



CRS Report for Congress

Tanzania: Background and Current Conditions

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Summary

Tanzania, an important U.S. ally in Africa, is a stable and important regional actor. There has been a gradual increase in political pluralism, but Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the ruling party, remains dominant in government and parliament. Tanzania's current president, Jakaya Kikwete, who previously served for ten years as Tanzania's foreign minister, won 80.3% of the votes cast in the December 2005 presidential election. Tanzania continues its pattern of steady real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and has a low and stable inflation rate. The Economist Intelligence Unit predicts that inflation will fall from an average of 7% in 2007 to 5.5% in 2008. This report will not be updated.

Background

Tanzania, with an eastern seaboard on the Indian Ocean and a western border abutting several of East Africa's Great Lakes, is a medium-sized poor country. Though it is socially diverse, with about 125 ethnic groups, it has enjoyed general political stability and national unity for about 40 years in a region wracked by civil wars, often with ethnic dimensions, in neighboring Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mozambique. Tanzania is a union formed in 1964 between the mainland – a German colony and later a British protectorate formerly known as Tanganyika – and the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, and several smaller islands. The islands, which remain semi-autonomous with their own president and parliament, are populated by peoples of mixed Arab and African descent, and almost all are Muslim.¹

¹ Europa Regional Surveys of the World. *Africa South of the Sahara*, 2008.

Tanzania's first president was Julius Nyerere, who led a one-party state that nationalized key industries and created *ujamaa*, a rural, collective village-based movement of "African socialism" and "self reliance." *Ujamaa* faced increasing popular dissatisfaction, and was slowly abandoned in the 1970s and 1980s.² In 1977, Tanzania repelled an invasion by the brutal Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin, and in 1979 intervened in Uganda to overthrow Amin. Tanzania was active in opposing racist political systems in South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Nyerere, who had a reputation as an honest, humble, idealistic leader, retired as president in 1985, and became an elder statesman, mediating peace processes in neighboring Burundi. He was succeeded by the president of Zanzibar, Ali Mwinyi, who oversaw political reforms and a gradual transition to a market economy, in part due to economic collapse brought on by *ujamaa* and centralized economic management.

Politics

There has been a gradual increase in political pluralism, but the CCM remains dominant in government and parliament, and is periodically accused of subverting the aspirations of opposition parties. Opposition parties have reportedly on some occasions been denied rally permits, and their party members detained, intimidated, and harassed, notably during electoral periods, according to human rights groups. In April 2005, CCM offices on Zanzibar were bombed. This event followed the discovery of the body of a missing CCM official, and the Zanzibar Election Commission (ZEC)'s ruling that the leader of the Zanzibar-based Civic United Front (CUF) party was ineligible to run for the Zanzibar presidency. In the 2000 general elections, Zanzibar political activists, notably those of the locally dominant opposition CUF, accused the CCM, and by implication the government, of administering the poll in a manner biased toward the CCM. The election was characterized by substantial violence between state security forces and opposition supporters. In its 2004 human rights report, the State Department said it had been "free and fair on the mainland, but... seriously marred by irregularities and politically motivated violence on Zanzibar."

Tanzania at a Glance

Geography: East African coastal country;
 Nearly one and a half times the size of Texas.
 Population: 39.3 million (2007 est.)
 Population growth rate: 2.09% (2007 est.)
 GDP (purchasing power parity): \$ 29.6 billion (2006 est.)
 GDP per capita (PPP): \$ 800 (2006)
 External Debt: \$4.6 billion (2006)
 Major Exports: Gold, coffee, cashews, tourism, manufactured products, cotton, cloves
 Languages: Swahili (official); English (official, used in business, administration, higher education); Arabic (Zanzibar); about 123 other local languages, many Bantu-based
 Religions: Christian 30%, Muslim 35%, indigenous beliefs 35%; Zanzibar /islands over 99% Muslim
 Literacy: Male, 77.5%; Female, 66.2% (2003)
 Under-5 Mortality: 165 deaths/1,000 live births
 HIV/AIDS adult infection rate: 8.8% (2003 est.)
 Life Expectancy, years at birth:
 Male, 49.4; Female, 52 (2007 est.)

