



Maasai International Solidarity Alliance

NEWSLETTER AUGUST - OCTOBER 2025

KEY UPDATES

Reports From the Two Presidential Commissions on Ngorongoro Will Only Be Released After Elections

Report of African Commission Joint Mission to Tanzania Confirms Human Rights Violations

MISA Submits Complaint to Verra Over Negative Impacts of Carbon Projects

IUCN Assessments of Ngorongoro and Serengeti World Heritage Sites Portray Colonial Visions of Conservation

Maasai Community Concerned About Announced Gazettement of Kwakuchinja Wildlife Corridor



CONTENTS

Ngorongoro People Commemorate One Year Since Massive Protest	4
Reports from the Two Presidential Commissions will only be Released After Elections	5
Continued Rights Violations: Destruction of Homes, Seizure of Livestock, Burning of Grazing Lands.....	6
Report of African Commission Joint Mission to Tanzania Confirms Human Rights Violations	8
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Adopts Resolution Condemning Human Rights Violations in Tanzania	9
Deteriorating Domestic Human Rights Situation Ahead of Elections.....	9
The 7 Points at the Heart of MISA's Complaint to VERRA Over Negative Impacts of Carbon Projects.....	11
MISA Delegation Travels Across Europe and US to Alert about Carbon-Driven Conflicts	13
Volkswagen Fails To Address Human Rights Concerns Linked to Climate Project	15
European Parliament Invites Maasai To Speak about Human Rights Impacts of Carbon Credits	16
Market-Based Climate Protection: Promise or Threat?	17
Manifesto of Leading CCM Party Includes Plans to Implement Carbon Projects in 40 Villages in Monduli.....	18
IUCN Assessments of Ngorongoro and Serengeti World Heritage Sites Portray Colonial Visions of Conservation	20
IUCN Calls on Pololet to be Included in Serengeti World Heritage Site	23
Overtourism in Maasailand: People Suffer, Tourists Thrive	24
Maasai Community Concerned About Announced Gazettement of Kwakuchinja Wildlife Corridor	25
Naturally Contested: Whose Nature, Whose Conservation?	27
MISA Calls on Frankfurt Zoological Society to Decolonize its Approach to Conservation	28
Contested Soda Ash Mining in Monduli	29



HUMAN RIGHTS



The Maasai are not trespassers, they are the heartbeat of Ngorongoro.



Photo: Thousands of Maasai gathered to protest in August 2024. Credit: MISA.

Ngorongoro People Commemorate One Year Since Massive Protest

In August, Maasai of Ngorongoro commemorated one year since their mass demonstration against the Tanzanian government. From August 18th to 24th, 2024, Maasai blocked the Ngorongoro-Serengeti Road in protest against the government's coercive strategies to evict Maasai from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA).

These strategies ranged from suffocation of social services such as healthcare, education and water access, to harassment and violence. Other strategies invented and implemented by the government include the requirement to show a passcard to be allowed entry to the NCA, particularly at Lodware gate, imposing fines on livestock traders and trucks supplying grains to Ngorongoro, as well as an average of TSh 46,000 (equivalent to \$20) daily for cars owned by Maasai people. The trigger of the demonstration was the delisting of villages and wards throughout Ngorongoro. The right to participate in the national and local government elections was also extinguished by August 2024.

Though the government promised to address these demands to avoid damaging the tourism industry, little has been implemented. In September, villages were restored by the same minister who delisted them. In December, the National Electoral Commission also restored voting rights in Ngorongoro. The daily parking fee of \$20 per day has been rearranged to an estimated \$50 per year. The government has, however, not restored access to services in Ngorongoro as it services the rest of the citizens in the country. State-sanctioned violence has sharply increased from September 2025 following President Samia's statement that Ngorongoro is meant for tourism and conservation, not the welfare of its people, even before the reports from the two Commissions are made public. There is now little hope that the state officials responsible for the crimes committed against the Maasai community in the last four years will be held accountable.



READ: [State-Enabled Dispossession Masked as Conservation Emergency: The Hidden War Against the Maasai in Ngorongoro - The Chanzo \(18 August 2025\)](#)



WATCH: [Kumbukumbu ya Maandamano ya Wamasai Ngorongoro \[18 - 23\] Agosti 2024](#)



Photo: President Samia. Credit: Wikimedia Commons CC BY.

Reports from the Two Presidential Commissions will only be Released After Elections

In her election campaign, President Samia publicly stated that the reports of the two Presidential Commissions on Ngorongoro had been submitted to the government but would not be made public until after the general elections on 29 October. The President's statement echoes the Arusha Regional Commissioner's statement in Loliondo, which also implored Ngorongoro residents to "maintain calmness" as they await the release of the reports.



WATCH: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/2004895267001681>

Meanwhile, Ngorongoro Conservation Commissioner Abdul-razaq Badru was in Msomera in late August to inspect infrastructure development in the area. Msomera is where relocated families from Ngorongoro have to resettle. Badru stated that he will continue working with relevant ministries to ensure that "Msomera is transformed into a model settlement, equipped with comprehensive infrastructure and essential public services" like road access, water supply, and electricity. The government is using infrastructure as propaganda for relocation. In contrast, Maasai of Ngorongoro have not received any of the money siphoned from their land through tourism: out of the TSh 704 billion that Ngorongoro has collected between July 2022 to June 2025, not a coin has reached citizens who remain deprived of social services like health and education for the last four years.



