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CONFRONTING TORTURE AND IMPUNITY THROUGH TANZANIA'S UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

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A coalition of [United Against Torture Consortium](#) members – IRCT, FIACAT, Omega, OMCT, and REDRESS – together with Change Africa Trust, the Center for Strategic Litigation, and the Pan African Lawyers Union, calls on United Nations Member States participating in the Human Rights Council's (HRC) 4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania) to recommend that Tanzania end torture and other grave human rights violations, and ensure accountability and access to an effective remedy for victims.

Despite Tanzania's acceptance of key recommendations during its 2021 UPR, the period from 2021 to 2025 was marked by an escalation in repression, including torture, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detentions, violent crackdowns on protests, and increasing restrictions on media and digital platforms. These violations intensified around the October 2025 general elections and were carried out with near-total impunity.

Torture and violence against dissenters

State authorities and security agencies have subjected human rights defenders, activists, opposition members, lawyers, journalists, and refugees to arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention, intimidation, torture, sexual assault, and enforced disappearance.

Election-related violence (October 2025)

Following the exclusion of major opposition candidates from the 2025 elections, security forces violently suppressed nationwide protests, using live ammunition, mass arrests, excessive force, and other forms of intimidation. Reports indicated that the number of people killed in the electoral context ranged from the hundreds to as many as 3,000.

Internet shutdowns and restrictions on expression

The state imposed a 4-day nationwide internet shutdown on election day, marking the 3rd major

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internet disruption within a year. Independent media outlets faced suspension, censorship, harassment, and regulatory restrictions.

Lack of accountability

There are several documented cases of law enforcement and military officials committing multiple violations, including torture, enforced disappearances, killings, and excessive use of force. These violations appear to take place with impunity, investigations are often delayed, ineffective and lacking independence, and perpetrators remain unprosecuted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ahead of Tanzania's UPR, the submitting organisations urged the Member States to recommend Tanzania to:

Criminalise torture and end torture, arbitrary detention and enforce disappearances

- Ratify the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT), its Optional Protocol, complete the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) and adopt implementation measures, including criminalising torture in line with the UNCAT.
- End arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention, torture, sexual violence and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearances and cross-border abductions, including of human rights defenders, activists, opposition members, lawyers, journalists, refugees, and others who dissent.

Protect democratic governance and political participation

- Ratify and implement the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and adopt implementation measures to ensure free, fair, inclusive and transparent electoral processes.
- Ensure law enforcement operations, including policing of assemblies and the use of equipment, comply with international human rights standards.
- End the use of torture, other ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests, and live ammunition against peaceful protesters and political opponents.
- Refrain from internet shutdowns, blocking digital platforms, and other undue restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

Ensure accountability for human rights violations

- Guarantee safeguards for all persons deprived of liberty, including access to a lawyer and family, independent medical examinations, and detention records, and the exclusion of evidence obtained through torture or ill-treatment.
- Ensure prompt, effective, and independent investigations into torture, enforced disappearance, unlawful killings, excessive force, and other human rights violations.
- Prosecute all perpetrators, including those bearing command responsibility, in fair and transparent proceedings.
- Ensure victims' participation in investigations and access to full reparations, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and measures of non-repetition.