

Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA)*

Newsletter – September 2023

Thanks to the unwavering support from our dedicated global community and partners, we welcome you to the inaugural edition of the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance newsletter.

We're on a mission to provide you with comprehensive updates from the ground. You'll get first-hand insights into the current scenario in both Ngorongoro and Loliondo, as well as other areas facing land dispossession by the Government. Additionally, stay tuned for the latest on community interventions and the strides we've taken in our journey so far.

Arbitrary arrests and State violence in Endulen, Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA)



On 23 August 2023, Ngorongoro councillors, village chairpersons and traditional leaders published a [joint statement](#) in response to a wave of arbitrary arrests taking place in Endulen. Since 15 August 2023, the Government has deployed paramilitary groups, police and Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) rangers to conduct arbitrary arrests of Maasai in NCA. In one week, more than 30 people were arrested and held incommunicado without their relatives or lawyers knowing their whereabouts, in a terrible repetition of what happened in Loliondo in 2022. Even the [MP Emmanuel Lekishon OleShangay from Ngorongoro was arrested](#), to be released two days later. Luckily, all community members were also released on 25 August 2023. The NCAA Authority (NCAA), which is abetting the operation against Maasai in Ngorongoro, has been accused of brutally attacking and torturing NCA residents without any action being taken against them. Despite the fact that the attacks by rangers working for the NCAA against at least 16 Maasai have been reported to police, no ranger has been arrested or taken to court. The military operation in Endulen/ Ngorongoro is extreme and is a gross violation of human rights.

In their statement, the councillors called on the Government to stop arbitrary arrest, torture and detaining Maasai of Ngorongoro; to grant building permits and allow people to access social and health services like other Tanzanians do; to stop funding fake journalists to publish hatred and embarrassing statements on the Maasai of Ngorongoro; to put an end to food blockage and taxes; and to demilitarise the NCA.

Ngorongoro women protesting and taking action against school collapse in Endulen, NCA.

On 1 August, peaceful protests took place in Endulen, NCA, to demand renovation and a building permit for Ndiyan Primary School. On 6 August, Endulen residents decided to construct a temporary classroom made of wood for Ndiyan school children, whose classroom is about to collapse. Sadly, NCA rangers destroyed their construction and left them with no hope.



Endulen women building temporary classroom

On 24 August, women [protested](https://t.co/yivsK75Y57) against the unlawful arrest of over 30 Maasai men and illegal operations taking place in Endulen: <https://t.co/yivsK75Y57> <https://t.co/BxcCaPenn8>

Flying Medical Service flight ban finally lifted: the Impact of a 15-month grounding

In a welcome turnaround, the Government has lifted its ban on the Flying Medical Service (FMS), which had kept them grounded since April 2022. This 15-month hiatus had severe implications for people in Maasailand, where healthcare access is scarce.



The inability of the FMS to operate led to:

- Vaccination delays: Over 24,000 children missed crucial vaccinations, leaving them vulnerable to preventable diseases.
- Maternal health risks: 5,700+ pregnant women went without critical examinations, vaccinations or expert advice.
- Unchecked TB cases: Treatment ceased for over 145 TB patients, and potential new cases went unidentified.
- Hindrance of HIV care: 84 known HIV patients in remote areas missed out on life-saving medications and, without FMS, new potential cases were likely overlooked.
- Infant health crisis: Babies born to HIV-positive mothers were denied the life-saving Navirapine dose, subjecting them to a lifetime of HIV treatment.
- Emergency response lapses: With the FMS grounded, they couldn't respond to 102 crucial life-saving emergency flight calls.

The reinstatement of the FMS is a ray of hope, but the prolonged ban's repercussions on the health of the Maasailand community are both deeply felt and concerning.

Hunger and humanitarian crisis in NCA

The Maasai of NCA have been facing strict policies that impede people's mobility, including no-go zone areas limiting access to water and pasture as well as a cultivation ban. The banning of cultivation has resulted in a need for increased import of grain and other food such as beans, potatoes, cabbage and carrots. Due to the food shortage, a sack of maize in NCA currently costs about 140,200 TZS whereas it would normally cost 80,000 TZS. The residents of the area are mainly women, children and the elderly, as most young men have

been forced to migrate to urban areas to find work. Residents have no funds to buy food, as they cannot sell their livestock that is already sick and dying from the drought. Further, excessive taxes on commercial food trucks/businesses have led to food price increases and food shortages as traders can no longer operate freely. Also private individuals are obliged to pay tourist fees when driving into the area, being treated as tourists in their own land. Recent severe drought led to massive death of livestock in NCA and beyond. Currently, a malnutrition and measles epidemic is ravaging NCA, causing high child mortality that is correlated to undernourishment and starvation. Starvation tactics are used by the government so that residents move out of NCA reluctantly and peacefully.