READ

[Unity in Peace: What Tanzania Can Learn from the Maasai Struggle for Land Rights - The Chanzo](#) (Chanzo, 11 September 2025)

Research paper - '[Please don't kill us; this is our ancestral land, we are not foreigners': Green grabbing, \(in\) voluntary resettlement and Maasai ethnic minority's land rights in Tanzania](#) - ScienceDirect

[Tanzania's Maasai people facing government pressure to leave - DW](#) - 09/24/2025



Endulen: A home lays in ruin after NCAA rangers demolished it, citing restrictions on renovating houses. Credit: MISA.

Continued Rights Violations: Destruction of Homes, Seizure of Livestock, Burning of Grazing Lands

While Maasai are waiting for the reports of the two Presidential Commissions, the President is not. In August, she stated that Ngorongoro should now focus on the two purposes of tourism and conservation and insisted that the new areas should be opened for tourism investment to respond to growing demand for tourist accommodations. A few days after her statement, rangers started harassing herders, chasing livestock, and denying access to waters at Ndutu in Ngorongoro, saying cows and Maasai should hide from key areas visited by tourists.

The harassment involved the demolition of several Maasai houses (including in Meshili and Endulen) and of a church at Oldupai, as well as the imposition of fines for grazing livestock at Maash/Ndutu, Endim e Ioloturot (highland forest that stretches to the former headquarter of the NCA, Empakaai, and Ormoti crater. Absurdly, people are being fined for “illegal automobile entry” to Ngorongoro because NCA laws expressly state that livestock should not be restricted, so authorities have to invent other pretexts.

In Loliondo, similar fines are imposed for livestock grazing in the Game Reserve. On the 4th of August, the government seized 41 cows allegedly grazing within Pololeti and imposed a fine of TSh 4,000,000. On the same day, the government seized another 700 sheep and goats and imposed TSh 10,000,000.



Photo: Receipts for a camping fee are given to community members who were forced to pay a livestock fine after entering the Pololeti Game Reserve.

In Loliondo, the government is also using fire to prevent livestock from going to certain areas. This appears to be a deliberate tactic aimed at displacing the Maasai by destroying their livelihoods in the dry season.

The burning extended to areas within Pololeti Game Reserve bordering settlements for fear that Maasai would graze their livestock. Fires do not only affect the Maasai and their livestock but also wildlife such as gazelles, zebras and giraffes.

These animals were found trying to save their lives by taking refuge in the neighboring Maasai villages not impacted by these reckless fires, such as Malambo, Mosonik and Irkarian.

Around the **Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA)**, Maasai are facing the same problem. Livestock are being seized and fines are imposed for grazing outside the Kilimanjaro Airport fence. The police are reported to have seized 37 cattle belonging to two families, threatening to confiscate the livestock until the family has paid a ransom fine.



READ: -

[The Oakland Institute Calls on the Tanzanian Presidential Land Commissions to Respect & Ensure Rights of Maasai Living in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area \(6 October 2025\)](#)

[Tanzania's Maasai people facing government pressure to leave - DW - 09/24/2025](#)



WATCH:

[One Year Since the Maasai Protest in Ngorongoro - Mwanzo TV](#)

[NCAA yafunguka: Mwaka mmoja baada ya Maandamano](#)



Photo: Maasai await health care from Flying Medical Service, which was grounded by the Tanzanian government. Endulen, the only hospital in Ngorongoro Division, was significantly defunded by the NCAA despite record profits from tourism. Credit: MISA.

Report of African Commission Joint Mission to Tanzania Confirms Human Rights Violations

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) has released its long-awaited report on the Joint Promotion and Fact-Finding Mission to the United Republic of Tanzania (2023), revealing serious human rights violations against the Maasai in Ngorongoro and Loliondo including:

- Violations of the principles of FPIC.
- Risk of long-term dispossession and socio-economic disruption.
- Use of force, destruction of property, and lack of accountability.
- Violation of village land rights and a disregard for legislative measures protecting indigenous communities' access to their land.
- Forced eviction of people by the Field Force Unit (FFU), burning of homes and livestock enclosures.
- Threatening of local civil society leaders.

The mission documented testimonies from affected communities and raised alarm over forced evictions, intimidation, and denial of basic services. All of these grievances are linked to conservation and relocation policies. The Commission expressed deep concern that government actions in Ngorongoro and Loliondo have undermined the rights of Indigenous Peoples to land, culture, and self-determination, as guaranteed under the African Charter. For the Maasai community, the findings expose a long-standing struggle for justice and dignity.

The ACHPR calls on the Tanzanian government to immediately halt all forced relocations, restore access to land and essential services, and engage in genuine dialogue with Indigenous communities. The report provides a crucial advocacy tool for ongoing campaigns to defend ancestral lands and ensure the protection of Maasai rights at regional and global levels.



READ: [The United Republic Of Tanzania: Joint Promotion And Fact-Finding Mission, 2023 | African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights \(Full Mission Report\)](#)



African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Adopts Resolution Condemning Human Rights Violations in Tanzania

At its 84th Ordinary Session, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted Resolution ACHPR/Res.640 (LXXXIV) 2025 on the Human Rights Situation in Tanzania, specifically condemning ongoing human rights violations in the country.

The resolution expresses grave concerns over reports of arbitrary arrests and suppression of opposition voices. It also calls on the government to implement urgent corrective measures, including the protection of freedom of expression and the restoration of civic and political rights.



READ: [Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the United Republic of Tanzania. ACHPR/Res.640 \(LXXXIV\) 2025](#)

Deteriorating Domestic Human Rights Situation Ahead of Elections

Tanzania is facing a deepening human rights crisis marked by forced disappearances and a climate of fear, ahead of the general elections scheduled for 29 October 2025.



