the EU Commission to withdraw €156m (\$182m) in funding under the **Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2025** for Tanzania. It should be noted that the decision is non-binding and final endorsement is required. Nevertheless, the move has shone an unfavourable international light on Tanzania.

To this point, planning and investment minister **Kitila Mkumbo** addressed the **Tanzania Investment and Export Strategy Authority (TIZESA)**, which local and international investors attended on 28 November. Mkumbo used the opportunity to punt Tanzania as a safe and reliable investment destination, [noting](#):

“In the midst of challenges, there is always an opportunity to rebuild a more united, peaceful and prosperous nation.”

The government has also [noted](#) that the EU’s funds freeze will not impact the approved TSh 56.49 trillion (\$23.1 billion) 2025/2026 budget, with foreign affairs minister **Mahmoud Thabit Kombo** conveying this to members of the diplomatic corps in a briefing on 28 November. However, the freeze will impact development funding, which Tanzania will need to raise elsewhere or try to replace via its own means.

The freeze has placed an international spotlight on the post-election violence and democratic backsliding, which will be pushed to the fore for investors. Tanzania has been the investment darling of **East Africa** in recent years, attracting foreign direct investment worth \$1.7 billion in 2024, its highest level since 2014, but this election and its outcome have harmed its reputation. The US declaration that it is reviewing ties, specifically citing the *“presence of persistent obstacles to US investment”*, indicates that the decline in confidence in Tanzania has already begun.

Construction of East Africa’s largest port, Bagamoyo Port, to begin

Chief government spokesperson **Gerson Msigwa** [confirmed](#) on 23 November that Tanzania will start construction of the long-delayed **Bagamoyo Port** in December, making progress on a large-scale special economic zone (SEZ) just outside of Dar es Salaam. The port agreement was initially [signed](#) under former president **Jakaya Kikwete** (2005-2015) during a state visit to Tanzania by **China’s** leader, **Xi Jinping** (2013-present), and was to be another stepping stone in China’s ambitious **Belt and Road Initiative**.

China Merchants Holding International (CMHI) and the **Omani State General Reserve Fund (SGRF)** are the developers of the project. The planned port has effectively been **Oman’s** reason for keeping its office running in Tanzania. Construction of the port faced roadblocks under late former president **John Magufuli** (2015-2021). However, in June 2021, Hassan announced that talks on the project would recommence (*see ARC Briefing Tanzania Jul 2021*).

The planned deep-water port is in Bagamoyo, 75 km north of Dar es Salaam, and is estimated to cost \$10 billion. Msigwa confirmed that the port will have 28 berths, but that construction will initially begin on 14, and be able to handle ships with a capacity of up to 25,000 containers. The port will be **East Africa’s** largest deep-water port and is expected to handle 20 times the cargo currently being processed at the port of Dar es Salaam, which will significantly decrease congestion at the port. Port of Dar es Salaam handles [approximately](#) 92% of Tanzania’s international trade, and serves several neighbouring countries, including **Malawi, Zambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi** and **Uganda**.

Tanzania has bet on its port industry to contribute significantly to economic growth – alongside major investments under Hassan into both lake and sea ports – such as TSh 421.9 billion (\$172.57m) in the **Port of Tanga**. The government signed an agreement with **Dubai**-headquartered **DP World** in October 2023 for the operation of seven of the 11 berths at port of Dar es Salaam. This relationship has [yielded](#) good results, with the operating times reduced from 46 days in May 2024 to an average of seven days. The Bagamoyo Port fits in with these overarching plans and should deliver even greater results for the government. In the context of current political tensions, this will be reassuring for the government.

2026 outlook

Tanzania will in 2026 face the consequences of its presidential election. The US and other countries could continue to threaten to review relations and pause aid, which would negatively impact Tanzania’s development capacity. Hassan has shown no intention of capitulating to these external partners, which could push Tanzania to favour other partners going forward, including **Gulf** partners, **China** and **Russia**. These are partners that have historically looked past any human rights or democratic issues when it comes to aid and investment.

Tanzania is still poised for strong economic growth, with the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** projecting growth of 6.3% in 2026. The extent of the economic consequences of the post-election unrest is yet to be determined, but an impact on projected growth cannot be ruled out.

Political tensions are expected to remain heightened in 2026. The threat of unrest going in to the new year is much higher and the operating environment could face challenges. Observers will be watching for progress on massive projects, such as the planned \$42-billion LNG project, which has faced several delays. Progress on such projects will be indicative of how serious government appetite is to pursue major development as well as its willingness to work with, mainly Western, foreign companies on such major projects.

Planner

9 Dec 2025 **(Tanzania)** Demonstrations expected to take place on **Independence Day**;
 Dec 2025 **(Tanzania)** **Labour Mobility Dialogue** between **African Union (AU)** and **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**;
 19 – 21 Nov 2026 **(Tanzania)** 7th **Tanzania Mining and Investment Conference**
 2026 **(Tanzania and Uganda)** Completion of **East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)**;

Chronology

4 Dec 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *CNN*. **United States (US) Department of State** confirms it is reviewing its relationship with Tanzania, citing ongoing repression of religious freedom and free speech, the presence of persistent obstacles to US investment, and disturbing violence against civilians in the days leading up to and following the October presidential election;

4 Dec 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Chanzo*. The police declare that no demonstrations will be permitted on 9 December, warning that anyone who attempts to participate will be arrested;

2 Dec 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Tanzania Invest*. President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** addresses the nation, defending how security forces handled the post-election protests, claiming her 97% victory in the election reflects the will of the people, and criticising the **European Union's** parliamentary vote to suspend aid to Tanzania;

27 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **European Union (EU)** adopts a resolution suspending €156m (\$177m) in aid funding intended for Tanzania in 2026, citing concerns over repression and human rights violations;

27 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *EWN*. An international coalition of lawyers and human rights groups formally requests the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** to investigate Tanzania's election and the post-election violence in which an unknown number of people died;

25 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. **Bank of Tanzania's** (central bank) consolidated zonal economic performance report shows that Tanzania's mineral sector is approaching \$1 billion in output, driven by surges in gold and diamond production;

25 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Africanews*. Tanzania cancels its independence day celebrations, scheduled for 9 December, after calls for protests on the same day over the killings in post-election violence;

24 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Reuters*. Chief government spokesperson **Gerson Msigwa** reports that Tanzania will begin construction of the long-delayed **Bagamoyo port** in December, starting with 14 of 28 planned berths and aiming to handle ships carrying up to 25,000 containers;

24 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. Government confirms that development projects will continue as planned despite donor partners raising concerns following post-election unrest, with

government spokesman **Gerson Msigwa** affirming that domestic resources are being used for most projects;

21 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Chanzo*. Vice president **Emmanuel Nchimbi**, alongside **Zambia's** President **Hakainde Hichilema** and **China's** premier **Li Qiang**, attends the foundation laying ceremony for the rehabilitation of the **TAZARA Railway**;

20 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** launches a commission to investigate the 29 October unrest, urging it to uncover the forces responsible and provide a clear account of what triggered the disturbances;

19 Nov 2025 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Citizen*. President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** appoints **Bakari Steven Machumu**, former managing director of **Mwananchi Communications Limited**, as **State House** communications chief;

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