



**PRESS STATEMENT ON STATE ASSAULT ON PRESS FREEDOM AND FREEDOM
OF ASSEMBLY AS PROVIDED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

February 5, 2022

On February 3, 2022 wardens from Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA), together with the police force unit, detained six (6) journalists within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) in Northern Tanzania. The journalists were searched without warrant, then interrogated, harassed and verbally insulted at the Lodoare Gate.

After four hours of detention, they were released on condition that they should meet with one Bajuta, a staff of NCAA. They met him in Karatu around midnight where he intimidated them. He warned the journalist that they should never again enter the NCA without accreditation from the authority; However, the journalists had followed all legal procedures including paying the entry fees.

The arrested journalists, and their media houses, are Amina Ngahewa (Mwananchi Digital), Allen Isaack (Nipashe), Profit Mmanga (Wasafi TV), Apolo Benjamin (Daily News Digital), Janeth Mushi (Mwananchi) and Julius Sagati (Star TV).

The journalists aimed at covering a meeting organized by the Maasai pastoralists in Nainokanoka Ward that intended to protests against gross violations of their various human rights and land rights as well as plans by the Tanzanian state to forceful evict them from their ancestral land.

On the morning of the arrest the police together with NCAA wardens invaded and surrounded en masse the ground where the Maasai pastoralists planned to hold their peaceful rally. The aim of this heavy presence of the armed force and wardens is apparently to scare away Maasai indigenous pastoralists not to attend the rally in fear and deny them freedom of expression.

We argue Tanzanian state to desist from attacking press freedom and freedom of assembly

- We condemn, with extreme disquiet, this violation of press freedom in Tanzania as it is not only against human right standard but also it breaches the constitution of the United



Republic of Tanzania. The arrest breaks Tanzanian laws and international legal instruments protecting press freedom of which URT is affirmed to conform with .

- In the same strength deploying the police and the wardens in a peaceful community rally is regrettably absurd and seriously contravenes the right of assembly and peaceful environment
- Intimidating the Maasai from attending a peaceful rally together with attempts to prevent the press from reporting the rally is a failed strategy to silence the Maasai and to ensure that the public remains unaware of the chronic Maasai woes in Ngorongoro.

Chronic Maasai woes in Ngorongoro Conservation Area

One of the objectives of the very establishment of NCA namely, “to safeguard and promote the interests of Maasai citizens of the United Republic of Tanzania engaged in cattle ranching and diary industry within the [Ngorongoro] Conservation Area.”

- Ignoring pastoralists in developing NCA management plans and in managing the area.
- Restriction to suffocate the Maasai and force them to move away out of frustrations.
- Poverty and starvation in the midst of plenty. The indicators of deteriorating human well-being including 50% of the Maasai being very poor while 70% have acute hunger.
- Denial of the rightful share of income accrued from their ancestral land is responsible for the fact that 64% of Maasai indigenous pastoralists in Ngorongoro being illiterate.
- Onslaught media propaganda to depict that the Maasai are destroying NCA.
- An ever lingering threat of forceful eviction from ancestral land.

This is happening while there is an increased human activities caused by tourism including hotels and cars. There are many rampantly constructed tourists accommodation facilities in NCA including some built right on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater.

While there are less than 90,000 Maasai pastoralists residents in Ngorongoro; there are well over 700,000 tourist visiting the area per year travelling in massive and noisy greenhouses gases emitter vehicles and aircrafts.



Facts ignored by NCAA

That, Ngorongoro Conservation is customary and ancestral land of the Maasai pastoralists. The 25 villages in the area are no less villages than the rest of villages in the country.

That, In 1958 the British colonial regime in Tanganyika forcefully evicted the Maasai to give room for the creation of the now nearly 15,000 km² Serengeti National Park.

- That NCA is a Multiple Land Use area where the residents co-exist with wild animals while the tourism business flourishes.
- The British colonial Government promised never to evict the Maasai from NCA again.

Recommendations

- The NCAA and government machinery should observe freedom expression, freedom of the community to express their grievances, freedom of assembly and media freedom
- NCAA stop immediately harassment and threats to the community leaders and human right defenders when they are trying to receive information from the community
- We argue NCAA to stop using the media to make propaganda on wrong portrayal of the image of the community and allow free media to access the community
- Establish a multi-stakeholder commission composed of self-identified representatives from the pastoralists, ecologists, conservationists and human rights advocates to develop a rights-based approach to manage and preserve the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.
- Revoke the eviction plans of the MNRT and the NCAA, and ensure the respect and protection of indigenous pastoral communities' rights to life, livelihood and cultural integrity; and the respect for their fundamental rights and freedoms;
- Fully recognize and support indigenous pastoralist communities' sustainable practices and systems of conservation and management of resources;
- Address hunger and starvation of the Maasai lifting the ban on gardens in 25 villages and the restrictions imposed on the movement of livestock for pasture and water;



- Organize an independent committee to investigate decades of injustices and human rights violations of the MNRT and NCAA against the indigenous pastoralists.

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