READ:

[Tanzania: Unopposed, unchecked, unjust "Wave of Terror" sweeps Tanzania ahead of 2025 vote](#) (Amnesty International, 20 October 2025)

[Are east African governments colluding to stifle dissent?](#) (The Economist, 21 August 2025)

US [2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Tanzania](#)

[A/HRC/60/35: Enforced or involuntary disappearance - Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances | OHCHR](#) (See page 22 for info on Tanzania)

[Meeks Raises Concerns About Repression & Human Rights Violations in Advance of Tanzania's Elections](#) (US Foreign Affairs Committee, 22 October 2025)



**NO TO CARBON
CREDITS**



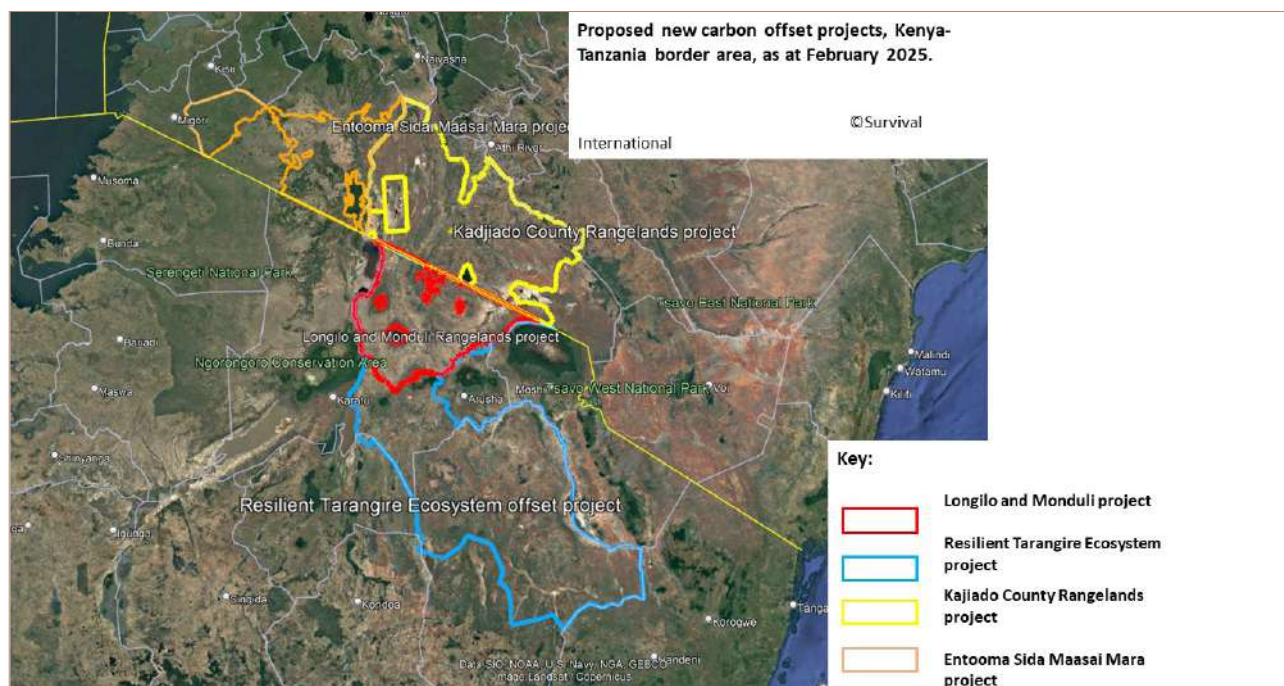


Photo: Map of planned soil carbon credit projects. Credit: Survival International.

The 7 Points at the Heart of MISA's Complaint to VERRA Over Negative Impacts of Carbon Projects

On 24 July, MISA submitted a formal complaint to Verra, the non-profit organisation that develops and manages standards for climate action. The complaint specifically targeted [Soils for the Future Tanzania](#) and its Longilo and Monduli Rangelands Carbon Project (LMRCP) #4924, in partnership with [CarbonSolve](#), [Biodiversity Research Institute \(BRI\)](#) and [Volkswagen](#) (ClimatePartner). The complaint also targeted [The Nature Conservancy \(TNC\)](#) and its Resilient Tarangire Ecosystem Project (RTEP) #4742, which is being developed in the same area, including with funding from the [Darwin Initiative \(UK\)](#).

Both projects are currently described in Verra's registry as 'under development' but are already creating conflicts and tensions on the ground. In its letter, MISA requested that Verra do not validate these projects for the following reasons:

- Failure to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** from all concerned Indigenous Peoples. Our research showed that only a few villagers who sit on the village council appear to have access to information while most villagers, as well as women and youth are largely left out of decision-making processes. The payment of 2 USD/ha by Soils for the Future Tanzania when villages get into carbon deals influences the process and is contrary to FPIC. We consider it a form of corruption.
- While the project documentation asserts that the carbon projects **will run for 40 years**, we have evidence that Soils for the Future Tanzania is trying to convince villages to sign by offering 5-year contracts.



