



Tanzania

Assessment: Fair

Trend: ⇌

Capital: Dar es Salaam

Type of Government: Republic

Head of Government: President Benjamin

William Mkapa (since 23 November 1995)

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International
Cooperation: Jakay Mrisho Kikwete

Population: 36,232,074

Human Development Index Ranking: 151

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tanzania has a **fair** record of support for democracy abroad. This is particularly evident in the eastern and southern African sub-regions, a part of Africa where Tanzania traditionally has had widespread influence, especially during the struggle against colonial rule. Opposition parties were legalized in Tanzania in 1992 and open competitive elections conducted in 1995. Yet these improvements in democratic governance domestically have not been translated into support for democracy as an important foreign policy objective.

Although Tanzania has generally opposed unconstitutional changes of governments in the region, as demonstrated by its imposition of trade sanctions against the military regime in Burundi in 1996, it has accepted elections won through fraud and manipulation, as occurred in Zimbabwe, for example. Tanzania also has continued to support authoritarian regimes outside Africa, thanks to its socialist heritage and a long-standing relationship with China, its cold war ideological role model. Thus, despite the end of the cold war a decade ago, Tanzania still votes consistently against discussing the human rights situation in authoritarian states such as China, Cuba, Iran, Iraq and the Sudan. Tanzania has continued to hold onto the general view - common among many of Africa's political elite - that multi-party political systems are conflict-inducing and hence not appropriate for multi-ethnic societies.

FOREIGN RELATIONS BACKGROUND

Shortly after independence in 1961, Tanzania identified its foreign policy priorities as the pursuit of racial equality, collective self-reliance and world peace. Yet Julius Nyerere, the country's first President, was well aware of the limited influence Tanzania could have in world affairs, admitting at the United Nations, "we small powers can have no...illusions. Only in an organization like the UN can we hope to make our voice heard on international issues."¹ At the regional and sub-regional levels, Tanzania actively supported liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, using the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Front-Line States (FLS) organization as fora for pursuing de-colonization. Furthermore, the OAU decided to base the headquarters of its Liberation Committee in Dar es Salaam.

After 30 years of single-party rule, Tanzania held its first competitive elections in October 1995 under pressure from its international donors to accept economic reforms and allow political pluralism. Electoral controversies have diminished, but remain a major source of conflict on the federated semiautonomous island of Zanzibar.

With the death of Nyerere in 1999, the man whose name had been synonymous with the country's foreign affairs for three decades, Tanzania found itself facing new foreign policy challenges. Key among these have been the continuing conflicts in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Democratization in Africa as such is not a foreign policy goal for Tanzania. Rather, Tanzania has joined ranks with other regional leaders and continued to criticize the West over pressures to democratize, charging neocolonialism and attempts to dictate the continent's future.



RESPONSE TO OVERTHROW OF DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED GOVERNMENTS

Tanzania has a good record of condemning the overthrow of constitutional regimes and regained power through a military coup that toppled the democratically-elected government of Hutu President Sylvester Ntibantunganya on 25 July 1996. Tanzania was the force behind the embargo adopted by Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda, at Arusha on 31 July 1996, and the first to enforce it. The communiqué read by then Foreign Minister Jakaya Kikwete stressed that the regime in Bujumbura should undertake “specific measures aimed at the country’s return to constitutional order” and the immediate restoration of the national assembly and political party activities.² He added that the national assembly in Bujumbura was a democratic institution that derived its mandate from the people of Burundi. An important factor in Tanzania’s strong response was the desire to stem a growing influx of refugees escaping the conflict.

Tanzania’s response to overthrows of democratically-elected governments can also be seen in its actions within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which it is a member. At a meeting of SADC’s Inter-State Defense and Security Committee (i.e. Defense Ministers), in Cape Town, South Africa in 1995, Tanzania endorsed SADC’s decision to take collective action in cases of illegal attempts to remove governments by force. This commitment to respond collectively to unconstitutional regime changes led to a number of interventions in the region, including SADC’s military intervention by South Africa and Botswana to restore democracy in Lesotho in September 1998, at the invitation of the Lesotho Government. When SADC met at its annual summit in Mauritius in 1998, Tanzania strongly supported calls to brand Jonas Savimbi a war criminal for walking away from elections and restarting the war in Angola. Tanzania also endorsed a 1997 OAU summit resolution condemning military coups as a method of changing governments.

As a member of the Commonwealth, Tanzania has consistently supported resolutions condemning military takeovers of governments. It endorsed the Harare Declaration adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government at its 1991 summit in Zimbabwe, and the establishment of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group

governments. In the case of Burundi, Tanzania went beyond condemnation and took the lead in imposing regional sanctions on the military regime of strongman Major Pierre Buyoya. Buyoya, a Tutsi, had lost democratic elections in 1993, but (CMAG) in 1995 address serious or persistent violations of the Harare Declaration’s fundamental political values, including democratic governance. Furthermore, Tanzania joined other countries in condemning the Abacha regime in Nigeria for executing Ken Saro-Wiwa and other minority-rights activists, which led to Nigeria’s suspension from the Commonwealth. Tanzania also joined the Commonwealth consensus to suspend Pakistan after General Pervez Musharraf overthrew an elected government in 1999.

RESPONSE TO MANIPULATION OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES

Tanzania has been less than willing to condemn electoral malpractices, particularly when the perpetrator regimes are its allies. This is due in part to its socialist legacy of one party rule, but also because like several African states, Tanzania perceives commenting on another country’s electoral process as an intervention in that country’s internal matters. Tanzania therefore did not condemn controversial elections held recently in Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, the Gambia, Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Togo and Madagascar.

