

# Tanzania's CCM regime imposes nationwide state terror on Independence Day

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Sixty-four years after Tanzania formally cast off the political yoke of British imperialism, the population was forced to mark Tuesday's Independence Day under conditions resembling a state of siege.

Instead of the usual public celebrations, parades, cultural gatherings and popular festivities, the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) government unleashed military-police repression. Armoured vehicles and soldiers occupied road junctions and government buildings, blocking traffic from entering city centres. Tanzania's state house, the official residence of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, was heavily fortified.

The government ordered civilians to remain indoors, leaving streets deserted and shops shuttered. Fuel stations were closed and public transport suspended. Access to social media was severely restricted, with users struggling to share content on platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Police helicopters circled ominously over major cities.

The immediate pretext for Tuesday's repression was the announcement of anti-government protests, organised online by Gen-Z activists to coincide with Independence Day. The CCM regime criminalised the planned demonstrations outright, offering the ludicrous claim that it had cancelled the December 9 celebrations to "save money."

Prime Minister Mwigulu Nchemba ordered all nonessential workers to remain at home, while Home Affairs Minister George Simbachawene declared that participation in demonstrations would amount to an "attempted coup." He said, "Those protests are not permitted and are unlawful ... that is not a protest, that is a coup. Our security organs will handle them."

In the lead-up to Independence Day, his threats were enforced through mass arrests. Human Rights Watch reported the detention of at least ten activists for online posts promoting peaceful protest, including one arrested for "organising and promoting crime through a WhatsApp group."

This display of state terror was unprecedented in a country

romanticised by the corporate media and international investors as a "land of peace," famed for its safaris and political stability. Not since the aftermath of the 1964 army mutiny, three years after independence, has Tanzania experienced anything comparable.

That uprising started when rank-and-file soldiers of the Tanganyika Rifles, still led by British officers despite formal independence, revolted over poor pay, stalled promotions, and unfulfilled promises of rapid Africanisation of the army. Independence leader and first President of Tanganyika (Tanzania), Julius Nyerere, fled Dar es Salaam and, in a stark contradiction to his anti-colonial rhetoric, appealed to London to send British troops to restore order.

Royal Marines landed in the capital, disarmed the soldiers, and imposed strict control over the city. For days, Dar es Salaam was transformed into an occupied zone, with armed patrols, barricades, roadblocks, and checkpoints at major intersections. Afterwards, Nyerere invoked laws of preventive detention against hundreds of civilians, paving the way for the establishment of one-party rule under the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), the precursor of today's CCM. His government moved to suppress trade unions and outlaw workers' strikes, binding the working class to the national bourgeoisie.

Today, the CCM's response exposes the deep fear of the Tanzanian ruling class over a renewed eruption of anger following the October 29 election crackdown, one of the bloodiest episodes in post-independence African history.

President Hassan's one-candidate race, crowned with the ludicrous official result of 98 percent, provoked mass anger. During a five-day internet blackout, and as hundreds of thousands, potentially millions of workers and youth, poured into the streets of major cities and towns, security forces launched a nationwide killing spree. Death toll estimates range from 700 to as many as 3,000. More than 2,000 people were arrested, and hundreds remain charged with treason, facing the death penalty.

Footage verified by the BBC and CNN showed bodies lying in the streets and piled up outside hospitals. Police

conducted door-to-door raids, dragging young men from their homes and executing them.

A senior doctor at one of the biggest hospitals in Dar es Salaam told *AFP* that during a shift on November 1, more than 200 patients were “taken away while receiving treatment” by men who were “not uniformed” and arrived in “green trucks resembling military vehicles”. “They even took dead bodies from the morgue,” the doctor added.

The CCM government has escalated this repression, arresting dozens more since mid-November, expanding digital surveillance, and even restricting fuel sales to avoid protestors mobilising. In a grotesque mockery, the regime has announced a commission to “investigate” its own crimes.

Imperialist powers are manoeuvring amidst the crisis, each seeking to exploit the collapse of bourgeois rule to its advantage. Seventeen western governments, including Britain, Germany, France, Canada, and the EU, issued a joint statement expressing regret over the loss of life and urging the Tanzanian security forces to exercise “maximum restraint.”

Such appeals drip with hypocrisy. These are the same governments arming and financing Israel’s genocide in Gaza, supporting the Saudi monarchy that saws up journalists in its consulates, backing Egyptian dictator Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and providing billions of euros in weaponry to the Ukrainian regime to deploy the country’s youth against Russia. Their sudden concern for Tanzanian “fundamental freedoms” is motivated by the scramble for resources on a continent where China has made substantial inroads.

US Senator Jim Risch, a hardline anti-China hawk, welcomed a State Department review of U.S.–Tanzania relations last week, seeking to shift Tanzania from China’s orbit and disrupt Beijing’s extraction of minerals across Africa via Dar es Salaam port.

On Monday, Hassan met with acting US ambassador Andrew Lentz, during which they advanced major investments: a \$42 billion LNG mega-project, the \$942 million Tembo Nickel venture, and the \$300 million Mahenge Graphite development.

These natural resources—gas, nickel, graphite—are central to the electric vehicle supply chain and the US military-industrial complex. Ambassador Lentz praised Hassan’s “2050 reform agenda,” while Hassan celebrated the growing footprint of US investors as evidence of “confidence” in her government.

Transnational corporations are plundering Tanzania’s resources, while the government imposes staggering levels of repression against its own population. Hassan’s anti-colonial posturing is a fraud. She waves the nationalist flag, accusing protestors of being pawns of the West and

denouncing Western powers as “colonisers” to justify internal crackdowns. But her government acts on behalf of these same imperialist powers.

The CCM regime has long been a tool of imperialism. Julius Nyerere upheld capitalist social relations and suppressed independent working-class organisation. His African socialism was a form of bourgeois nationalism that could not transcend the colonial borders or the economic dependency inherited from imperialism. Nyerere’s project remained tied to and sustained by Western aid.

Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution demonstrated that in belated capitalist countries, the national bourgeoisie is incapable of resolving the fundamental tasks of democracy, economic development, or genuine liberation. Its fear of the working class and subordination to imperialism force it inevitably toward dictatorship. CCM’s evolution, from Nyerere through John Pombe Magufuli to Hassan, is confirmation of this historical law.

The explosive contradictions in today’s Tanzania pose urgent political tasks for the working class. No salvation will come from the bourgeois opposition parties. The pro-business Chadema and the self-styled heirs of Nyerere’s “African Socialism,” ACT–Wazalendo, have refused to endorse, let alone call for protests on December 9.

They have actively distanced themselves from the emerging mass movement. Since October 29, their entire focus has been on pressuring the corrupt, authoritarian CCM state to adopt a more “transparent” and “law-abiding” stance, to offer compensation to the victims of its own police repression, and to invite the intervention of the imperialist-dominated “international community” to put pressure on the government. Such appeals aim to contain widespread anger within the confines of the bankrupt capitalist order. The bourgeois opposition parties fear the independent mobilisation of the working class more than they fear a CCM dictatorship.

The youth-led protests, though courageous, cannot succeed without a revolutionary leadership that unifies the struggles of workers, young people, and the rural poor into a conscious political movement against capitalism and imperialism.



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