- c. **Absence of national legislation regulating soil carbon projects**, particularly those implemented in rangeland areas where Indigenous Peoples live. No legislation exists to guide dispute resolution. The procedures outlined in the reviewed contracts lack legal standing and are impractical, especially since the designated authorities are also project beneficiaries and tend to be biased toward the proponents. Village authorities who attempted to withdraw from the project were threatened and coerced into contracts that remain unknown to the majority of community members. One prominent example is Eluai village.
- d. The proposed projects will introduce **changes to Maasai traditional grazing practices** that will destroy communal land use and sharing of natural resources. The survival of Maasai Indigenous Peoples relies on common pool resources, brotherhood, solidarity, Indigenous knowledge, and strategic mobility, especially in times of drought. It is dangerous to disrupt traditional practices, changes to which lead to the destruction of culture.
- e. Abusive contracts, as documented by MISA's legal team.
- f. The project **methodology is unsound**, and there is no scientific evidence that rapid rotational grazing will lead to increased soil carbon levels. The project cannot demonstrate additionality and will amount to climate fraud.
- g. **Soils for the Future has ignored these concerns** and continues to exert strong pressure on villages to enter into agreements under questionable circumstances, with support from the district government. After our comprehensive findings and the confusion on the ground, we reached out to both carbon project proponents to share with them the key realities facing our communities. We also communicated these same concerns to Volkswagen since they are funding the LMRCP project, but Volkswagen has not acted on them.

On September 30th, MISA presented these concerns directly to Verra representatives during a meeting held in Washington and online to have these projects terminated.



READ:

[Semi-nomadic people say Tanzanian soil carbon projects threaten their way of life](#) (Carbon Pulse, 30 September 2025)(Paywall)

[As COP30 nears, Maasai evictions expose the dark side of carbon markets](#) (Global Sisters Report, 16 October 2025)



Photo: MISA delegates give their testimonies about the human rights violations associated with carbon markets in Maasailand. Credit: MISA.

MISA Delegation Travels Across Europe and US to Alert about Carbon-Driven Conflicts

Since MISA published its [Report on Soil Carbon Credits](#) in March, it has been advocating for a moratorium on all soil carbon projects in Tanzanian rangelands and has called on all carbon proponents to respect this moratorium.

In September, several Maasai representatives travelled to Europe while others attended Climate Week in New York. A key objective of these two lobby tours was to meet decision-makers, journalists and the general public and share direct experiences about the negative impacts of carbon credit projects in Maasai Land.



READ: [Summary of roundtable discussion](#) co-organised by MISA and Carbon Market Watch in Brussels.

WATCH: [Recording](#) of the roundtable discussion.



“

We don't want to be told by Western science on how to graze our animals. **Don't teach us how to operate in our own environment. If civilization means abandoning one's culture then we as Maasai can never be civilized. We will never leave our traditional knowledge and practices behind.**”

Nasingoi

Maasai International
Solidarity Alliance (MISA)



“

“We believe carbon credits are false climate solutions. The Global North created this mess and has to fix it and not import these problems into our communities. We have always been protecting the environment and we will continue doing so in the future.”

Naipanoi

Maasai International
Solidarity Alliance (MISA)



Photos: Quotes from MISA Delegates Published By [Carbon Market Watch](#).

**WE ARE PERSUADED
TO MITIGATE CLIMATE IMPACTS
WHILE POLLUTERS
ARE BUYING
THEIR WAY OUT
TO CONTINUE
POLLUTING**



READ:

[Key demands of MISA for September Lobby Tour](#)

[Kenya: Used for tourism and Big Tech's carbon credit projects, nature conservancies hide human rights abuses against Indigenous people](#)
(New report by Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) documenting how NRT's actions have triggered a human rights crisis among Indigenous people).

[Protecting communities from carbon markets](#) (Article by REDD-Monitor on new [report from ActionAid USA](#) highlighting the dangers of carbon markets)



Photo: MISA delegation travels across Europe to denounce VW's role in community land conflicts. Credit: MISA.

Volkswagen Fails To Address Human Rights Concerns Linked to Climate Project

MISA has repeatedly called on Volkswagen to stop partnering with Soils for the Future Tanzania. Volkswagen's funding is facilitating development of project #4924 in Longido and Monduli districts. MISA has documented the land conflicts and corruption associated with this project and tried to dialogue with Volkswagen since 2024. Volkswagen refused to meet the Maasai delegation travelling this September to Germany.

Media Coverage on Volkswagen's Role in Human Rights Crisis:



READ: [Tanzania: Maasai demand Volkswagen pull out of carbon offset scheme which allegedly violates their rights and threatens to wreck their livelihoods; Volkswagen responded \(Business and Human Rights Center\)](#)



READ:

[Volkswagen: Kein Empfang für Maasai / Volkswagen: No reception for Maasai \(German\)](#)

[Klimakolonialismus? Warum Massai wütend auf VW und die EU sind | Kurier / Why the Maasai are angry with VW and the EU \(German\) \(Paywall\)](#)

[Landrechte: Carbon-Handel bedroht Rechte der Maasai in Tansania / Carbon trading threatens Maasai rights in Tanzania \(German\) \(Paywall\)](#)

[Wie VW die Existenz der Maasai in Tansania gefährden soll – DiePresse.com / How VW is threatening the existence of the Maasai in Tanzania \(German\)](#)

[Kohlenstoffzertifikate bedrohen Lebensgrundlage der Maasai | SN.at / Carbon credits threaten Maasai livelihoods \(German\)](#)



LISTEN:

https://wdrmedien-a.akamaihd.net/medp/podcast/weltweit/fsk0/336/3367184/3367184_64163270.mp3 (German, starts at 1:10:40)

[Massai leiden unter CO2 Zertifikatehandel \(German\) / Africa: Maasai suffer from CO2 certificate trading](#)



Photo: Still from the European Parliament livestream of the event. Credit: European Parliament.