Endulen Hospital, which is owned by the Catholic Church, is the only operational health facility in the area at the moment and is overwhelmed, particularly by malnourished children below 5 years of age. The hospital is facing severe challenges including limited staff and lack of food and essential medicine to serve these sick children. The only option for the few who can afford this, often those with educated relatives with paid jobs in the towns, is for the sick to travel to hospitals in Karatu town for medical attention.

This is a difficult pill to swallow especially for the local community members, who suffer while foreigners flock the area for tourism purposes and others build multi-million hotels in the areas that are allegedly protected. The ecological footprint of exclusive tourism operations is overwhelmingly higher than that of Maasai residents which are targeted by the Tanzanian Government for their supposedly negative environmental impacts.

MISA calls on the international community to step in with:

- Food aid provision to at least 10,000 households most affected by food insecurity. This will include the purchase and distribution of highly nutritious foods, including maize, peanuts, soybeans, rice and millet, to aid treatment of malnutrition in Endulen dispensary.
- Capacity building for at least 40 Community Health Workers (CHWs) to ensure that they continue to sensitise and support women, especially pregnant and postpartum women.
- Running a 'Mama Ngojea' facility at Karatu town for at least two years. This is a waiting facility for expectant mothers with complications or those very close to their due dates and who live far from the hospital.
- Partnership with FAME Hospital to provide obstetric services to at least 200 expectant mothers from NCA. FAME is a private health facility based in Karatu striving to provide affordable, high-quality healthcare to under-resourced communities in northern Tanzania.
- Supporting Endulen Hospital by providing a sub-grant to help with staff salaries, medical equipment, and supplies, including nutritious food for patients admitted in the facility.

Council of Tanzanian Catholic Bishops (TEC) issues statement about the agreement between Tanzania and the Emirate of Dubai on economic cooperation, standing in solidarity with the Maasai

On 20 August 2023, Tanzania's Catholic Bishops stated they want their Government to cancel a recent agreement giving an Emirati company the right to manage the country's ports. Tanzania's Catholic Bishops have strongly criticised and cautioned the Government of Tanzania against going ahead with the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Tanzania and Dubai, giving exclusive port rights to the Dubai-based DP World company. The Pastoral Statement outlining the position of the Bishops is co-signed by 37 of the country's Bishops. In the same [Pastoral Statement](#), the Bishops allude to another thorny issue in Tanzania, where the Maasai community have been repeatedly evicted from their traditional pastoral lands by the Government.

"Ignoring the voice of the people on investments that do not hear their voice has also brought suffering to the people of the areas where they live, as seen in the Maasai communities of Loliondo, whose cultural and social rights have been violated. Investments have been given unproductive priority, and the Maasai people have been left to suffer," reads the Bishops' Statement.

Disturbing violence in Ngorongoro: 15-year-old boy brutally assaulted by NCA rangers

In a harrowing incident on 13 July 2023, a 15-year-old Maasai boy, Joshua Olepatorro, suffered a violent assault at the hands of NCA rangers. Joshua's injuries were severe: three of his front upper jaw teeth were knocked out, and a blow to his forehead required stitches. The weapon? The reverse side of a gun wielded by an NCA ranger. Making matters even more agonising, a delay in his medical treatment occurred due to the absence of Police Form No. 3, a legal requisite in Tanzania for unnatural injury treatment. Even though the law required this form, the police withheld it for two days. Joshua's alleged "crime"? Grazing livestock at Ormoti—a practice permitted under the governing NCA laws. As of now, there's no word on any repercussions for the responsible ranger. In response to this disturbing event, a Maasai representative delegation met with NCA leadership on 17 July 2023. The meeting culminated in a press release, and various media outlets have covered the story. To learn more, view the reports from these links:

[YouTube Report](#) [Mwanza TV Coverage](#)

The Maasai community and advocates for justice eagerly await official action regarding this blatant act of violence.

Loliondo crisis: displacement, arrests and unlawful seizures

June 2022 saw a distressing upheaval in Loliondo, with the Tanzanian Government barring over 97,000 community members from vital grazing areas across 14 villages. These include notable areas like Ololosokwan, Soitsambu and Malambo.

This clampdown was marked by legal intimidation, resulting in the unwarranted arrest of 159 locals. After being detained for up to six months, all were released because of insufficient evidence. Tragically, 41 individuals were injured by live ammunition, causing over 2,500 to seek refuge in Kenya and leaving thousands more displaced within Tanzania. The unrest

also led to the disappearance of one person, and two known deaths – one being a government officer and the other a tragic accident involving the Arusha Regional Commissioner's convoy.

