

INSIGHTS FROM 2024

Tanzania State of Internet Governance Series

The State of Internet Governance and Analysis on Emerging Digital Threats in Tanzania

April 2025

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Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)

The study is developed in partnership with the Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group (IGTWG), with support from the U.S. Embassy in Tanzania.



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About the Tanzania State of Internet Governance Series

The Tanzania State of Internet Governance Series is a comprehensive monthly and annual initiative that examines the current landscape of Internet governance in Tanzania. It highlights key issues, challenges, and opportunities in digital governance, policy frameworks, cybersecurity, and digital rights. Through expert insights and data-driven analysis, the series aims to inform stakeholders, policymakers, and the public about critical trends shaping the country's digital future and digital economy. It promotes transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making in Internet governance. The series is part of the Tanzania Digital Collaboration Program, supported by the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, in collaboration with the Bureau of African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

About the Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group (IGTWG)

The Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group (IGTWG), led by civil society and coordinated by Tech & Media Convergence (TMC), comprises 25 organizations from Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. It promotes data governance, inclusivity, equitable internet access, and responsible usage while advocating policy reforms to shape Tanzania's digital landscape.

About the Tanzania Technical Group

The Tanzania Technical Group draws from independent Tanzanian ICT experts, lawyers, policymakers, researchers, civil society organizations, and digital governance specialists to foster innovation, ensure sustainable development, and provide knowledge for informed policy briefs.

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We recognize the valuable role played by respective government authorities such as the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), the Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF), and others that consistently make data and reference materials readily accessible resources that were instrumental in informing and strengthening the research process.

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Finally, we pay tribute to the individuals and institutions across Tanzania and the region who continue to champion digital rights, innovation, and accountability in the face of rapid technological change. Your efforts not only inform this report but also inspire continued action toward a transformative digital future.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRF	African Digital Rights Fund
AfIGF	Africa Internet Governance Forum
AI	Artificial Intelligence
APNIG	African Parliamentary Network on Internet Governance
AU	African Union
CERT	Computer Emergency Response Team
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSA	Compliance Systems Audit
DRI	Digital Rights Index
EPOCA	Electronic and Postal Communications Act
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
IGTWG	Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group
IoT	Internet of Things
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LGA	Law Guards Advocates
MCT	Media Council of Tanzania
NIGF	National Internet Governance Forum
OGBV	Online Gender-Based Violence
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
TCRA	Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority
THRDC	Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition
TISPA	Tanzania Internet Service Providers Association
TMC	Tech & Media Convergency
TZ-CERT	Tanzania Computer Emergency Response Team
UCSAF	Universal Communications Service Access Fund
UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
USSD	Unstructured Supplementary Service Data

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of internet governance in Tanzania, assessing the frameworks, actors, and practices shaping the digital ecosystem in 2024. As the internet increasingly underpins public service delivery, economic growth, political discourse, and civic engagement, it also brings with it growing complexity and new risks. In this context, responsive, inclusive, and rights-respecting digital governance has become not only necessary but urgent.

The report situates its analysis within the country's rapidly evolving digital environment and rising internet penetration, which now connects over 50% of the population. Yet, while digital technologies offer significant opportunities, they also expose gaps in legal protection, access equity, institutional coordination, and accountability; particularly in the lead-up to critical democratic events such as the 2025 general elections. Risks such as internet shutdowns, increasing surveillance, online misinformation, and shrinking civic space have emerged as significant threats to digital freedoms and democratic participation.

Drawing from evidence compiled across a year-long assessment, the study reveals that 53% of digital rights-related incidents in Tanzania in 2024 were regressive, 13% were neutral, and only 34% were progressive; highlighting sustained pressure on civil liberties in the digital space. Incidents include content takedowns, platform access restrictions, state surveillance, and online attacks targeting activists and journalists. These trends indicate that the digital environment remains fragile, and vulnerable to rights violations, particularly during politically sensitive periods.

The economic consequences of poor digital governance are also notable. According to the 2024 report by Top10VPN.com, internet disruptions in Tanzania resulted in an estimated loss of \$1.4 million, spanned across 1,116 hours, and affected approximately 14 million users. Tanzania ranked 25th globally in terms of economic losses due to internet shutdowns, contributing to a global total of \$7.69 billion in lost revenue. These disruptions not only impact

freedom of expression and access to information but also damage investor confidence and the growth of the digital economy.

Tanzania's legal and policy infrastructure includes the National ICT Policy, the Personal Data Protection Act, and the Cybercrimes Act, as well as a range of regulatory interventions led by institutions like the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). Public campaigns such as TCRA's "Ni Rahisi" initiative are helping build digital literacy and awareness about misinformation and cyber hygiene. However, these efforts remain fragmented and inconsistently enforced.