European Parliament Invites Maasai To Speak about Human Rights Impacts of Carbon Credits

On 25 September, a MISA delegate presented an overview of the human rights challenges facing the Maasai community in Tanzania, including the negative impacts of fortress conservation, state-led discrimination and criminalisation of environmental activism.

The human rights abuses linked to soil carbon credit projects developed notably by the European car manufacturer Volkswagen received particular attention.

These include lack of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), destruction of traditional knowledge and payments upon signing carbon deals that amount to corruption.

The presentation in front of the EU Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights was followed by a very interesting discussion on the issue of Environmental Human Rights Defenders.



WATCH: [Presentation of the Maasai Situation](#) at the European Parliament (Livestream).



Photo: A Maasai delegate speaks at the event on CO2 certificates at the Hotel Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Haus in Berlin. Credit: MISA.

Market-Based Climate Protection: Promise or Threat?

On 22 September, a Maasai delegation took part in an event in Berlin that addressed the role of international trade in CO₂ certificates in the run-up to COP30. The event was hosted by the Research and Documentation Centre Chile–Latin America (FDCL), FIAN Germany, the Forum on Environment and Development, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the Climate Alliance and Misereor. Market-based approaches to forest- and land-based climate protection in the Global South are often presented as a win-win solution: cost-effective climate protection for the main contributors to the climate crisis, investment and development opportunities for the Global South, and at the same time a contribution to closing the global climate finance gap.

However, a Maasai delegate gave an impressive account of experiences in Tanzania, where so-called 'green' projects are leading to land loss, restricted access to vital resources and massive violations of the rights of the Maasai. Communities are often persuaded to sign contracts with false promises and insufficient information, the consequences of which they can hardly foresee. For example, as part of planned soil carbon projects, the Maasai are to be forced to change their grazing areas every two weeks for a period of 40 years – a completely unrealistic scenario that would destroy their traditional way of life. The delegate's report made it clear that market-based climate protection instruments pose significant risks to people, nature and the climate. These problems are not limited to East Africa; similar developments are well documented in the Amazon region, where the next World Climate Conference (COP30) will take place in Belém, Brazil.



READ: [Veranstaltung zu Klimapolitik auf Kosten der Rechte indigener Völker - FIAN Deutschland e.V.](#)



Photo: Still from a video of President Samia Suluhu Hassan giving a speech about Ngorongoro.

Manifesto of Leading CCM Party Includes Plans to Implement Carbon Projects in 40 Villages in Monduli

While there is a strong movement of villagers resisting the introduction of carbon business on their grazing lands in Monduli district, the leading party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) has included carbon projects in its manifesto. The party's manifesto can be seen as a road

map for development projects that will be implemented by the prospective government (once elected). Does the CCM party think carbon business projects will convince voters? The Manifesto states that 40 projects will be implemented by the Natural Resource Department of Monduli District Council. That means the government under CCM has already decided to implement these projects, even before reaching the villagers who are the landowners and victims of any decisions that affect the land. Indigenous Peoples' right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has already been grossly violated.



**NO TO COLONIAL
CONSERVATION**



Ngorongoro Conservation Area

2025 Conservation Outlook Assessment

SITE INFORMATION

Country: Tanzania (United Republic of)

Inscribed in: 1979

Criteria: (iv) (vii) (viii) (ix) (x)



Photo: The IUCN report indicates significant concern for the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Credit: Screenshot from IUCN report.

IUCN Assessments of Ngorongoro and Serengeti World Heritage Sites Portray Colonial Visions of Conservation

The IUCN recently published its Conservation Outlook Assessments of both Ngorongoro and Serengeti. The two reports reflect entrenched institutional and epistemic bias against the Maasai, their pastoralist livelihood,

and traditional ecological knowledge and are emblematic of a colonial vision of conservation that must be abolished.

Last year, MISA published the [Maasai Conservation Vision](#) which is grounded in Indigenous Peoples' rights and co-existence with nature.

The Maasai Vision is an alternative model developed by the people and that all conservation interventions should align with. It promotes pastoralism as central to biodiversity conservation in Northern Tanzania.



Photo: Maasai co-exist with wildlife, Ngorongoro. Credit: MISA.

In stark contrast with the Maasai Conservation Vision, the IUCN report on Ngorongoro portrays Maasai presence in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) as ecologically destructive, repeatedly invoking “overgrazing,” “excessive livestock,” and “degraded rangelands” to frame pastoralism as a threat to ecosystems and wildlife. This ignores long-established evidence that Maasai grazing practices preserve ecological balance and enhance biodiversity.

The fixation on “*carrying capacity*” imposes rigid, reductionist models that disregard and undermine the strategic mobility central to Maasai land stewardship through pastoralism.

Even more shocking, the report on NCA does not cite any independent scientific evidence supporting the claims that Maasai people and livestock are a threat to the ecosystem.

We counted at least 20 statements that are anti-livestock or anti-coexistence. The vast majority of these statements are not referenced at all (!) while a few reference old state reports, published by the NCAA in 2011, 2013 or 2018 or by Tanzania as a state party reporting to UNESCO in 2016. The fact that researchers cannot conduct independent assessments in NCA is a major limitation that should be acknowledged in the report, as it renders its conclusions completely useless and largely influenced by the state agenda.

IUCN’s framing of human and livestock’s presence as “degradation” and “encroachment” casts Maasai livelihoods as a conservation liability while concealing the real drivers of ecological strain such as land alienation, tourism expansion, and the historical land dispossession by colonial powers for the establishment of the Serengeti National Park, to which IUCN participated.



