



# Legal and Human Rights Centre



## GREETINGS FROM LHRC

### ***Esteemed Readers,***

With the dedicated efforts of our staff and the generous support from our development partners, including the embassies of Sweden, Norway, and Ireland, LHRC is pleased to present the March 2025 edition of the Mlinzi wa Haki Newsletter.

This month, LHRC had the honor of participating in a meeting with the Independent National Electoral Commission and other election stakeholders to discuss ways of improving the permanent voter register in the Dar es Salaam region.

We also wrapped up our commemoration of International Women's Month by empowering women from various regions. This included training on legal, economic, and development issues, alongside bringing together stakeholders to enhance the themes produced for public audiences, aiming to increase awareness of various societal issues.

Additionally, LHRC has been advocating for inclusive and accountable reforms in the National Health Insurance Fund (Amendment) Act of 2025, as well as demanding urgent action against corporal punishment following the tragic deaths and injuries of students.

As always, we continue to document and condemn human rights violations in Tanzania, including alarming cases of abduction.

***Dr. Anna Henga (Advocate)***  
***LHRC Executive Director***



## LHRC condemns the enforced evictions from protected areas in Tanga and Morogoro.

In March 2025, LHRC received reports of arrests, house burnings, destruction of crops, and various properties belonging to residents in Bondo Hamlet, Kilindi District Council, Tanga Region. These residents were alleged to have encroached and, therefore, were forcibly evicted despite having lived in the area for more than 56 years. These actions, which were violative of human rights, were allegedly being carried out by the Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS).

Similar incidents were once documented by LHRC in Mlimba District Council, Morogoro Region, and were allegedly carried out by the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA).

LHRC urges and calls upon wildlife authorities, the Tanzania Forest Services Agency, and the relevant ministry to adhere to human rights principles and good governance in case residents of protected areas are required to be evicted. This includes providing compensation and allocating alternative resettlement areas. In addition, law enforcement agencies should ensure in this case, due process of the law, including the right to bail, is granted since all alleged offenses are bailable.



Traces of a once-lived life, remains of a demolished shelter in Bondo Hamlet, Kilindi District Council, Tanga Region, serve as a stark reminder of the human impact behind enforced eviction

## **LHRC participates in the election stakeholders' meeting with the Independent National Electoral Commission on the improvement of the permanent voters' register in the Dar es Salaam region.**

On March 5, 2025, LHRC participated in a meeting of the Independent National Electoral Commission and election stakeholders held at Ubungo Plaza, Dar es Salaam.

The meeting was conducted as part of the Commission's efforts to engage election stakeholders in the voter registration and improvement of the Permanent Voters' Register.

The voter registration and improvement exercise for the Permanent Voters' Register took place from March 17 to March 25th, 2025, in the Dar es Salaam region.



Bridging Democracy: Stakeholders collaborate with the independent national electoral commission to enhance the permanent voters' register in Dar es Salaam.

## LHRC pushes for inclusive and accountability reforms in the National Health Insurance Fund (Amendment) Act, 2025.

LHRC has engaged in advocating for inclusive and accountability reforms in the National Health Insurance Fund (Amendment) Act, 2025.

In March 2025, LHRC presented its analysis of the National Health Insurance Fund (Amendment) Act, 2025, to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Health and HIV/AIDS. LHRC is advocating for crucial amendments aligned with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Universal Health Coverage (UHC) principles, and Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being.

Our recommendations included recognizing people with disabilities who are wholly dependent on an NHIF member as “dependents” and establishing an independent, accountable NHIF with a competitive selection process for the Director General. While we acknowledge the inclusion of indigent persons in the Act, we emphasize the need for robust enrollment mechanisms to ensure effective coverage.



Championing Change: Advocacy Officer Hidaya Haonga of LHRC during an advocacy session championing for reforms on the National Health Insurance Fund.

## LHRC urges the government to expedite terrorism cases or release detained Sheikhs after prolonged imprisonment.

LHRC issued a press release following the release of 12 sheikhs who had been detained on terrorism charges and their subsequent re-arrest a day after they were set free. LHRC condemned the subsequent re-arrest since, in March 2023, a statement of the kind was issued condemning the arrest of over 40 sheikhs who had been held in various prisons for more than a decade, including members of Sheikh Said Mohamed Ulatule's family. In that statement, LHRC called on the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to release these detainees, as their prolonged imprisonment without trial strongly indicated a lack of sufficient evidence to proceed with their cases.

According to Acting Executive Director Advocate Fulgence Massawe, LHRC has information that approximately 51 sheikhs remain in detention in various prisons across the country, having been held for nearly 10 years without being brought before a court. This prolonged detention is a clear violation of Article 13(6)(b) of the 1977 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.



