

## **NEWSLETTER JANUARY-MARCH 2025**





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Photo: Ngorongoro

#### Ngorongoro: President Forms Two Commissions to Investigate the Situation

In response to people's massive protest in August 2024 in Ngorongoro, the President of Tanzania has established two commissions to investigate the situation and propose solutions. The two commissions are composed of experts, diplomats, and persons who have previously served the Tanzania government. The first commission has been tasked to assess the land question in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) and is led by the sitting Judge of the Court of Appeal and nine other members, two of whom are from the Maasai community. The other commission has been tasked to assess the relocation program from Ngorongoro to Msomera and is composed of people with a high historical profile in both police and intelligence, as well as two Maasai representatives. While MISA has serious reservations about the imbalanced

representation of Maasai in the two commissions (only 2 Maasai representatives in each and very few women), it welcomes the President's decision to form a committee to investigate Ngorongoro injustices and eagerly awaits the commissions' reports.



READ: https://thechanzo. com/2025/02/21/two-presidentialcommissions-launched-to-addressngorongoro-saga/



**READ:** https://dailynews.co.tz/ president-samia-inauguratestwo-special-commissions-forngorongoro-land-disputes/



READ: https://www.ippmedia.com/the-guardian/news/local-news/read/land-relocation-samia-picks-two-ngorongoro-commissions-2025-02-21-101659



**READ:** https://dailynews.co.tz/ ngorongoro-challenges-samialaunches-commissions/



Photo: Women solidarity boma

### MISA Calls for 5-year Moratorium on Soil Carbon Projects in Northern Tanzania's Rangelands

MISA has released a comprehensive report addressing the rapid development of two large-scale soil carbon credit projects in Maasai lands: one by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and one by Soils for the Future Tanzania (SftFTZ), funded by Volkswagen. The report, based on extensive desk research and engagement with 11 villages targeted by carbon projects in Longido and Monduli districts, highlights the adverse effects of carbon credit projects on Maasai communities.

Many community representatives interviewed fear that carbon credit projects will add to the existing threats of land alienation resulting from tourism, hunting blocks, and conservation areas, all of which have led to evictions, militarization, and criminalization. MISA identified a serious knowledge gap around carbon projects in local communities, lack of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC,) and anticipated negative outcomes on pastoralism and mobility, raising concerns for food security and land sovereignty in the future. MISA calls for a five-year moratorium on soil carbon projects in rangelands in Northern Tanzania given the outcomes of the study.

Before the release of the report, MISA representatives and lawyers met with TNC, SftFTZ, and its partners Carbon Solve and Volkswagen Climate Partner, to raise their concerns. Meanwhile, MISA has participated in large meetings in Longido, Monduli, and Simanjiro districts to raise community awareness about the implications of carbon credit projects.



**READ:** The <u>short version</u> or <u>long</u> <u>version</u> (ENG) of the report.



**WATCH:** MEP Rakete's Instagram statement on her visit to carbon projects in Tanzania:

https://www.instagram.com/p/ DHEaqBHO6zA/

Maasai communities rejected carbon projects in Monduli:

https://youtu.be/ x5ajTKOmiMQ?si=d7iqHB5ParxkqCrN

https://youtu.be/
cNn9nhOzuzA?feature=shared



Photo: Vice President of Tanzania, Dr Mpango - Screenshot from video: https://youtu.be/rZTZoN9Nv6k?si=fkcyXUXdISvGEg58

#### Tanzania Vice-President Raises Concerns about Carbon Offset Projects

On March 7, Dr. Mpango, the Vice President of Tanzania, expressed concerns similar to those outlined in the MISA report regarding the carbon credit business. He addressed issues such as unclear and unfavorable contractual

terms, the lack of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), and unclear mechanisms for benefit sharing.

Additionally, he emphasized that there is too much room for exploitation by intermediaries, who may take advantage of the business.