IUCN's advocacy for population "*reduction*" or "*relocation*" perpetuates and reproduces a colonial logic that equates human absence with environmental purity. Equally troubling, the report calls for "*monitoring*" Maasai lifestyles to ensure they do not negatively impact the environment, as if traditional knowledge was static or dangerous, denying Maasai the ability to act as sophisticated ecological managers. IUCN's depiction of human-wildlife interactions only through the lens of conflict and disease erases the Maasai's long tradition of coexistence, reverence for wildlife, and adaptive grazing systems. Further, the IUCN reports advance a tourism-centered vision that treats Maasai culture as a blemish rather than part of the ecosystem's living heritage. The reports barely mention Maasai land rights and ignore the obligation to seek Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before any project or intervention on Indigenous Peoples lands.

In doing so, IUCN perpetuates a colonial conservation paradigm pathologizing pastoralism and displacing Maasai in the name of nature conservation.

MISA calls on IUCN to change its approach to conservation and apologize for past and current wrongdoings. IUCN should revise its two Assessments in light of [Resolution 008 on "Conservation and sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism"](#), recently adopted at the IUCN Congress. This resolution calls on all States to observe the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists IYRP2026 and include the conservation and restoration of rangelands as a priority objective in their national strategies and plans. The resolution also calls on all States to respect and protect the rights of pastoralists, including customary rights over their lands and natural resources.

READ:

[Ngorongoro Conservation Area | World Heritage Outlook](#) (IUCN Report)



[Can UNESCO Accommodate Both Preservation and Human Rights?](#)
(Foreign Policy, 12 August 2025)

[Why Indigenous knowledge must be preserved](#) (Development and Cooperation, 22 August 2025)



Photo: Loliondo now Pololet in 2022. Violence underpinning the creation of World Heritage Sites. Credit: MISA.

IUCN Calls on Pololet to be Included in Serengeti World Heritage Site

The IUCN's 2025 report on the Serengeti advances a troubling narrative that celebrates the 2022 forced removal of Maasai pastoralists from Loliondo for the establishment of Pololeti Game Reserve as an ecological success.

The report asserts that *"removing livestock and pastoralist people"* improved water infiltration and reduced fires. Equally alarming is the report's lack of scientific and professional integrity. It relies on studies conducted between 2017 and 2021 to justify outcomes allegedly resulting from post-2022 events rendering its conclusions methodologically invalid.



READ: [Serengeti National Park](#)
[| World Heritage Outlook](#) (IUCN Report)

Moreover, the IUCN minimizes the 2022 violent evictions that led 42 people being injured and 150 people being arrested as well to the confiscation of over 68,000 Maasai livestock between July 2022 and September 2025, describing these atrocities merely as *"controversial removals."* Such language trivializes serious human rights violations. The report's selective use of evidence and self-referencing such as citing UNESCO and IUCN (2024) to validate IUCN's own policy agenda reveals deep institutional bias. Instead of championing inclusive, rights-based conservation, the report promotes exclusionary practices that disguise political dispossession as environmental management efforts. The IUCN's call to extend World Heritage status to Pololeti, immediately following violent evictions, exposes this hypocrisy. It seeks global prestige to mask abuse and rewarding injustice against Maasai under the guise of conservation.



Photo: A line of vehicles shuttles tourists in Serengeti. Credit: Creative Commons.

Overtourism in Maasailand: People Suffer, Tourists Thrive

Under President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania's tourism sector has developed rapidly and has been promoted worldwide through initiatives such as the promotional film 'The Royal Tour.' Tourist numbers have skyrocketed: the number of international visitors increased by 132.1% between 2021 and 2024, and domestic tourism grew by an astonishing 307.9%. Revenues have also skyrocketed, with international revenues having tripled to US \$3.9 billion, while domestic revenues have increased by more than 350%. Behind these figures lies a growing crisis for the Maasai people. Across Maasai land, traditional grazing lands are being seized for the rapid construction of luxury hotels and tourist facilities. Investors are being given huge tracts of land to build luxury lodges, while locals are regularly denied permission to build homes for their families. This follows a public directive from the President calling for Ngorongoro to be 'handed over to investors.' Tighter security measures in the affected areas further restrict access for local herders. While the government celebrates rising visitor numbers and increasing revenues, the Maasai continue to bear the hidden costs of this so-called progress. Maasai do not benefit from tourism development: employment in the tourism

industry is prohibited by the government in Ngorongoro and tourism revenues are captured by the central government, with no positive impacts on the people. The Maasai Conservation Vision calls for Fair Tourism, including the right of Indigenous Peoples to control and manage tourism on their lands and benefit from it.



WATCH:

[Earthwise: The great Maasai Mara wildebeest migration and human threat.](#) In Kenya, tourism and hotels developments are increasingly contested for their impacts on the environment and wildlife.

Operation in Masek, Ndutu, by NCAA rangers denying the pastoralists access water to make room for tourists.