Dr. Anna Henga (right), LHRC Executive Director, and Sheikh Ponda (left), with a Ulatule family member, during a 2023 press conference urging the DPP to drop terrorism charges.

Massawe added that holding suspects for such an extended period without trial strongly suggests that the government lacks sufficient evidence to convict them. According to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Chapter 19, as revised in 2022, the minimum sentence for a proven terrorism offense is 30 years in prison. This means that if the accused were indeed guilty, they would have already served one-third of their sentence by now.

“LHRC urges the government to take immediate action: if there is enough evidence, terrorism-related cases against the sheikhs should be expedited so that justice is served fairly and without further delay. However, if there is insufficient evidence, the suspects should be released so they can reunite with their families,” said Massawe.

Furthermore, in the statement, LHRC called on the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to uphold the principles of justice by exercising his authority in full compliance with the Constitution, laws, regulations, and legal procedures of the country.

This includes adhering to Section 91(3) of the Criminal Procedure Act, Chapter 20, as revised in 2022, which mandates that the prosecution should not use its authority to hold suspects without credible evidence. Simply put, once re-arrested for the same charges, a suspect must be immediately taken to court and have their case heard without unnecessary delays.

## Outrage over school violence: LHRC and TEN/MET demand action against corporal punishment after student deaths and injuries.

On March 11, 2025, Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), in collaboration with the Tanzania Education Network (TEN/MET), met with journalists to address increasing incidents of students being injured and killed due to corporal punishment in schools.

On February 26, 2025, media outlets reported the death of a student named Mhoja Maduhu, a Form Two student at Mwasamba Secondary School, located in the Busega District, Simiyu Region. Mhoja is said to have died after being excessively beaten by a teacher named Salim Chogogwe for the offense of not completing a group assignment in class.



LHRC and TEN/MET urge action against corporal punishment following tragic student deaths and injuries.

Additionally, on March 4, 2025, the network received a report from a citizen regarding the broken arm of a student named Khudhaifa Salim Hamisi, a second-grade student at Msufini Primary School, located in Chamazi, Temeke District, Dar es Salaam Region. The student's arm was broken after being severely beaten by his teacher. According to the report, although the incident was reported to the Mbande Police Station in Mbagala, Temeke District, no action has been taken so far," said Martha Makala, National Coordinator - TEN/MET.

LHRC and the Tanzania Education Network are deeply concerned about these incidents of students being injured and killed due to corporal punishment in schools, which not only violates children's rights but also goes against the country's laws and education guidelines.

LHRC is implementing a project on corporal punishment aimed at ending its use in schools. The project seeks to raise awareness of the harm corporal punishment causes to children and challenge the notion that it has a positive impact on their development. The goal is to protect children from violence and promote the use of non-harmful alternative disciplinary methods.

In the statement, LHRC and TEN/MET have jointly recommended that the Ministry of Education amend the Education Act of 1978 and its regulations to include provisions that explicitly prohibit the use of corporal punishment in schools and other forms of punishment that affect the child's right to life, well-being, and dignity. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology should issue an official circular directing all teachers to cease the use of harsh corporal punishment and adopt alternative disciplinary methods that protect the dignity and rights of children while the process of amending the Education Act continues.

Strong legal action should be taken against all those involved in this brutal incident and other similar incidents that violate the fundamental right of children to life, contrary to Article 14 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977. The government should continue to ensure that justice is served for the victims of school-related abuse and that the perpetrators are held accountable, sending a clear message that violence against children and students will not be tolerated or accepted.

## Empowering communities through mass education: LHRC meets grassroots stakeholders to discuss societal issues for engagement through community radios.

Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) brought together various grassroots stakeholders with the aim of discussing and agreeing on key themes for community engagement through community radios. The stakeholders gathered included community paralegals, human rights advocates, community radio program coordinators, and journalists from various regions of the country. The goal of this intervention is to increase public awareness and engagement on community issues and concerns through mass education.

Speaking at the three-day session, LHRC's Director of Empowerment and Human Rights Response, Deogratias Bwire, emphasized the importance of building the capacity of these key stakeholders to enhance community engagement using methods and concepts that are more likely to be accepted by the public.

Community radio program producers were encouraged to involve experts such as psychologists, social welfare officers, religious leaders, and government officials on various societal issues to deliver messages with accurate information to the respective communities. Involving experts for awareness raising in the community will significantly help in enhancing public understanding by providing accurate information on various matters such as inheritance, gender-based violence, land disputes, harmful traditional practices, and other issues that have been problematic in the community.



