AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Tanzania Monthly Briefing November 2026

Tanzania Summary 16 November 2026

The high court in Dar es Salaam acquits opposition leader Tundu Lissu on charges of treason but finds him guilty on charges of incitement. The acquittal allows the government to avoid backlash, as a treason conviction carries the death sentence, and to maintain pressure on Lissu and the opposition. Finance minister Khamis Mussa Omar says the government expects to finalise the planned $42 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in the Lindi Region in the coming months, but the main project partners – Norway-headquartered Equinor and United Kingdom-headquartered Shell – have yet to comment. The African Development Bank (AfDB) announces on 4 November that Tanzania has signed a $1.2 billion financing facility with the 411km Tabora-Kigoma section of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), a boost to developing its transport and logistics infrastructure.

Lissu cleared on treason charges but convicted of inciting unrest

The high court in **Dar es Salaam** on 6 November acquitted opposition leader **Tundu Lissu** on charges of treason but found him guilty on charges of incitement. The acquittal allows the government to avoid backlash for handing Lissu the death sentence associated with treason charges, but helps it to maintain pressure on Lissu and the opposition.

Lissu's treason charges were more than likely politically motivated. He had encouraged voters to boycott the October 2025 elections that saw President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** (2021-present) re-elected with a questionable 98% of the vote. Since the election, the government has weaponised terrorism-related charges to target the opposition and critics, as they are often non-bailable and carry heavy sentences, if not the death sentence. Lissu faces up to four years in jail on the incitement conviction but he is planning to appeal from jail, where he has been held since April 2025.

Lissu's detention and trial have been marred by allegation of violations, including denial of access to his lawyers, the banning of live broadcasts of the trial, and the arbitrary arrest of two international observers. Lissu on 27 October ended a hunger strike after prison authorities allowed him to meet privately with his lawyers.

Prior to Lissu's trial, Tanzania was facing increasing pressure regarding his detention, specifically from the **Commonwealth**, of which Tanzania is a member. The **Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)** in early November demanded that the government end Lissu's detention, launch an investigation into the post-election violence and hold talks with opposition parties. The CMAG has been placing pressure on the government since April, when it sent former **Malawian** president **Lazarus Chakwera** (2020-2025) to formally investigate the post-election violence. The government has concluded that 500 people were killed but other bodies, including the **United Nations**, have said it could be up to 2,000 *(see ARC Briefing Tanzania May 2026)*.

The government has not met any of the demands, aside from dropping the treason charges, with the CMAG confirming that it will review all matters concerning Tanzania in March 2027. The **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)** also took place from 1 to 4 November, during which it is reported that Commonwealth leaders placed pressure on Hassan regarding Lissu's trial, which could have led to the lesser charges being pursued. This would also be evidence of interference in the judicial system by the executive, showcasing its ability to place pressure on judges to either implement or withdraw charges.

The **United Kingdom (UK)** on 10 November released a statement via its foreign, Commonwealth and development office (FCDO), expressing concern over the outcome of Lissu's trial, citing the findings of a UN working group on arbitrary detention that found that Lissu's detention was arbitrary, lacking legal basis, had serious fair trial concerns and contravened the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and obligations under the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, to which Tanzania is party. Nevertheless, Tanzania continues to be able to operate in the diplomatic and international space, facing pressure but no real consequences for its democratic backsliding.

Finance minister says Tanzania close to finalising LNG project

Finance minister **Khamis Mussa Omar** told the media on 13 October that the government expects to finalise the planned $42 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in the **Lindi Region** in the coming months, but the main project partners – **Norway**-headquartered **Equinor** and UK-headquartered **Shell** – have yet to comment. Officials made a similar declaration in June, but there has been no concrete update. Negotiations largely stalled in 2023 after the government requested changes to the financial terms. The project would be the single largest investment in Tanzania but its dragged-out negotiations have raised concerns over the barriers investors can face in Tanzania.

The project, which has been in development since 2014, would access up to 47.13 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Most of the gas will be exported but a portion will be retained for domestic consumption. A faster timeline would be ideal as the region is experiencing a push in energy development. Uganda is expected to export its first oil in early 2027, **France**-headquartered **TotalEnergies** is developing a $20 billion LNG project in **Mozambique**, while **Nigeria**-headquartered **Dangote Industries** has broken ground on a refinery in **Kenya**, driving up regional energy ambitions and competition.