In Kenya, for example, President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya was re-elected for a fifth term amid charges of rigging and politically-instigated violence in December 1997. Yet Tanzanian President Mkapa congratulated him, saying the pluralist elections were a “success” and that the manner in which the elections were conducted had given honor and respect to the entire African continent. “The success has shown clearly that Kenya and other African states do not need to be taught democracy,”³ Mpaka stated. Mkapa’s congratulations came in spite of the fact that the Moi regime had denied registration to Saba Saba, a political party allied to Kenneth Matiba, Moi’s foremost political opponent in the 1992 multi-party elections.

Similarly, Tanzania did not defend democracy in Zambia in 1996 when, in an attempt to secure re-election, President Fredrick Chiluba amended the constitution to exclude as a candidate his only serious political rival, former President Kenneth Kaunda. Chiluba also insisted on a flawed voter registration process and persecuted



journalists and domestic observer groups that cried foul. After the voting, Kaunda was arrested on dubious charges of treason and imprisoned for several months. Tanzania remained similarly mute with regard to Uganda's "no-party" democracy, in which candidates are allowed to run only as individuals. President Yoweri Museveni has barred political parties in Uganda, arguing that they are tribally based.

In Zimbabwe, Tanzania joined SADC in rejecting the use of sanctions against Mugabe and his ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), even before the elections were held. In a meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers in London in March, 2002, Tanzania joined other African nations in voting as a bloc to support Zimbabwe, maintaining that the Commonwealth had no right to intervene in the southern African country's internal affairs.

While addressing a political rally in the Kilimanjaro region in mid-March 2002, President Mkapa assured Zimbabweans that Tanzania would continue to support them. He defended Mugabe against what he considered Western interference in the affairs of the people of Zimbabwe "As you have heard, about Zimbabwe and the EU's decision to impose sanctions, they want to divide Africa at Brussels in 2002 just as they did in Berlin in 1884...Africa must say no," Mkapa reportedly said, adding, "I want to tell the Zimbabweans that we are supporting them in this matter" and "an independent nation is independent, its leaders deserve respect and its people are free to make decisions on their own."⁴

While attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government summit in Coolom, Australia in March 2002, Mkapa publicly opposed any discussion of Zimbabwe, saying, "the scene is unfolding in Zimbabwe. It is not unfolding in Coolom."⁵ He declared land reform the "core issue," but failed to mention Mugabe's law limiting freedom of the press, or the pre-election violence and government-orchestrated campaign of intimidation that disenfranchised thousands of Zimbabweans.

When Mugabe was declared the winner following the controversial presidential elections of 9-10 March, the 25-member Tanzanian election observers group declared that "the pre-election and election period was characterized by calmness and peace, and...the people of Zimbabwe were able to exercise their democratic right to choose their

leader."⁶ This group had been invited by Zimbabwe to observe the elections. Mkapa wrote to Mugabe, congratulating him and stating, "you have been firm defending the inalienable right of the people of your country to free, democratic and sovereign governance...your firmness was good for all of Africa."⁷ Congratulatory messages were also sent by Tanzania's ruling party, *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM), and the SADC Ministerial Task Force, to which Tanzania belongs.

It should be pointed out that Mkapa's support for Mugabe came after Tanzania had rejected foreign offers to help implement a Commonwealth-brokered agreement between political parties in Zanzibar. An essential component of this agreement was reform of the islands' electoral commission. It is widely believed that Mkapa's party, the CCM, stole both the 1995 and 2000 elections from the island's largest opposition party, the Civic United Front (CUF).

PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY

While Tanzania has maintained a decent record in condemning unconstitutional changes of government and in opposing military regimes in Africa, its support for democracy and human rights at the international level has been disappointing. It has largely hewed to the line of non-interference in what it considers another state's internal affairs. Only under special circumstances has it deviated from this position, as in the cases of its intervention in Uganda (1979) and its imposition of economic sanctions on Burundi (1996).

Tanzania's reluctance to stand for democracy abroad is also seen in its voting record at the UN General Assembly. Over the last decade, it has consistently voted against international efforts to promote fair and transparent elections among new democracies. When the question was whether support for electoral processes constitutes a violation of the principle of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, Tanzania always voted "yes."⁸

POLICY TOWARDS ENTRENCHED DICTATORSHIPS

Despite its own abandonment of socialism, and its adoption of a more liberal political and economic system, Tanzania has continued to demonstrate mixed support for



authoritarian regimes at the UN. Like a majority of other African countries, Tanzania has generally abstained when human rights issues in authoritarian regimes, such as Iraq, have been brought up before the General Assembly -- presumably to avoid offending its Western donors. It also abstained from voting to condemn human rights violations in fellow African countries like the DRC and Nigeria, presumably for fear of revenge votes over its handling of the situation in Zanzibar. Furthermore, Tanzania has a mixed record with respect to human rights in the Sudan. It

has abstained from voting 42 per cent of the time and voted to condemn human rights violations 58 per cent of the time.

Tanzania still maintains ties with communist Cuba, as well as with authoritarian Iran. Between 1994 and 2001, for example, Tanzania voted not to discuss human rights issues in Iran 62.2 per cent of the time. And when Cuba's human rights situation was brought up before the General Assembly, Tanzanian voted "no" a hundred per cent of the time.

¹ Johns, David. "The Foreign Policy of Tanzania." in Olajide, Aluko, ed. The Foreign Policies of African States. 1977.

² Daily News, Dar es Salaam 6 Aug. 1996.

³ Daily News, Dar es Salaam 6 Jan. 1998.

⁴ Africa News Service, Inc. 20 Feb. 2002.

⁵ Sydney Morning News 4 March 2002.

⁶ The Herald, Harare 15 March 2002.

⁷ The Boston Globe 24 March 2002; The Daily News, Dar es Salaam 14 March 2002.

⁸ The summary covers Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria and Suda. < <http://www.unbisnet.un.org> >