Sources: CIA World Factbook 2007; World Bank Development Indicators; and Ethnologue.com.

² Europa Regional Surveys of the World. *Africa South of the Sahara*, 2008.

In October 2005, Zanzibar held its presidential election. Amani Abeid Karume was elected President with 53.2% of the votes cast, while opposition candidate Seif Hamad received 46.1%. In the legislative elections, the ruling CCM took 31 seats, while the CUF won 18 seats in the House of Representatives. Observers reported about election-related violence and claims of electoral fraud.³ The Commonwealth recommended an investigation into the election related violence. The Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) stated that the elections were free and fair. In December 2005, presidential and legislative elections took place on Mainland Tanzania. CCM candidate Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete won 80.3% of the votes cast in the presidential elections, while the CUF candidate, Ibrahim Lipumba, won 11.7% of the votes cast. The ruling CCM won 207 seats, while the CUF took 18 seats in the National Assembly.

President Kikwete. Tanzania's current president, Jakaya Kikwete, previously served for ten years as Tanzania's foreign minister. He is pursuing an agenda of political continuity that builds on the achievements of Mwinyi and Benjamin Mkapa but also seeks to generate greater economic growth and reform. He has also voiced a desire to resolve political conflicts that have long affected Zanzibar internally and in its relations with the mainland.

Economy. The Mkapa administration pursued a number of key economic reforms and was generally seen positively by bilateral and multilateral donors, which have provided substantial financial and technical support to Tanzania. Some of these reforms included privatizations of state firms, on-going improvements to Tanzania's weak infrastructure system, the creation of growing cell phone networks and increased Internet access, and an increasingly robust and investor-friendly private sector, particularly in the tourism, retail, gold and gems mining, transport, communication and agriculture sectors. Tanzania reached its completion point under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in 2001, and has received partial debt stock reductions under the initiative. Several donors have recently provided bilateral debt relief to Tanzania.

Tanzania continues its pattern of steady real GDP growth and its low and stable inflation rate. The Economist Intelligence Unit predicts that inflation will fall from an average of 7% in 2007 to 5.5% in 2008, and 4.5% in 2009.⁴ Despite its real GDP growth, Tanzania's economy largely fails to address the needs of ordinary Tanzanians (i.e., healthcare, education, employment, and poverty-reduction). In recognition of this failure, the MKUKUTA (National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty) strategy has been developed with the goal of raising economic growth and the reduction of poverty.⁵ The price of gold—Tanzania's main export—remains high due to the global market and the weakness of the U.S. dollar. Tanzania maintains a substantial current-account deficit that is likely to persist, but its income deficit is projected to shrink.

HIV/AIDS. Tanzania faces a severe AIDS epidemic. Its HIV/AIDS infection rate, at about 8.8% (2003) is lower than that in southern Africa, but higher than those of its

³ The Norwegian Center for Human Rights (NORDEM). *The United Republic of Tanzania: Presidential and Parliamentary Elections December 2005*.

⁴ *The Economist Intelligence Unit*. Tanzania, December 2007.

⁵ *The Economist Intelligence Unit*. Tanzania, December 2007

East African neighbors. Tanzania is estimated to have the 12th highest national infection rate globally, with between 1.6 and 2 million HIV-positive persons, with work force-aged and urban populations most hard-hit, mostly on the mainland. Zanzibar and the other islands have an estimated infection rate of about 0.6%. In April 2005, however, the National AIDS Commission (TACAIDS) chair announced TACAIDS/U.S. Agency for International Development-funded survey data showing a decrease to 7% in infection rates for Tanzania – though some estimates remain far higher. In 2000, Tanzania declared AIDS to be a national disaster and later established TACAIDS and a separate Zanzibar AIDS Commission (ZAC). These entities design and administer national anti-AIDS efforts, including programs implemented through local government HIV/AIDS committees. In August 2004, at the signing of an \$87.9 million grant by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, President Mkapa announced that his government would begin providing free anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) to AIDS patients. In June 2005, the government announced a very ambitious goal of providing 100,000 patients with ARVs by late 2006, and of reaching 400,000 patients within the next five years. The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS, provides technical, policy, public education, and financial assistance to TACAIDS and ZAC. Tanzania also receives AIDS assistance from a variety of private AIDS foundations, and from the United States. It is a “focus country” under the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.⁶