Strengthening Tanzania's position was the 27 October announcement that France-headquartered **Maurel & Prom** and state-owned **Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC)** had discovered 223 billion cubic feet of gas in **Mnazi Bay**, Tanzania's first discovery in over ten-years. Maurel & Prom said that production could begin as early as November. On 28 October, the government awarded TPDC four new oil and gas exploration blocks – **Mnazi Bay North**, **West Songo Songo**, **Eyasi-Wembere** and **Lindi-Mtwara** – increasing state participation in the sector.

Tanzania's economy, as outlined below, remains heavily dependent on agriculture, exposing it to climatic and agricultural productivity risks. However, the growing contribution of mining, alongside the continued importance of construction, trade and transport, points to opportunities for diversification. Mining's rising share also increases the economy's exposure to international commodity markets.

Looking forward, oil and gas could become an important additional contributor to Tanzania's GDP and economic diversification, especially if the Lindi project materialises. However, the prolonged negotiations and uncertainty over the project's implementation timetable continue to delay these benefits.

Tanzania: Top five contributors to GDP, 2021 – 2025 (%)					
Rank	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1	Agriculture, forestry and fishing (24.9%)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing (24.9%)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing (25.1%)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing (24.9%)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing (24.3%)
2	Construction (13.2%)	Construction (13.8%)	Construction (13.3%)	Construction (12.5%)	Construction (11.9%)
3	Wholesale and retail trade; repairs (8.7%)	Wholesale and retail trade; repairs (8.5%)	Wholesale and retail trade; repairs (8.6%)	Wholesale and retail trade; repairs (8.6%)	Mining and quarrying (10.3%)
4	Transport and storage (7.8%)	Transport and storage (7.7%)	Transport and storage (8.1%)	Transport and storage (8.1%)	Wholesale and retail trade; repairs (8.6%)
5	Manufacturing (7.7%)	Manufacturing (7.5%)	Manufacturing (7.2%)	Mining and quarrying (7.8%)	Transport and storage (8.3%)

Source: Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics

Tanzania expands railway ambitions

The **African Development Bank (AfDB)** announced on 4 November that Tanzania had signed a $1.2 billion financing facility with the 411km **Tabora-Kigoma** section of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), significant financing that will help it to develop its transport and logistics infrastructure. This section of the SGR, known as Lot 6, will connect the west-central Tabora with Kigoma, located on **Lake Tanganyika**, where the ports of Kigoma and **Kalemie** facilitate trade with the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**. The SGR also connects Tabora to the **Indian Ocean**, expanding this direct trade route.

The AfDB was the mandated lead arranger, and structured and arranged the partial credit guarantee (PCG) of $800m, its largest to date. Co-arrangers were **Germany**-headquartered **Deutsche Bank** and France-headquartered **Société Générale**. Other banks that joined included **United Kingdom (UK)**-headquartered **HSBC**, Germany-headquartered **Commerzbank**, **South Africa**-headquartered Nedbank, **Stanbic Bank Tanzania**, **First Abu Dhabi Bank**, **FirstBank UK** and **Bank of Africa United Kingdom**. The banks collectively committed $720m in guaranteed lending and another $480m against Tanzania's sovereign credit risk. This financing forms part of a broader mandate Tanzania has given the AfDB to mobilise $3.2 billion for its regional railway programme.

Separately, transport minister **Makame Mbarawa** announced on 24 October that the government had secured approximately $1.3 billion in funding for the **Makutupora–Tabora** and **Tabora–Isaka** sections of the SGR, making up an additional 424km of railway.

During his visit to these sections, Mbarawa confirmed that there had been construction delays but that these were linked to the contractor– **Türkiye**-headquartered **Yapi Merkezi** – adding that the government had also subcontracted **China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC)**, which was making far better progress. These sections are nevertheless expected to be completed by 2028.

The SGR's operations began in June 2024 and between then and March 2026, it transported over 5.5 million passengers. The link between **Dodoma** and **Dar es Salaam** transports an average of 280,000 passengers every month. Between July 2025 and March 2026, approximately 102,000 tonnes of cargo was carried on the SGR, earning Tsh 82.77 billion ($31.2m). Completing the additional rail and port connections will increase these earnings and improve access to regional markets.