# Pastoralists in Eluai Village Seek to Withdraw from Carbon Credit Project Amid Allegations of Coercion and Lack of Transparency

Pastoralists in Eluai Village in Monduli District have initiated a process to withdraw from a carbon credit project contract with Soils for the Future TZ citing coercion, inducement, and the absence of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Community leaders argue that the agreement threatens their traditional pastoralist way of life. Many villagers have expressed concerns that the deal, initially presented as an opportunity for sustainable development, will restrict their land use,

undermine their livelihoods, and prioritize corporate interests over their well-being. Key terms of the contract were not fully explained to community representatives, leaving them feeling misled.

Despite the newly elected village government's decision to pull out, the government has continued to block their efforts to terminate the agreement, raising questions about whether communities have a true mandate to independently enter or exit such agreements.

MISA believes that this intervention exposes the imbalance of power in carbon offset schemes, where corporations and state authorities hold significant leverage over local communities.



WATCH: <a href="https://youtube/6xDHo">https://youtube/6xDHo</a> RhwX 8?si=09E8zwUDHVTvF 2S

# Soda Ash Mining Project Threatening Pastoralist Livelihoods in Engaruka, Monduli District

The government has decided to move ahead with its controversial soda ash mining project. Soda ash is used in the manufacturing of soap, detergents, and rechargeable batteries. The mining was initially designed to take place in the Lake Natron area, famous for its flamingos. It was blocked due to fierce opposition by environmental including Birdlife International because it would destroy the habitat of migratory birds. The soda ash extraction project has now been moved to the Engaruka basin, in Monduli district, where it will use 27,000 hectares of land. The mining project will negatively impact grazing lands and water sources, undermining pastoralist livelihoods and the environment. The government anticipates extracting 1 million tons/year to supply local manufacturers. Community representatives are urging authorities to halt the project, respect their land rights, and preserve their way of life.



#### READ:

https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/ news/national/tanzania-revivescontroversial-lake-natron-soda-ashproject-4892574

https://dailynews.co.tz/two-major-soda-ash-factories-underway/

https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/ news/national/engaruka-soda-ashproject-compensations-to-villagers-tostart-next-month-4620714



#### **WATCH:**

https://youtu.be/QRWWH-3DYJY?si=YdbTHHpZib8jvenB



#### Loliondo: Government Proceeds with Legalization of Land Grabbed in Pololeti

Following the rejected 2023-2043 Ngorongoro District Land Use Plan Framework (DLUPF) financed by the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), the government has proceeded to re-demarcate the boundaries of villages impacted by the establishment of Pololeti Game Reserve in Loliondo and Sale Division of the Ngorongoro District.

The government plan is to exclude the land annexed for the establishment of Pololeti Game Reserve from the newly defined village boundaries. The Government has invited 31 villages in Loliondo and Sale to collect their new Village Land Registration Certificates, in a move to legalize the grabbing of 1502 sq. kilometers of the Loliondo Villages land in June 2022. The District Land Use Plan was rejected by Councilors for camouflaging and hiding illegalities committed in June 2022.

The same DLUPF indicated Ngorongoro as a land devoid of people regardless of the Government's theory that Ngorongoro Conservation Area has a population of over 100,000 people.



Photo: Launch of Ereto fund

# Pastoralists Launch Ereto Solidarity Fund

On March 10, several NGOs part of MISA launched the ERETO Fund, meaning solidarity in the Maasai language. This initiative is designed to support indigenous and local communities in East Africa by embracing traditional knowledge, cultural and spiritual wisdom, traditional governance systems, and language while fostering self-determination and acknowledging the crucial role of land in the survival and well-being of both the land and its people. The objective of Ereto is to empower indigenous communities by providing grants

based on principles of movement building, trust, relationship building, reciprocity, and respect, using participatory grant-making. The fund will put an emphasis on communityled decision-making, protection of individual defenders, healing and well-being, simplified processes, and adaptive funding.