Regional Role. Tanzania is a member, with Kenya and Uganda, of the East African Community (EAC), established by a 1999 treaty, which revived an earlier EAC, defunct since 1977. The EAC Treaty provides for the creation of a range of regional development, economic policy cooperation, trade, and political coordination initiatives and entities. EAC members signed a customs union agreement in March 2004, which began to be implemented in January 2005. Tanzania, a Southern African Development Community (SADC) member, is also cooperating with its southern neighbors in regional economic development projects, notably in transport. Tanzania has also helped to facilitate an end to the conflict in neighboring Burundi.

Human Rights Conditions⁷

Although the Tanzanian government is not reported to be responsible for any politically motivated killings or disappearances in the past year, there have been several instances of unlawful killings by policemen and prison guards. Police and prison wardens are also accused of torturing and threatening suspected criminals. The police force lacks funding and is plagued by corruption and the excessive use of force. Prison conditions remain dismal, and the current number of prisoners exceeds the maximum capacity of the country’s prison system by nearly 100%. Prisoners continue to contract (and often die of) malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and cholera. Additionally, mob violence persists and suspected witches continue to be killed. The constitutional right to freedom of speech is for the most part respected, but freedom of the press is another issue entirely. Both the Union government and the semi-autonomous Zanzibar government have seriously compromised the media’s capacity to function independently and effectively, according to some observers in the region. The government also suffers from corruption and

⁶ The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. *2007 Country Profile: Tanzania*.

⁷ The State Department. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2006*.

transparency issues. Although freedom of religion is a constitutional right, Muslims in Tanzania report being discriminated against in government hiring, education, and law enforcement. Refugees are forced to live in camps or settlements and remain targets of theft, abuse, and rape. Domestic violence against women is pervasive and rarely taken seriously by authorities. Female genital mutilation remains widespread, although it is prohibited by law. The trafficking of persons (mostly girls) for forced labor and sexual exploitation remains an issue.

U.S. Relations. U.S.-Tanzanian relations are cordial and friendly. The Bush Administration's bilateral policy priorities, according to its FY2008 Congressional Budget Justification,⁸ include pursuing of anti-terrorism cooperation to deny terrorist groups sanctuary; providing assistance in security sector reform; helping Tanzania to further its private-sector economic growth; strengthening democracy and political transparency; assisting Tanzania to counter HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria; and providing assistance in basic education. A principal objective in the education sector is providing training to English, Math, and Science teachers.⁹ U.S. concerns about terrorism in Tanzania stems from the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Dar es Salaam, the capital, by al Qaeda and from the alleged growth of radical Islamic views within Tanzania's large Muslim population. In addition, several Tanzanians are known to have joined al Qaeda. The United States provides anti-terrorism and financial and immigration fraud capacity-building assistance, and the U.S. Embassy maintains an emphasis on the protection of U.S. citizens in Tanzania.

U.S. development assistance seeks to consolidate Tanzania's transition from a socialist to a market economy, in part by fostering small enterprise development, farm production, and agricultural producer organizations and market efficiencies, in order to generate increased income earnings for citizens. It also supports biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. Health aid focuses on capacity-building and addressing diverse AIDS-related challenges, including prevention and care for AIDS patients, blood system safety, and care for AIDS orphans. A Peace Corps contingent carries out projects in education, natural resource management, and health, with an emphasis on combating AIDS. Tanzania is eligible for trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act, including textile and apparel benefits, and is a Millennium Challenge Account "threshold country," making it eligible to apply for MCA assistance. In September 2007, Tanzania signed a \$698 compact agreement aimed at poverty reduction, access to clean water, transparency, and anti-corruption efforts. U.S. assistance to Tanzania has increased over the past several years. In FY2005, bilateral assistance totaled an estimated \$109 million, \$137.5 million in FY2006, and \$213.3 million in FY2007. The Bush Administration has requested \$341.4 million for FY2008.

⁸ [http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2008/fy2008cbj_full.pdf]

⁹ Congressional Budget Justification, 2008.