As outlined earlier, transport and storage is in the top five contributors to Tanzania's GDP. While the **National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)** methodology does not identify how much of the overall contribution comes from the SGR specifically – it draws on road, rail, pipeline, maritime and inland water and air transport, alongside warehousing and logistics and postal and courier services – there is

evidence of increased passenger and freight movement through the SGR, which in turn is strengthening the sector.

Planner

19 – 21 Nov 2026 **(Tanzania)** 7th **Tanzania Mining and Investment Conference**

2026 **(Tanzania) Ntorya Gas Project** to begin operations

Jan 2027 **(Tanzania and Uganda)** Exports of oil via the **East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)**

19 Jun – 17 Jul 2027 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** Tanzania, **Uganda** and **Kenya** to co-host the **Africa Cup of Nations 2027 (AFCON)**

Chronology

16 Nov 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Tanzania Invest.* Tanzania grants nine gold exploration licences to **Saudi Gold Refinery**, which plans to invest up to $100m in Tanzania and begin production by 2030;

12 Nov 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Business Insider Africa*. **Air Tanzania** warns passengers of widespread schedule disruption after the early removal of engines from its Airbus A220 aircraft reduced the availability of one of the airline's most important fleets;

11 Nov 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Global Trade Review*. Tanzania signs a $1.2 billion commercial loan for its standard gauge railway project, with the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** using its largest partial credit guarantee to date to bring in nine lenders and to share part of its exposure with private insurers;

9 Nov 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Chanzo.* Opposition **Chadema** accuses police of holding ten of its leaders and members without bringing them before a court or granting police bail, alleging torture, forced confessions and restrictions on contact with lawyers and relatives;

9 Nov 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Tanzania Invest.* **National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)** reports annual headline inflation eased to 4.2% in October 2026, down from 4.3% recorded in September;

6 Nov 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Chanzo.* **Kisutu Resident** magistrate's court charges **Coletha Clavery Ntidyicha**, chairperson of opposition **Chadema**'s youth wing **BAVICHA** in **Kigoma Region**, with counselling the commission of terrorist acts;

6 Nov 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Al Jazeera*. A court acquits opposition leader and **Chadema** chairman **Tundu Lissu** of treason charges that carry the death penalty, in a case that has drawn international condemnation;

5 Nov 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Club of Mozambique*. Electricity minister **Peter Kapala** tells lawmakers that a major high-voltage line linking Zambia to **Tanzania** that will boost regional electricity trading and reliability is expected to start operations in 2029;

30 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Reuters.* President **Samia Suluhu Hassan** says Tanzania and **Angola** have agreed to connect their **Indian Ocean** and **Atlantic Ocean** transport corridors with a railway link via **Zambia** and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**;

28 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Market Screener.* Government awards state oil company **Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC)** four new oil and gas exploration blocks;

27 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Reuters.* Energy minister **Juma Homera** says Tanzania has discovered an estimated 223 billion cubic feet of natural gas in the **Mnazi Bay** area in the south of the country, the first gas discovery in more than ten years;

22 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Bloomberg*. A court charges **John Pambalu,** a senior figure of opposition party **Chadema**, with treason, adding to a widening crackdown a week ahead of the first anniversary of the deadly 2025 election protests;

20 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Tanzania Invest.* Tanzania's **Taifa Gas** and **United Arab Emirates**-headquartered **Amber Energy Investment** file an appeal with the **Fair Competition**

Commission (FCC) which has blocked the sale of **British Virgin Islands**-headquartered **Orca Energy**'s **Songo Songo** gas field to the two companies for $10;

20 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *The Chanzo.* **European Union** approves a €156m ($172.9m) package for Tanzania, but the decision does not restore direct EU budget support to the government, with the funding to be delivered through other partners and modalities after the political and human-rights deterioration surrounding the October 2025 election;

17 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Visas News.* Tanzania implements a requirement for all travellers entering the mainland to complete an online health declaration, regardless of where they are coming from, as the government introduces tighter health screening measures as **Ebola** spreads to neighbouring **Kenya**;

14 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Tanzania Invest.* **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** projects Tanzania's real GDP will grow by 6% in 2026 and 5.9% in 2027, above the **sub-Saharan Africa** average of 4.5%, with inflation forecast to average 4% and 4.2% over the same periods respectively, the lowest rate among **East African Community (EAC)** members;

13 Oct 2026 **Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)** *Reuters.* Finance minister **Khamis Mussa Omar** says Tanzania expects to finalise agreements on major investment projects in the coming months, including a $42 billion LNG development that officials hope will underpin industrialisation;

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