NGOs involved include: The Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organization's Forum (PINGOS), Traditional Ecosystems Survival Tanzania (TEST), Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT), Pastoralist Women Council (PWC), and Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT).





#### **A New Documentary**

On the outskirts of Serengeti National Park in East Africa, Maasai face eviction from their land to make way for international tourism and hunting grounds.

Human rights lawyer Joseph Oleshangay campaigns for his community to remain on its homeland as it has done for generations. While he represents Maasai communities in court, Joseph also remains close to his traditions among the cattle at his rural home near the Ngorongoro Crater. Risking his life to gather evidence from recently depopulated villages, Joseph battles in court where he leads

the fight to resist the evictions. Set against the backdrop of the Serengeti, the documentary underscores the complex interplay between conservation, tourism, and Indigenous Peoples' rights.

"In the Shadow of the Serengeti" serves as a poignant reminder of the resilience of indigenous communities and the importance of safeguarding their heritage for future generations. "In the Shadow of the Serengeti" is a documentary film by Benedict Moran.





Photo: Grazing livestock in Monduli

#### Monduli: Conflict over Pastoralist Land Seized in 1974 by the Army

In 1974, the late Edward Moringe Sokoine, the Minister for Security, allocated 200,000 acres of grazing land in Monduli to the military, recognizing multiple land use and allowing access to pastoralists. Since then, the area has been used by both pastoralists and army without any conflict. In 2014, a few nonpastoralist individuals – mainly retired district government officials - started asking for compensation, claiming private ownership over that land. It seems they secretly registered as landowners in the area in 1988 while the land had already been set for shared use between the army and pastoralists. They filed a case in court, but the same was struck out for non-compliance.

They continued the fight for compensation until early January 2025 when the pastoralists saw a convoy of more than thirty vehicles going into the land and later on knew the purpose of the convoy was to do a valuation of the land for compensation to those non-pastoralists individuals.

The pastoralists woke up to resist through meetings, social media, and their leaders, and on 24th January 2025, in response to their action, the Minister of Defense and National Service came to Monduli and met traditional leaders, village leaders, and councilors. She listened to those claiming compensation and to pastoralists and promised to form a special committee to investigate the matter. On 17th March 2025, the committee arrived in Monduli, and on 18th March 2025, the committee met the pastoralists. However, the committee only met with four people representing pastoralists. Traditional leaders

are now planning to go meet the President because they fear that the committee is filled with military officials and land officers and may not listen to their plight. They also fear the committee might be bribed.

The reasons why the pastoralists resist any compensation are:

- 1. 90% of those who claim ownership are neither residents of Monduli nor pastoralists. Some residents relocated voluntarily and refuse to be compensated because they want the land to remain for multiple uses.
- 2. The said land was set up in 1974 for other uses than farming and settlement. The non-pastoralist individuals claim to have been allocated the land in 1988-1990 for farming while the land had already been set aside for other uses.
- 3. If these few individuals are compensated, the land will be exclusively used by the army and lose its multiple use function. The pastoralists in Monduli will have no other place to graze their livestock and their livelihood will be jeopardized grossly. This will lead to extreme poverty. It will also lead to conflict as the pastoralists will have no choice but to enter the area for grazing.

To summarize, pastoralists in Monduli insist that the land remains a communal pasture as it has been for over 50 years. Few non-pastoralist individuals, mainly former government officials, secretly registered as landowners and are now seeking compensation.

The Maasai are refusing to recognize private claims over the land, and demand continued shared use of the land with the army.

## President Launches New Land Policy

On March 17, President Hassan <u>launched</u> the revised <u>Tanzania's National Land Policy of 1995, 2023 Edition</u>, noting that the new document will improve national efforts in managing the land and its resources.