LHRC's Deogratias Bwire, Director of Empowerment and Human Rights Response (DEH), during the opening session for grassroots stakeholders in Dodoma

## Empowering women, securing their rights: LHRC champions legal and economic awareness during International Women's Month commemoration.

On March 24th, 2025, Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) concluded its commemoration of International Women's Month by empowering women from various areas. The empowerment initiative began with the women of Kipunguni Ward, Ilala District, through training on legal, economic, and development issues.

One of the key areas of empowerment provided by LHRC officers, Nancy Masenha (Community Engagement Officer) and Ally Ramadhani (Youth and Children's Officer), included topics such as marriage laws, marital dispute resolution, inheritance rights and its management, the importance of writing a will, asset distribution, and the challenges of economic violence against women. They also discussed various opportunities for economic empowerment to reduce dependency on high-interest loans and exploitation, which often have psychological and social impacts on women.

In addition to the education provided, some women expressed that, despite the challenges posed by these exploitative loans, they still rely on them as a quick solution to their daily problems while complaining of the difficulty of accessing government loans due to stringent requirements.



Ally Ramadhani youth and children's officer at LHRC, leads the charge in the International Women's Day 2025 commemoration by empowering women and securing rights:

They also highlighted the main causes of marital conflicts, including lack of income, trust issues, extramarital affairs, failure to meet marital needs, and polygamous marriages.

After the training, some women spoke to Haki TV, sharing how the knowledge they gained would help them tackle their daily challenges. Others admitted that they had previously not understood the importance of writing a will and the procedures for inheritance, but now they have a better understanding of their rights, how to protect themselves, and the significance of having formal employment contracts. LHRC continues to strategize on expanding this education to reach more people, transforming lives through justice and equality.

Many women stated that most marriages in their areas end due to men's infidelity and economic abuse, with many being left without any family support. A major challenge was also identified in the management of inheritance, as many lack knowledge of their rights or the importance of writing a will. This issue has left widows and children in difficult situations after the deaths of their husbands.

Furthermore, the women revealed that many young workers in the area's factories complained about not being given employment contracts, which puts them in unsafe working conditions and denies them basic worker entitlements.



Nancy Masenha, community engagement officer at LHRC, during an engagement with women from Mkuranga.

## **LHRC and CHRAGG discuss the implementation of ACERWC recommendations on girls' education.**

From March 26 to 28, 2025, Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) convened a crucial meeting with the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) in Morogoro to discuss the recommendations issued by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) in Case No. 0012/COM/001/2019.

The meeting forms part of LHRC's ongoing efforts to ensure the reintegration of girls into schools, aligning with the 2022 National Education Guidelines. This initiative is guided by ACERWC's decisions on child reintegration into the education system and reproductive health education.



LHRC's Community Development and Engagement Manager, Advocate Getrude Dyabene, during a discussion on the implementation of ACERWC recommendations on girls' education.

LHRC has been working closely with various government ministries to implement these recommendations. In 2024, the organization, alongside the Government of Tanzania, participated in a high-level meeting in Maseru, Lesotho, where key stakeholders deliberated on the effective implementation of ACERWC's directives. One of the pivotal recommendations from that engagement was the inclusion of CHRAGG as a key stakeholder in advancing girls' rights and ensuring full protection mechanisms are in place.

The meeting brought together CHRAGG officers specializing in human rights, gender equality, children's rights, and international treaty implementation. Discussions centered on the best strategies to implement ACERWC's recommendations and develop a strategic plan for monitoring and follow-up actions.

Speaking at the meeting, representatives from LHRC and CHRAGG underscored the significance of a collaborative approach in addressing barriers to girls' education. They emphasized the need for policy alignment, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement to foster an inclusive education system that upholds children's rights.

The outcomes of the meeting are expected to inform national strategies aimed at ensuring that all girls, including those affected by pregnancy-related school dropouts, have access to education and the necessary support systems for successful reintegration.

This initiative reaffirms LHRC's commitment to championing children's rights and gender equality in Tanzania, working in tandem with key institutions such as CHRAGG to create a lasting impact.

## Ford Foundation visits LHRC for grant implementation updates amid changing contexts.

On March 19, 2025, the Ford Foundation paid a courtesy visit to LHRC office at Kijitonyama to discuss updates on grant implementation, changes in the external context, and the process of learning and adapting. The discussion also covered how these shifts are impacting LHRC's work, as well as any significant changes or challenges the organization has experienced during the implementation period.



LHRC staff with representatives from the Ford Foundation during a visit to the LHRC office in Kijitonyama.

## Our development partners.



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