



PRELIMINARY STATEMENT ON THE 29 OCTOBER 2025 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Today, 31st October 2025 – In line with its mission to promote credible, peaceful, free, and fair elections through impartial regional observation and analysis across the East and Horn of Africa, the East and Horn of Africa Election Observation Network (EHORN) monitored developments surrounding the General Elections held on 29th October 2025 in the United Republic of Tanzania. The elections were conducted to choose the President, Members of the National Assembly, and Local Government representatives across the country.

Introduction

According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), a total of 37,647,235 registered voters were expected to cast their ballots across 99,895 polling stations nationwide. Of these, 97,348 polling stations were located on the mainland, while 2,547 were in Zanzibar. The elections covered multiple levels of representation, including:

- The Presidency;
- 272 parliamentary constituencies (222 on the mainland and 50 in Zanzibar); and
- 3,960 local government wards for councillorship seats on the mainland.

In Zanzibar, 717,557 registered voters participated in both Union and local elections, with early voting on 28 October 2025 for security personnel, election officials, and other authorized categories at 50 designated polling centers across the Isles.

Observation Methodology

As a regional body, E-HORN conducted its observation of the 2025 General Election in Tanzania through its Remote Election Situation Room (ESR) mechanism, rather than deploying ground observers. This approach ensured real-time monitoring and verification while prioritizing the safety of partners and the integrity of collected data.

The ESR served as E-HORN's analytical and coordination hub, tasked with receiving, monitoring, and validating electoral information from multiple verified sources. The ESR collated and assessed data through the following channels:

1. Continuous media and open-source monitoring to track election-related developments and public communication;
2. Reports from local actors and regional partners, including civil-society organizations and research institutions;
3. Updates from credible institutions, international observer missions, and diplomatic statements; and
4. Verification of incidents through E-HORN's regional networks and human rights partners.

This methodology allowed E-HORN to maintain situational awareness, cross-check information, and provide a balanced regional perspective on the conduct of the elections. The present statement is preliminary, reflecting information available as of 30 October 2025 (13:30 EAT). A final and more comprehensive regional analysis report will follow, incorporating verified post-election developments and findings.

A: Pre-Electoral Environment

The pre-election phase for Tanzania's 2025 General Elections occurred under a restricted political and civic environment, testing the nation's commitment to democratic openness as enshrined in its constitution and its obligations under international instruments. Although security remained generally calm, there were persistent limitations on fundamental freedoms and rights including assembly, expression, and political competition.

- a. **Voter Registration:** The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) completed voter registration in mid-2025, listing 37.6 million voters nationwide, including 717,557 in Zanzibar. The process was peaceful but faced challenges such as limited public awareness, unequal access to remote areas, delays in issuing voter cards, and technical issues in biometric data capture. Youth and first-time voters were particularly affected.
- b. **Political Campaigns:** Campaigns officially began on 8 September 2025 and were mostly peaceful but uneven. The ruling CCM dominated the political space through state media access, use of public venues, and security support, while opposition parties like

CHADEMA and ACT-Wazalendo faced denials of rally permits, last-minute cancellations, and biased enforcement of regulations, restricting their voter engagement.

- c. **Civic Freedoms:** The period saw tight controls on freedom of assembly, association, and expression. Opposition gatherings were often disrupted, media faced censorship and intimidation, and civil-society organizations experienced delays or denials in accreditation and voter education activities. This atmosphere of fear and control suppressed open debate and political pluralism.
- d. **Use of State Resources:** Reports indicated misuse of state resources in campaigns, including government vehicles, public venues, and official functions for ruling-party activities. Opposition parties accused the government of using security and administrative structures to its advantage. Despite official denials, these practices blurred the line between state and party, undermining electoral fairness.

While the period was largely peaceful, it was characterized by systemic constraints on competition and civic participation, favoring the ruling party and restricting opposition visibility. These trends conflict with Tanzania's obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) which affirms that the right to regular, free, fair, and credible elections as fundamental to democratic norm, serving as a primary means for the exercise of the sovereign right of a people to self-government under Article 20, and the right of individuals to participate in public affairs under Article 13. Further, the trends observed appear to go against SADC Principles and Guidelines (2021) which call for equality, media pluralism, and respect for fundamental freedoms.

B: Election Day Environment

Election Day on 29th October 2025 unfolded in a complex and tense atmosphere, characterized by heavy security presence, restrictions on communication, and scattered reports of unrest. While voting proceeded in many areas as scheduled, the broader environment raised significant concerns regarding the exercise of fundamental freedoms, transparency, and public confidence in the process.

1. **Freedom of Assembly and Expression:** E-HORN notes that the nationwide curfew imposed from 6:00 p.m. on Election Day, announced by the Dar es Salaam Special Zone Police Commander, severely restricted movement and public gathering. Coupled with a nationwide internet shutdown, these measures curtailed civic participation and limited

independent scrutiny of the process particularly during vote counting and results transmission. Civil society and media actors reported difficulties accessing polling centers or verifying information from observers and citizens, thereby reducing transparency and public oversight. These restrictions appear inconsistent with Tanzania's obligations under Art 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right (ACHPR) which guarantees every individual has the right to receive information and the right to express and disseminate opinions within the law.

