

UPR 4th Cycle

# NEWSLETTER



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## Strengthening Tanzanian CSOs Engagement in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) 4th Cycle: *Civil Society Priorities and the Road Ahead*

As Tanzania enters its 4th Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are once again playing a critical role in documenting realities on the ground, amplifying the voices of affected communities, and shaping international human rights dialogue. Led by the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) in collaboration with the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), CSOs are preparing a joint stakeholder report that reflects both progress made and persistent gaps in the protection of human rights.

This UPR cycle comes at a defining moment. During Tanzania's 3rd cycle UPR review (held in 2021 with outcomes adopted in March 2022), the Government received 252 recommendations. Out of these, **167 recommendations were accepted** as compliant with national laws and policies, 20 were partially accepted, and 65 were noted (not accepted). While Tanzania has accepted a significant number of recommendations in previous cycles, implementation has remained uneven, with several structural and legal challenges continuing to affect vulnerable groups.

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## Child Rights: Progress without Legal Certainty

Over the past cycle, Tanzania has taken steps to address barriers to education, most notably through the introduction of the school re-entry policy for adolescent mothers. However, the absence of a legal framework to anchor this policy raises concerns about its long-term sustainability and nationwide enforcement. Early marriage remains a critical concern, as the Law of Marriage Act and provisions of the Penal Code continue to allow girls to marry at the age of 15, contrary to international standards.

Data from civil society monitoring indicates that violence against children, including sexual violence and child labour, child trafficking, remains prevalent, particularly in rural and informal economic settings. Limited budget allocation for child protection and weak enforcement mechanisms continue to undermine national strategies.



## Women's Rights: Legal Gaps and Systemic Barriers

Gender-based violence remains one of the most reported human rights violations in Tanzania. Despite the existence of gender desks within police stations, survivors continue to face barriers related to stigma, weak investigations, and limited access to justice. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) remains inadequately addressed, with the law failing to protect adult women and not criminalizing attempted FGM.

Women's economic rights also remain constrained. Customary inheritance practices, reinforced by the Local Customary Declaration Order, continue to deny women equal access to land ownership. Women remain underrepresented in political and decision-making spaces, and gender-responsive budgeting remains weak across sectors.



## Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Unequal Enjoyment

Tanzania has expanded health insurance coverage and invested in digital transformation; however, access to quality public services remains highly unequal. Audit reports consistently highlight inefficiencies and accountability gaps in public expenditure. Child labour persists in agriculture, mining, and domestic work, while persons in rural and marginalized communities face limited access to quality education, healthcare, and social protection. Restrictive media and cyber laws further affect the enjoyment of economic and social

rights by limiting access to information and civic participation.



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## Persons with Disabilities: Inclusion Still Out of Reach

Persons with disabilities continue to face systemic exclusion from education, employment, justice, and public infrastructure. While policies and strategies exist, enforcement remains weak. Many public buildings and digital platforms are inaccessible, and protection against violence, particularly for women and children with disabilities, remains insufficient.

Tanzania has yet to ratify key regional instruments, including the African Disability Protocol, and lacks comprehensive

legislation addressing specific violations against persons with albinism and persons affected by leprosy.

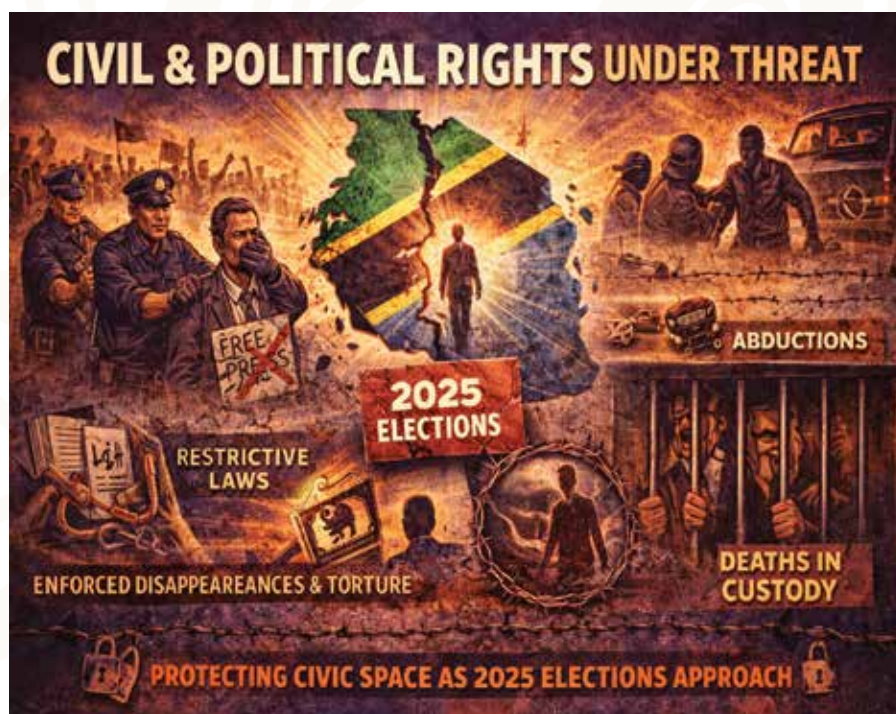


## Civic Space and Human Rights Defenders: A Shrinking Environment

Civil and political rights remain an area of serious concern. Reports throughout the review period document arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention, restrictions on peaceful assembly, and the use of restrictive laws to silence journalists, opposition leaders, and human rights defenders. Incidents of abductions, enforced disappearances, deaths in custody, and torture allegations have been reported, particularly during politically sensitive periods.

As the country approaches and reflects on the 2025 General Elections, the protection

of civic space remains a central concern for civil society and international partners.



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## Pastoralist and Indigenous Communities: Land and Livelihoods Still at Risk

Pastoralist and Indigenous communities continue to experience land dispossession, forced evictions, and lack of meaningful consultation in development and conservation projects. These actions threaten livelihoods, cultural heritage, and food security, contrary to regional and international human rights standards.



## The Role of Civil Society in the 4th Cycle

**Beyond report submission, CSOs have a sustained role throughout the UPR cycle. This includes:**

- Engagement with diplomatic missions in Dar es Salaam,
- Participation in UPR pre-sessions at national and Geneva levels,
- Advocacy for strong and measurable recommendations, and
- Post-review monitoring of government implementation.

The joint CSO report aims not only to inform UN Member States but also to serve as a national accountability tool, reinforcing dialogue between the civic sector, government institutions, and oversight bodies such as the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG).

## Looking Ahead

The UPR 4th Cycle presents an opportunity for Tanzania to translate commitments into measurable action. For civil society, it is a moment to consolidate evidence, strengthen alliances, and ensure that the voices of every group such as children, women, persons with disabilities, human rights defenders, and marginalized communities are reflected at the highest international level.

Through sustained advocacy, strategic partnerships, and credible data, Tanzanian civil society remains committed to advancing human dignity, accountability, and inclusive development for all.



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## Activity Photo



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