[KIVUMBI! POLISI NGORONGORO WAZUIA MIFUGO KUNYWA MAJI](#)



READ:

TAWA praises Samia for "revitalizing the tourism industry" <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/18dxmEx2nb/>

[Ngorongoro Crater tops tourist attractions in Africa - Daily News Outcry over Ritz-Carlton in Mara | Southern & East African Tourism Update \(Kenya\).](#)

[Kenyan activist tries to block new Ritz-Carlton safari lodge opening | WTVB \(Kenya\).](#)

['Royal tour film' drives tourism boom - Daily News](#)

[Being a responsible safari tourist - Horizon Guides](#)

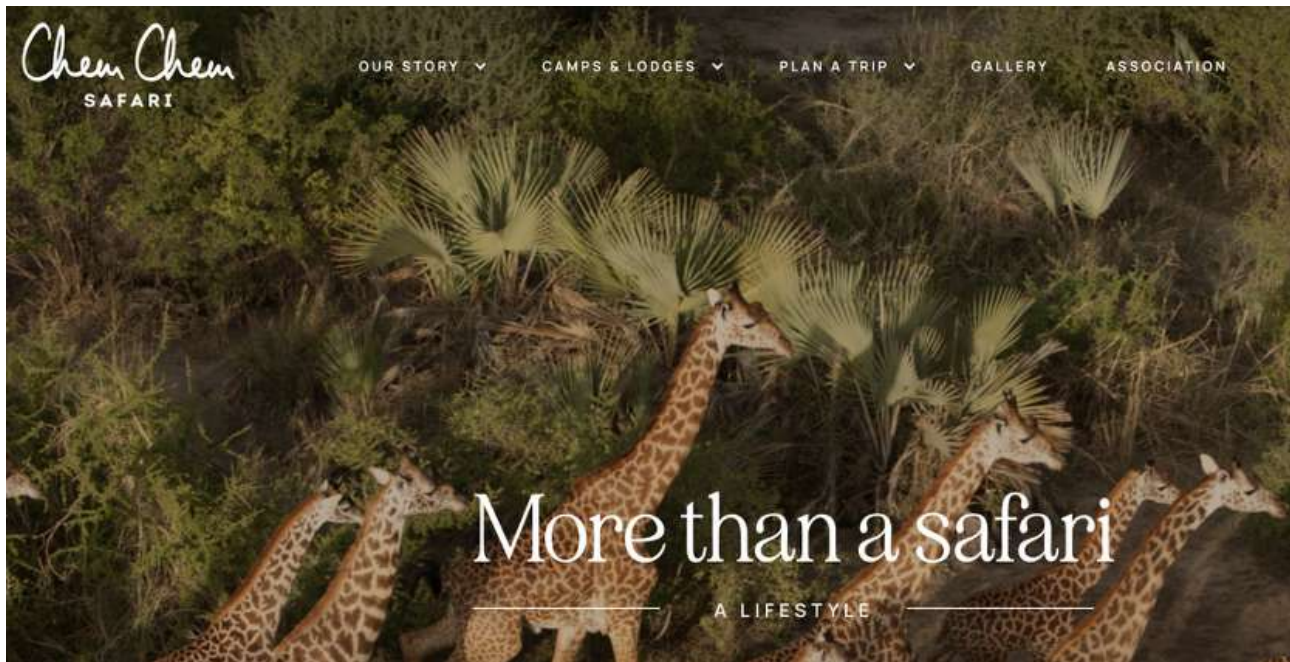


Photo: Screenshot from the website of Chem Chem Safari, part of the Chem Chem Association, which lobbied for the gazettement of the Kwakuchinja Wildlife Corridor. Credit: Chem Chem.

Maasai Community Concerned About Announced Gazettement of Kwakuchinja Wildlife Corridor

The so-called Kwa Kuchinja Wildlife Corridor connects Tarangire National Park and Manyara National Park and extends to the Great Serengeti Ecosystem. It covers an estimated 280 sq kilometers. The whole area falls under village land and includes the villages of Mswakini Juu, Mswakini Chini, Naitolia, Oltukai, Esilalei, Losirwa in Monduli district and Olasiti, Vilima Vitatu and Minjingu in Babati (with additional villages also facing impacts). It is said to be a vital conservation area as it allows movement of wildlife between different habitats. In 2009, conservationists declared the area as in critical status due increased human activities.

In the past 20 years, there have been substantial interventions in the area by conservation agencies and organizations like USAID.

Since the corridor has no legal conservation status, conservationists have relied heavily on community meetings, land-use planning, and other initiatives to try to achieve official legal protection of the wildlife corridor.

Community members of the above villages have consistently resisted the gazettement of the area for the obvious fear of losing access to grazing areas and water points which are essential to their livelihood.

In response to advocacy efforts by conservationists such as [Chem Chem Association](#) (a safari lodge) with support from the [Foundation Segré in Switzerland](#), the government of Tanzania has announced its plans to gazette the area in a government notice (GN).

The plan is to double the Corridor size from 280 Sq Kilometer to 600 Sq Kilometers. This is an obvious threat to the village lands on which Indigenous Peoples depend for survival, cultural practices and beliefs.

The Wildlife Conservation Act 289 empowers the Minister of Natural Resource and Tourism to establish Wildlife Corridor but under very strict conditions under a newly promulgated subsidiary legislation in 2016 called The Wildlife Conservation (Wildlife Corridors, Dispersal areas, Buffer Zones and Migratory routes) Regulations, GN. No. 123 of 2018. This law lays a long legal procedure which the Minister responsible must comply with before designating any area as a Wildlife Corridor. The principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is given significant weight. Surprisingly, the conservation organizations are applauding the decision of the government to gazette the area, while the landowners (from 11 villages) that MISA recently visited are not aware of anything.

If at all this happens without obtaining the informed consent of villagers, it will again mark another systematic attack on the Maasai community in the name of conservation.