- 2. Security and Voter Safety:** A visible deployment of armed security personnel was observed across major urban centers and selected rural districts, reportedly to maintain order. While some level of security presence is expected during elections, EHORN's Situation Room and verified media reports indicated isolated incidents of violence and intimidation, including clashes between police and protesters in Tunduma and parts of Zanzibar. In several instances, opposition supporters and independent observers alleged harassment and arbitrary detention, contributing to an atmosphere of fear and unease that may have discouraged voter turnout in certain areas. E-HORN emphasizes that while security enforcement is essential for peaceful elections, excessive use of force or intimidation undermines citizens' right to participate freely and without coercion.
- 3. Information Access and Transparency:** The confirmed internet shutdown, officially attributed to *national security concerns*, had a profound impact on transparency and information flow. Journalists, civil-society organizations, and citizens were unable to share verified updates or communicate in real time from polling centers. This disruption hindered observation coordination, slowed the relay of credible information, and created an environment prone to misinformation. E-HORN underscores that open communication channels are vital for public trust and for ensuring accountability in vote counting and results management.
- 4. Public Confidence and Credibility:** The combination of restrictive security measures, limited information access, and constrained civic space eroded public trust in the integrity of the process. Many citizens expressed uncertainty about the accuracy of results and the transparency of counting procedures, citing the lack of real-time official updates and limited independent verification mechanisms. This perceived opacity, together with the uneven enforcement of regulations, risks diminishing public confidence in the electoral outcome and may affect post-election stability.

E-HORN acknowledges that voting took place across most polling stations and that logistical preparations were generally adequate. However, the overall Election Day context was marked by restricted freedoms, heightened tension, and limited transparency mechanisms.

C: Election Day Incidents

E-HORN's Election Situation Room (ESR) documented several significant developments during and immediately after election day that shaped the overall electoral environment.

- a. Nationwide Curfew and Internet Shutdown:** On 29 October 2025, the Government imposed a nationwide curfew beginning at 6:00 p.m., citing public unrest reported in several areas. The directive, confirmed by Dar es Salaam Special Zone Police Commander Jumanne Muliro, restricted public movement for an indefinite period. Simultaneously, internet services were disrupted nationwide, impeding communication and information flow. These restrictions affected coordination among polling officials, observers, media, and civil-society actors, limiting transparency in the vote-counting and results transmission process.
- b. Public Unrest and Police Confrontations:** Verified media and eyewitness reports indicated clashes between police and protesters in multiple locations, including Dar es Salaam and Tunduma, resulting in injuries. The exact scale of casualties remains under verification at the time of this statement. E-HORN notes that while security enforcement is an essential component of orderly elections, excessive force or intimidation risks undermining citizens' rights and confidence in the process.
- c. Civic and Academic Response:** The University of Dar es Salaam Staff Association (UDASA) issued a public statement warning that the suppression of freedoms and lack of transparency threaten good governance and democratic principles. This reflects growing concern among professional and civic groups regarding the broader implications of restrictive measures during electoral periods.
- d. Media Freedom and Information Control:** Throughout election day, restrictions on online platforms, limited live reporting, and incidents of journalist intimidation were reported. These constraints significantly affected public access to information and independent scrutiny of the process, contrary to the principles of open and transparent elections.

Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations

E-HORN acknowledges the peaceful participation of voters in several polling areas earlier in the day and commends citizens for their commitment to the democratic process. However, the Network expresses deep concern over the restrictive measures and security responses that followed, which appear inconsistent with Tanzania's international and regional obligations particularly Articles 19, 21, and 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantee freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and the right to participate in public affairs.

E-HORN emphasizes that genuine democratic elections require not only orderly polling but also open civic participation, unhindered access to information, and transparency in results management.

E-HORN therefore:

1. Urges the Government and security agencies to lift the curfew immediately, restore full internet access, and respect citizens' constitutional rights to movement, expression, and information.
2. Calls upon the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure transparency in result tabulation and publication, allowing sufficient scrutiny by all stakeholders, including political parties, observers, and the public.
3. Appeals to political actors and citizens to remain calm, refrain from violence, and pursue grievances through lawful and peaceful means in accordance with national legislation.
4. Calls upon the Government of Tanzania to ratify the African Union (AU) Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, adopted in 2002 which establishes foundational standards for free, fair, and transparent elections across the continent.
5. Calls upon the government of Tanzania to ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) which plays a significant role in shaping and improving elections across Africa by establishing comprehensive norms and standards for democratic processes.
6. Encourages regional and international partners including the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to support independent

verification of results and to advocate for reforms that strengthen electoral integrity and inclusiveness.

7. Commits E-HORN to continue monitoring the post-election environment and to issue a comprehensive regional report with actionable recommendations to promote democratic resilience and credible electoral processes across the region.

Closing Statement

E-HORN reiterates that credible elections are the foundation of democratic governance and peaceful political transitions. The Network stands ready to collaborate with national institutions, civil-society organizations, and regional bodies to advance reforms that reinforce transparency, accountability, and citizen trust in electoral processes.

Issued in Nairobi, Kenya, on 30 October 2025

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