Amid this turmoil, there's been a systematic seizing of livestock. By June 2023, a staggering 17,000+ livestock were either auctioned or held for an unjust ransom of 100,000 Tanzanian shillings (TZS) per animal. Notably, this "fine" has no legal backing, further emphasising the arbitrary nature of these actions.

Ngorongoro update: funds redirected, services denied

Since 2019, the Tanzanian Government's actions in the Ngorongoro Division have been puzzling. Although funds were allocated, the majority remained untouched in bank accounts. The NCA Authority consistently denied implementation permits.

In a startling move, April 2022 saw the diversion of over four billion TZS, originally earmarked for schools and dispensaries in the area, to locations the Government deemed more 'deserving'. This, despite Ngorongoro being home to nearly 100,000 individuals.

Notable contributors, like Mama Kim, who previously aided in constructing three schools, have now been barred from offering services. It seems the Government's reluctance to support Ngorongoro's local services hints at a bigger plan: accelerating a mass relocation.

Tragically, since 2022, there's been a complete halt on budget allocations for Ngorongoro, making it stand apart from other Tanzanian communities. The effects of this policy on the local populace? Profound and deeply concerning.

MISA critically assesses impact of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) on Maasai in Tanzania

In the paper [*"What's wrong with the Wildlife Management Area \(WMA\) model?"*](#), the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) has made a critical assessment of so-called "community-based conservation" that is sold under the banner of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in Tanzania. WMAs promised to vest village governments and local communities with the authority to manage their own land and natural resources and were supposed to lead to biodiversity conservation, economic growth and community prosperity.



A beautiful example of Maasai-wildlife coexistence in Lake Natron

The paper points to the large discrepancy between WMA rhetoric and the reality on the ground. It presents key findings from research into the impact of WMAs on pastoralist communities in Tanzania and outlines possible alternatives. It calls for more equitable conservation approaches that respect and support indigenous management practices compatible with biodiversity conservation, without interest-driven international tourism, hunting and “development” actors who commercialise conservation in benign terms.

Maasai delegation advocates for human rights in European tour (May-June 2023)

Between 20 May and 9 June 2023, a five-member Maasai delegation embarked on a pivotal [lobbying tour across Europe, spanning Germany, Belgium, Austria, and Italy](#). Their mission? To highlight the human rights situation in Ngorongoro and Loliondo and urge action against the stalled social services in Ngorongoro.



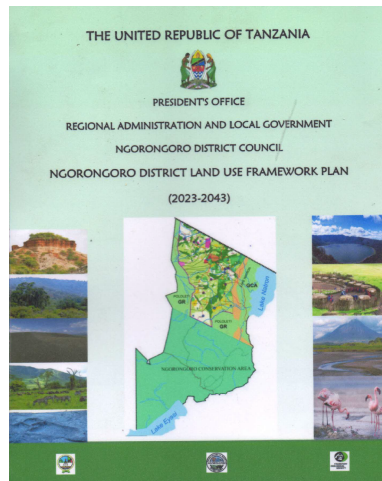
Backed by influential CSOs from Africa, Europe and America, including names like FIAN International and Survival International, the delegation appealed to EU decision-makers, urging them to leverage their influence to curb the ongoing violence against the Maasai in Tanzania, safeguard their human rights, and halt financial aid that could perpetuate forced evictions and violence in the region.

Moreover, they emphasised the Maasai's intrinsic role as natural conservators of wildlife and biodiversity, cautioning European stakeholders against narratives that depict the Maasai and their livestock as obstacles to biodiversity conservation.

During the lobbying tour, the delegation held discussions with notable institutions such as the Frankfurt Zoological Society, Bundestag (German Parliament) Human Rights Committee and the German Foreign Ministry. In Belgium, they engaged with the European Parliament, the European External Action Service and other key EU entities, driving their message home.

Frankfurt Zoological Society freezes support for District Land Use Framework Plan in Ngorongoro District

Despite Frankfurt Zoological Society's repeated argument of not being active NCA and the 2022 gazetted areas of Loliondo (Pololeti GCA), their involvement was documented by the final proposal of a District Land Use Framework Plan (DLUFP), which was published but rejected by all ward councillors. FSZ also was instrumental in facilitating the meeting for the DLUFP. As the DLUFP covers all areas of Ngorongoro District including NCA and Pololeti GCA, the FZS arguments of not being involved could be refuted. A central critique on the DLUFP is that it legalises the annexation of village land for the Pololeti GCA. As another impact of the lobbying tour (which included a personal meeting with FZS) and in response to a protest letter of all ward councillors to FZS, FZS announced to freeze their activities for the DLUFP. MISA expects FZS not to resume this activity, as it has been rejected by virtually all councillors.