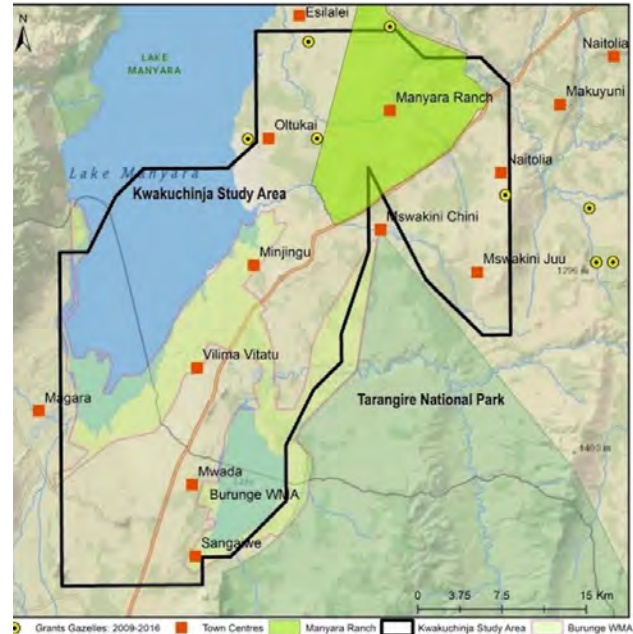


Photo: Map of the Kwakuchinja area.



*Photo: The "Biodiversity Wall" at the Museum of Natural History in Berlin, where three Maasai delegates spoke about the Maasai conservation vision.
Credits: Museum of Natural History Berlin.*

Naturally Contested: Whose Nature, Whose Conservation?

On 23 September 2025, Maasai representatives spoke at the Museum of Natural History in Berlin about colonial continuities in global nature conservation. The event, organised by the museum's Centre for Humanities of Nature, MISA and Survival International, highlighted how European governments – including Germany – are funding projects in the Global South with billions in subsidies to large conservation organisations, often leading to the displacement of Indigenous communities. Using the Serengeti ecosystem as an example, the speakers showed that under the guise of nature conservation, thousands of Maasai have been displaced from their land in Loliondo, Pololeti and Ngorongoro – often by force.

German development and nature conservation organisations such as the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), which supports the Tanzanian park authority TANAPA with vehicles and equipment, have long been the subject of criticism.

The participants called for the decolonisation of nature conservation: instead of displacing people from protected areas, nature conservation must be shaped together with local communities – in harmony with their rights, cultures and ways of life. As a counterproposal to colonial continuities in nature conservation, MISA presented the [Maasai Conservation Vision](#).



READ: [Naturally Contested: Whose Nature, Whose Conservation? | Museum für Naturkunde](#) (Museum Event Description)



Photo: Maasai protest the Frankfurt Zoological Society. Credit: MISA.

MISA Calls on Frankfurt Zoological Society to Decolonize its Approach to Conservation

In September 2025, MISA held a meeting with the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) at Frankfurt, Germany, with a view to address FZS's involvement in Maasai rights violations in Loliondo and Ngorongoro. MISA raised concerns about FZS's role in the establishment of Pololeti Game Reserve and FZS financing of the Ngorongoro Land Use Plan.

In the draft District Land Use Plan (2023-2043), FZS described the Ngorongoro division as a "land without people," a year before the government delisted villages in Ngorongoro, which tends to indicate FZS was privy to government plans. Another concern raised by MISA is that FZS works through the government (District Council) to pressure people to agree to their projects, which impairs communities' right to FPIC.

The meeting also touched on the issue of carbon credits. While community information indicates FZS is planning to implement forest carbon projects in Loliondo, particularly Engusero Sambu Forest, FZS stated that it has no such plans. There is enormous fear in Loliondo that carbon in Engusero Sambu might change the area into a form of conservation that limits access for pastoralists, as was the case with Pololeti Game Reserve.

When MISA introduced its Maasai Conservation Vision that is clearly against trophy hunting, FZS stated that it disagrees with that component of the Vision. FZS believes trophy hunting adds a layer of conservation protection and brings income to communities. MISA rejects trophy hunting in principle as a cruel system that does not benefit wildlife nor people.

Experience from Loliondo shows that trophy hunting is the most significant trigger of corruption and state capture, leading to massive violations of human rights. FZS' pro-hunting stance explains why it has now employed Maurus Msuha – the most pro-trophy hunting former director of the Wildlife Division – as new Country Director. This position further shows a close nexus between the Tanzanian government, Otterlo Business Corporation (OBC) and FZS.



READ:

[How German government funds are used to dispossess Tanzania's Maasai in Serengeti land grab](#) (Article in Mongabay, 29 November 2024)

[Germany's state-owned KfW bank linked to rights violations - PressReader](#)



Photo: Lake Natron. Credit: MISA.

Contested Soda Ash Mining in Monduli

The nine villages surrounding Lake Natron, Engaresero, Pinyinyi, Wosiwosi, Alaililai, Ilchangit Sapukin, Noondoto, Gelai Lubwa, Gelai Merugoi, and Magadini, have issued a press statement opposing the planned construction of a soda ash factory near the lake. While the proposed soda ash extraction project at Lake Natron has been suspended, it is anticipated that mining will take place in the Engaruka area, posing similar threats to people livelihoods and grazing areas.



WATCH:

[WANANCHI WA VIJJI 9 WAOMBA SERIKALI KUSITISHA UCHIMBAJI NA USINDIKAJI WA MAGADI SODA ZIWA NATRON.](#)



READ:

[Wananchi watahadharisha mradi wa magadi soda Ziwa Natron | Mwananchi](#)
[Controversial mining project in Tanzania's Lake Natron halted - BirdLife International](#)

[Tanzania Protects Flamingos: Soda Ash Mining Halted at Lake Natron](#)