



UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

**A REBUTTAL OF CLAIMS
ABOUT THE SO-CALLED INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE IN TANZANIA**



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A REBUTTAL OF CLAIMS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN TANZANIA

The United Republic of Tanzania, famously known as the land of Kilimanjaro, Serengeti, Ngorongoro and Zanzibar is a unified and democratic nation of more than 120 ethnic groups who identify themselves first and foremost as Tanzanians, with Kiswahili language as their unique identity and symbol of national cohesion. These ethnic groups derived from the unique Bantu and Nilotic language groups that inhabited the territory, now known as Tanzania for thousands of years. The Nilotic was the last group to migrate to this area up till the 18th century. The Maasai belong to this group and are mostly found in Arusha region of Tanzania. It suffices to state that the Maasai are part of the 120 ethnic groups in Tanzania. Their legal status is no different from the rest of Tanzanians and they enjoy the rights guaranteed to and enjoyed by all Tanzanians. The legal system of Tanzania does not provide for indigenous people rather, it recognises only citizens of Tanzania, hence the firm stance by the Tanzanian government that there are no indigenous people in the country.



Some of the ethnic groups in Tanzania. From top left the Barabaig from Manyara, top right the Hadzabe from Arusha, bottom left the Makonde from Mtwara and bottom right the Gogo from Dodoma.

COLONIALISM AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

In Tanzania, indigenous concept found favour during the colonial era; a notion intended to belittle local communities as inferior and there has never been critical thinking to balance the nuance of this definition. As a result, underdeveloped societies are defined as indigenous rendering their culture "alien" and of low esteem. It is in this regard that we have difficulties in accepting the notion hence the definition itself. We believe that culture adopts itself to the environment as it evolves.

Colonialism subjected pastoralist societies in Africa to perpetual marginalization and discrimination leading them to remain backward. Cognizant of this situation, immediately after independence, Tanzania adopted measures that were meant to engender the wellbeing of all people regardless of their ethnicity or tribal affiliation to redress inherent imbalances. The Government invested heavily on the provision of social amenities and economic empowerment as well as political participation for all communities including the minority groups. Most societies have evolved overtime, taking up new ventures in addition to the customary ones. Good examples of these are the Maasai people whose vibrant culture is a part of our national identity.

HISTORY OF LOLIONDO AND NGORONGORO

The 4,000 square kilometers which constitute the Loliondo Game Controlled Area, has stood unoccupied land since time immemorial and was designated a protected wildlife area by law from 1891 under German Rule, this lawful status continued under British rule and during independence in 1961 to date. The Loliondo Game Controlled Area was never occupied until after independence in 1961 when people began to encroach this lawfully protected area. Therefore, no tribe has any basis or legal claim of right of customary or traditional right of occupancy of the Loliondo Game Controlled Area.

The Maasai cannot be considered indigenous to the Ngorongoro Conservation area as they arrived in the Ngorongoro about 150 years ago to find the Hadzabe who had settled there 3000 years ago and the Datoga who had settled there 400 years ago. The Maasai chased away the majority of the people of these tribes and became dominant over the area. Therefore, there are other tribes which also reside in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. It is in this context that the Maasai are neither indigenous to the Loliondo nor the Ngorongoro. The claim to that effect is therefore a mere fabrication.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES IN THE LOLIONDO GAME CONTROLLED AREA AND NGORONGORO CONSERVATION AREA

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has been addressing the challenges in the Loliondo Game Controlled Area which are distinct from the challenges in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area through consultations with the local communities in strict consideration of their human and peoples' rights.

Challenges in Loliondo

The challenges caused by encroachment into the 4,000 square kilometers of the Loliondo Game Controlled area has been addressed by leaving 2,500 square km of the lawfully reserved land to the people who encroached into the area in consideration of their livelihoods and the right to life.

This allocated land is almost the size of Luxembourg land size (2,586 sq km) or four times bigger than the land area of Singapore (624 sq km). The remaining 1,500 square kilometres of land is retained as Game Controlled Area for continued protection of the wildlife and the environment for the benefit of the present and future generations of humankind.

1,500 square kilometres of the land has been reserved and demarcated for conservation as this area is also a water source for the Serengeti in Tanzania and the Maasai Mara in Kenya. It is also a migratory route for the wildebeests. The Government is ensuring that socio-economic rights of its people in the 2,500 square kilometres are being realised through the provision of social services like sanitation, electricity, roads, health, and facilitation in livestock keeping and farming.

Challenges in Ngorongoro

The challenges in the Ngorongoro are brought about by an increasing human population of 8,000 with 20 to 30 livestock in the year 1959 to about 110,000 people and 813,000 livestock in 2019. This is coupled with a failing multiple land use model for humans and wild animals to coexist as there are human-wildlife conflicts resulting in deaths and destruction. It should be noted that this is a Conservation Area. Therefore, no permanent structures can be established and farming and other economic activities is prohibited. As a result, poverty is increasing, and the Government continues to budget and supply the people in the area with food.

VOLUNTARY RELOCATION

The overpopulation and demands from the people for increased social services is being addressed through a voluntary relocation programme designed in consultation with the local community. Those who apply are being relocated to Msomera Village in Tanga Region of Tanzania where their traditions and customs can be maintained, and they are able to involve themselves in income generating activities. The relocation package includes title deed to a house on a 3-acre plot of land, designated grazing land, watering-holes, farmland, schools, health centres, a hospital, water and electricity. To date 551 households amounting to 3,010 people with 25,521 livestock have voluntarily relocated to Msomera Village



Newly constructed health facility at Msomera Village, Handeni District, Tanga.



Newly constructed school at Msomera Village, Handeni District, Tanga.



Shelters for those who voluntarily relocate from Ngorongoro and Loliondo.



Construction of road infrastructure at Msomera Village.

INVESTORS IN THE LOLIONDO GAME CONTROLLED AREA

The Loliondo Game Controlled area was established for conservation and tourism purposes, and since the 1990s four investors have been lawfully operating in the area through a public and transparent process. In 1992 the Government issued a public tender to utilize the Loliondo Game Controlled area which is also a designated hunting block. Many companies submitted bids and the OBC from the UAE won the tender.

Apart from the OBC, there are also three other companies within this same area which have invested in photographic tourism being Andbeyond Klein's Camp, Thomson Safari and Taasa Luxury Lodge. Therefore, OBC is not the only investor in the Loliondo Game Controlled area.

TRANSPARENCY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The Government has been open and invited the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing to undertake Mission Visits in these areas and we are waiting for their confirmation dates. The Government also extended the same invitation to the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights which undertook a Mission Visit in Tanzania from the 22nd to 28th of January 2023. The government is looking forward to receiving the recommendations of the Mission.



Amb. Fatma M. Rajab, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation briefing the diplomatic community in Tanzania concerning the Government measures in Loliondo and Ngorongoro.

It is important for the Special Procedures to witness for themselves the challenges in these areas, to familiarise themselves with the Tanzanian context and the lives of the people in these areas, the history and land tenure system as well as the reality on the ground. Rather, than relying on propaganda based on false and fabricated images and information being submitted to the Special Procedures Mechanism.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania shall continue with its concerted efforts to safeguard the human rights of its people in the Loliondo, Ngorongoro and throughout the country, in line with the Constitution and obligations emanating from different human rights instruments to which it is party.