The 112 pages long document seeks to respond to various challenges identified in the policy, including: the absence of a policy framework requiring all landowners to register their land; lack of a policy system to ensure every land parcel contributes to government revenue; lack of a geospatial data coordination system; absence of a framework allowing foreign real estate developers to lease land and sell houses; lack of a system enabling Tanzania Non-Citizen Diaspora to purchase or own land; absence of a policy framework to strengthen and protect international borders; lack of a sustainable coordination and economic utilization for sensitive areas; and failure to integrate crosscutting issues such as gender, environment and good governance into the policy.

MISA will conduct a thorough assessment of the new land policy and its anticipated impacts on the customary rights of pastoralists. Specific attention will be paid to the following areas: 1) the government's assessment that "uncontrolled livestock movements" encroach on conservation areas and, its plans to "Ensure designated livestock corridors are established to prevent land use conflicts" (page 54); 2) any provisions in the new policy that may impact decision-making powers over village land and the protection of customary rights.

The allocation of village land for investment by the Village Council to be now supervised by the Commissioner for Lands (page 48) may reduce local autonomy over land decisions; 3) plans to integrate conservation measures into land use planning and efforts by the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources to ensure that "conservation land is protected from encroachment" (page 82), which are likely to impact the rights of pastoralists over their grazing areas, including through the multiple land use model; 4) the anticipated human rights impacts of the creation of a land bank to facilitate investments (page 56) including digital land services; 5) whether the process of elaboration of the new policy was inclusive, participatory and transparent.

# Tanzania Government responds to UNESCO Decision on Ngorongoro World Heritage Site

Government has reacted to UNESCO decision 46 COM 7B.48, which noted that "maintaining a multiple land use model has more advantages economically, socially, culturally, politically and internally that the one that advocates for changing NCA to other protected area category".

The government reply argues that the Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) has more negative impacts, due to "increased human population and livestock, changes in life forms, transformation in land use patterns and climate change".

It further argues that the "voluntary relocation" program to Msomera is the outcome of community engagement, which is outrageous considering that the government coerced and restricted Maasai traditional pastoralist practices and limited access to social services to induce relocation.

The UNESCO response highlights the many complaints received by local communities and stakeholders who were not met by the February 2024 mission team nor adequately consulted. The government rejects this. The UNESCO decision reiterates its request to receive a full assessment of the environmental impacts of developments in the wider Serengeti ecosystem, especially linked to tourism, such as increased traffic. It also calls for a moratorium on new developments until the assessment is conducted. The government argues it has lacked resources to conduct this assessment, despite the millions generated by tourism revenue. However, it has not halted developments in the meantime.

Finally, the government response outlines it is finalizing its draft General Management Plan (GMP) and putting in place various management and conservation efforts for the Ngorongoro World Heritage Site. Yet, it fails to adequately address the concerns of the Maasai community, who have historically inhabited and depended on this land.

The government response concentrates on governance, tourism development, and land use but does not explicitly prioritize human rights or ensure their long-term sustainability. While it mentions "stakeholder engagement" in certain sections, it does not provide sufficient evidence that indigenous voices were actively and adequately included in decision-making processes.



#### MISA Promotes its Maasai Conservation Vision in Meetings with Diplomatic Missions and Conservation NGOs in Tanzania

In January, MISA held engagement meetings with several representatives from diplomatic missions and leading conservation NGOs in Dar es Salaam and Arusha to present and promote its Maasai Conservation Vision, developed in July 2024 as an alternative to the colonial fortress model of conservation that has been imposed on Maasai communities over the last 70 years. The diplomatic missions included the German Embassy, US High Commission, French Embassy, Swedish Embassy, Norwegian Embassy, European Delegation, UK Embassy, Canadian Embassy, and Governance Group. MISA also met with USAID and the World Bank in Dar es Salaam. MISA also met with conservation NGOs including the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), Oikos, TNC, and carbon credit

proponents such as Soils for the Future. MISA also engaged with the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) and Tanzania Land Alliance (TALA), the secretariat for the International Land Coalition in Tanzania. MISA presented its conservation vision, emphasizing a holistic approach that integrates pastoralism, traditional knowledge, land rights, gender equality, education, and livelihoods as inalienable tenets of conservation.