Summary of ongoing court cases in Ngorongoro and Loliondo

Several lawsuits are currently challenging the Tanzanian Government's actions in Ngorongoro and Loliondo. Here's a concise overview of these cases:

- Thadeus Clamian & 1619 Others Vs Attorney General (East African Court of Justice/EACJ Reference No 29 of 2022): Awaits a court scheduling conference. Focuses on Tanzanian Government policies denying Ngorongoro communities access to social services.
- Case Regarding June 2022 Violence (EACJ Reference No 37 of 2022): Awaits a court scheduling conference. Concerns the military's role in displacing Loliondo communities in June 2022, potentially violating Tanzanian laws and international human rights treaties.
- Ololosokwan Village Council & 2 Others Appeal (Appeal No 13 of 2022): Pending judgement. An appeal against a previous EACJ judgement from September 2022.
- Contempt of Court Case (EACJ Application No 2 of 2022): Pending ruling. Concerns the Tanzanian Government's displacement of communities in Loliondo, which may contradict a 2018 EACJ order.
- Ndalamia Partareto Taiwap & Others vs Minister of Natural Resources: Challenges the designation of a disputed area as Pololeti Game Reserve without legal adherence.
- Latang'amwaki Ndwati & Others vs Minister of Natural Resources: Contests the President's designation of the disputed area as Pololeti Game Reserve without following the law.
- Baraka Moson Kesoi & Raphael Oleruye Oloishiro Vs NCA (Appeal No 9 of 2023): Challenges the fine for seized livestock at 100,000 TZS per cow and 25,000 TZS per goat/sheep.

These lawsuits highlight the growing tensions and legal challenges faced by the Maasai communities in their fight for rights and justice. Finally, in a recent victory for the people of

Loliondo, on 22 August 2023, the Court decided to suspend the operation of Government Notice (GN) that established Pololet Game Reserve until determination of judicial review of the case in High Court.

Epic Safari and Tennis Tour to be hosted by McEnroe brothers in the Serengeti: MISA condemns sports washing

The [Epic Tanzania Tour](#) hosted by the McEnroe brothers is scheduled for the beginning of December 2023. Advertised as a combination of exclusive Safari and Tennis experience, this tour is promoted as involving stunning landscapes, playing tennis with John McEnroe, dining with the President of Tanzania and getting a close glimpse into traditional Maasai culture. At first sight, the aim seems unproblematic but, regarding the dire situation of the Maasai in northern Tanzania, MISA is of the opinion that this Tour (for which a new tennis court will be built in the Serengeti!) should be cancelled. Sports washing is a process through which the Tanzanian Government uses the strength of famous hotel and travel companies brands, as well as the reputation of John McEnroe, to hide ongoing human rights violations and to improve their own international reputation.

*** What is the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA)?**

The Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) is an international alliance standing in solidarity with the Maasai of Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Loliondo in northern Tanzania. We bring together faith-based organisations, human rights organisations, international aid and development organisations as well as researchers. Our alliance includes, among others, the Africa Europe Faith Justice Network (AEFJN), Agrecol Association for AgriCulture & Ecology, Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism (CELEP), *Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité* (CIDSE, International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity), Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN), *Koordinierungsstelle der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz* (KOO, Coordinating Office of the Austrian Bishops' Conference), Misereor and Welthaus Graz. Our main objective is to put an end to the human rights violations facing the Maasai of northern Tanzania. In June 2023, we jointly organised a lobbying tour to Germany, Austria, Belgium and Italy, which enabled a Maasai delegation to voice their concerns to European decision-makers and trigger international solidarity. We support the voices of grassroots organisations representing the Maasai at the local level, such as PINGOs (Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations) Forum, UCRT (Ujamaa Community Resource Team), PWC (Pastoral Women's Council), TEST (Traditional Ecosystems Survival Tanzania), IDINGO (Integrated Development Initiative in Ngorongoro) and PALISEP (Pastoralist Livelihood Support and Empowerment Program). These grassroots organisations are well recognised for their long-standing work in Maasai communities and are in regular contact with affected communities and their representatives, including traditional leaders, women and youth as well as councillors / village chairpersons. We are also supported by Tanzanian lawyers representing the Maasai in the several court cases that have been launched to address the violations of their land rights.