These engagements mark a step forward in building strategic partnerships to address conservation challenges in Tanzania and beyond. MISA's objective is to radically transform narratives and priorities in wildlife and biodiversity conservation so that projects and financing better align with peoples' priorities. Overall, the Maasai Conservation Vision was extremely well received, and MISA hopes to continue dialogue with these different actors in the future. This third lobby tour builds on previous MISA lobby tours organized in Europe in June 2023 and October 2024.



Photo: Carola Rackete in Northern Tanzania (credits: Rackete)

# German Member of European Parliament Carola Rackete Visits Pastoralist Communities Affected by Evictions in Tanzania

From 3rd March to 7th March 2025, Carola Rackete visited different pastoralist districts in Tanzania to meet communities impacted by evictions resulting from conservation, trophy hunting, carbon offsetting projects, and the EACOP crude oil pipeline.

Her focus was on documenting the impacts of projects financed by or originating in European corporations or countries.

The MEP listened to residents angered by carbon offset initiatives, which they say undermine their land rights and livelihoods. Emphasizing the need for justice and accountability, the MEP pledged to raise these concerns at the European level, which she already did on the issue of carbon credits.



**READ:** <a href="https://insideclimatenews.">https://insideclimatenews.</a>
org/news/25032025/europeanparliament-member-carolarackete-nature-movements/



Photo: State Secretary visits projects in Loliondo (credits: German Embassy Dar es Salaam)

#### Controversial German Conservation Funding: High-Level Visit in Loliondo

On January 24th, German State Secretary Mr Flasbarth visited several <u>BMZ-funded projects</u> in Loliondo, Ngorongoro District, including support for local schools and road development.

Maasai representatives seized the opportunity to call on him to stop funding conservation projects in the area, and in particular to stop funding militarized Government agencies such as TANAPA and TAWA and problematic conservation organisations like the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS).

Over the last few years, Maasai representatives have repeatedly requested information from KfW and BMZ on their funding activities and implementing organisations in Northern Tanzania, so as to be able to monitor and hold accountable the various actors that engage in problematic conservation initiatives thanks to German money.

Despite these requests, lack of transparency and access to information remain an issue.

On several occasions, the Maasai have also demanded that the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) stop any conservation activities in Loliondo. Despite those repeated demands, a parliamentarian question in Germany recently revealed that BMZ continues to fund FZS to do forest management and rangeland management activities in the area. The Maasai are also concerned that FZS will set up forest carbon credit projects in their forests.

# New UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples Engages with Maasai Representatives of Kenya and Tanzania in Nairobi

Dr Albert K. Barume, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), was appointed as <u>Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples</u> in December 2024. He has over 25 years of experience working on Indigenous Peoples' rights at national, regional, and international levels.

In early March, the Special Rapporteur hosted a dialogue with Indigenous Peoples from across Africa, showing strong solidarity with Indigenous Peoples in their ongoing struggle for recognition and the full protection of their rights. The meeting was held in Nairobi and hosted with the support of <u>IGWIA</u> and Impact.

Participants discussed how the rights to land, territories, and livelihoods are fundamental and must be recognized and protected to end the systemic human rights violations Indigenous Peoples continue to face.

# Oral Statement at the 58th Session of the Human Rights Council

On 21 March, Joseph Oleshangay delivered an oral statement on behalf of the Society for Threatened Peoples by video message at the 58th regular session of the Human Rights Council on minority issues. In it, he draws attention to the systematic eviction of the Maasai in northern Tanzania under the pretext of nature conservation. He mentions the involvement of the Tanzanian state authorities and international organisations in these human violations. He makes it clear that this endangers the survival of the Maasai and irreversibly damages their cultural heritage and way of life. In his statement, Joseph calls on the Human Rights Council to demand an end to the illegal eviction of the Maasai community, the illegal confiscation of their livestock, the obstruction of local infrastructure and the violent actions of the security forces.



Photo: Screenshot of video intervention



#### Selected Press Coverage of the MISA Carbon Credit Report (English, German, Italian and French):

https://taz.de/VW-und-Maasai/!6071555/

https://www.kathpress.at/goto/meldung/2456289/tansania-kohlenstoffzertifikate-bedrohen-lebensgrundlagen-der-maasai

https://reddmonitor.substack.com/p/carbon-projects-threaten-a-land-grab

https://landdwellers.co.tz/?p=1156

https://table.media/en/https/tablemedia/climate/news/land-and-human-rights-volkswagen-criticized-for-carbon-project-in-tanzania/

https://www.aciafrica.org/news/14643/catholic-agencies-call-for-action-as-tanzanian-indigenous-community-duped-into-signing-dubious-carbon-credit-projects

https://carbon-pulse.com/377110/

https://www.corriere.it/newsletter/mondo-capovolto/25 marzo\_12/ecco-cosa-c-e-sotto-il-ghiaccio-dell-antartide-e-quanto-rischiamo.shtml

https://thechanzo.com/2025/03/14/new-study-calls-for-five-year-moratorium-on-all-soil-carbon-deals-in-northern-tanzania-as-govt-urges-more-transparency-in-controversial-markets/

https://www.africa-live.de/tansania-kohlenstoffprojekte-untergraben-landrechte-der-maasai/

https://www.factory-magazin.de/news/vw-klimakompensation-in-tansania-ohne-beteiligung-indigener



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#### **Additional Resources on Carbon Credits:**

#### Does the global carbon offset sector need an overhaul?

https://www.dw.com/en/does-the-global-carbon-offset-sector-need-an-overhaul/a-71733505

#### Carbon projects increasingly discussed in Eastern Africa:

https://www.greengrants.org/2025/01/28/carbon-credits-in-east-africa/

#### Carbon projects threatening local communities in Kenya:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Qkef6br108

https://jass.journal.fi/article/view/144600/100762

#### Landmark ruling on legality of some of the conservancies in NRT project in Kenya:

https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/14121

Redd Monitor report on forest carbon project at YAEDA Chini shedding light on adverse

impacts: <a href="https://reddmonitor.substack.com/p/investigative-report-on-the-yadea">https://reddmonitor.substack.com/p/investigative-report-on-the-yadea</a>



## Additional Media Resources:

https://thecontrapuntal.com/the-maasai-strife-against-green-grabbing-in-tanzania/

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jan/28/conservation-environment-africa-community-wildlife-conservancies-national-parks-sustainable-tourism-indigenous-people-aoe

https://www.unep.org/technical-highlight/country-many-ecosystems-tanzania-takesimportant-steps-counter-climate-change

https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/elite-syndicate-threatens-tanzania-s-masai-giraffe?utm\_source=BenchmarkEmail&utm\_campaign=ENACT\_Review&utm\_medium=email

https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/decolonizing-maasai-history-9781350427433/

https://archup.net/saudi-arabia-acquires-bagamoyo-port-in-tanzania-as-part-of-the-east-gate-project/

https://news.mongabay.com/2025/01/what-does-an-ngo-do-when-its-funds-are-tied-to-human-rights-abuses-interview-with-john-knox/

https://iyrp.info/sites/default/files/2025-02/IYRP-WG-Bioversity-position-paper-MP-PAs\_rev-250203.pdf

https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099111624034537747/pdf/P150523123dbfb0eb181fb1ca75aca77f3d.pdf

https://news.mongabay.com/2025/01/world-bank-cancels-150m-tourism-project-in-tanzania-after-abuse-claims/