Civil society organizations play a pivotal role in advocating for democratic digital governance, advancing digital rights, and pushing for transparency and accountability. Through research, public engagement, and policy advocacy, these organizations elevate the voices of marginalized communities and address issues such as digital surveillance, internet shutdowns, disinformation campaigns, censorship and restrictions on freedom of expression, data privacy violations, biased AI systems, digital exclusion and inequity, cybersecurity threats and access inequality. However, in fulfilling this critical role, many digital rights advocates operate under increasing pressure and risk, as evidenced by reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and even forced disappearances.

This report identifies areas where Tanzania must take urgent action to align with regional and international standards such as the African Union's Malabo Convention and the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The study recommends a coordinated and strategic approach that includes legal reforms, institutional strengthening, investment in digital capacity, and sustained multi-stakeholder dialogue. Enhancing transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in internet governance is critical to safeguarding human rights while fostering innovation and national development.

By aligning its digital governance efforts with regional obligations and global best practices, Tanzania can position itself as a leader in equitable, secure, and future-ready digital transformation one that empowers citizens, builds public trust, promotes the digital economy and supports the country's broader socio-economic development agenda to align with the requirements of the forth industrial revolution.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

The concept of internet governance has evolved significantly, reflecting the need to balance the opportunities presented by digital transformation with the risks inherent in a connected society. Globally, frameworks like the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) have highlighted principles such as openness, inclusivity, and user-centric policies.^[1] Africa has embraced these principles through regional initiatives like the African Union's Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention).^[2]

In Tanzania, the internet's transformative potential is evident in sectors like finance, agriculture, and health. Mobile money services such as M-Pesa have revolutionized financial inclusion, while digital tools have enhanced agricultural productivity and access to healthcare.^[3] However, these advancements occur against a backdrop of governance challenges, including inadequate regulatory frameworks, limited multi-stakeholder participation, and uneven access to digital technologies especially to local communities and remote areas.

The legal and policy landscape in Tanzania features instruments such as the Cybercrimes Act (2015)^[4] and the Personal Data Protection Act.^[5] While these laws address some governance concerns, they often fall short of addressing contemporary issues such as AI regulation, cross-border data flows, and the balance between state surveillance and privacy which is a threat to surveillance capitalism.^[6] For example, the Cybercrimes Act has been criticized for its restrictive provisions that potentially stifle freedom of expression, raising concerns among civil society and international stakeholders.^[7]

Furthermore, regional disparities in internet access highlight the digital divide between urban and rural populations. While urban centers enjoy relatively robust internet connectivity, rural areas often face infrastructural challenges that hinder meaningful digital inclusion. This divide exacerbates socio-economic inequalities, limiting rural communities' access to e-learning, e-commerce, and e-governance opportunities.^[8]

Emerging technologies like AI and automation present both opportunities and risks. While AI can enhance government services and drive innovation, it also raises issues related to job displacement, ethical misuse, and data privacy. This highlights the need for adaptive governance models that address these risks while promoting inclusive growth. This study analyzes Tanzania's governance frameworks, the challenges they encounter, and potential pathways toward a secure and inclusive digital future.^[9]

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Definition of Internet governance
(Tunis Agenda, Paragraph 34):

"Is the development and application by governments, the private sector, and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet."

^[1] Internet Governance Forum (IGF). (n.d.). About IGF. Retrieved from <https://www.intgovforum.org>

^[2] African Union. (2014). Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention).

^[3] GSMA Intelligence; Digital transformation in Tanzania: The role of mobile technology and impact on development goals

^[4] The Cybercrimes Act, Tanzania. (2015).

^[5] The Personal Data Protection Act, Tanzania. (2022).

^[6] Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). (n.d.). Overview of Internet Regulation in Tanzania. Retrieved from <https://www.tcra.go.tz> Accessed on 24th December 2024.

^[7] Article 19. (2018). Cybercrimes Act Review: Implications for Freedom of Expression in Tanzania. Retrieved from <https://www.article19.org> Accessed on 24th December 2024.

^[8] International Telecommunication Union (ITU). (2023). Digital Inclusion Report for Africa. Accessed on 24th December 2024.

^[9] Digwatch "IGF 2024 and the future of AI, digital divides, and internet governance" Accessed on 23rd December 2024.

Internet governance lies at the heart of the digital era, embodying the collective policies, standards, and norms that regulate the functioning and evolution of the internet on a global scale. In Tanzania, where internet penetration continues to grow, effective governance of digital resources has become essential to national development, impacting areas such as public administration, economic innovation, education, and civic engagement.

This study examines the state of internet governance in Tanzania in 2024, evaluates its alignment with international norms and best practices, and explores strategies to address emerging digital threats. As digital adoption accelerates, the country faces significant challenges including cybercrime, misinformation, data privacy violations, and unequal access to digital services. Left unaddressed, these issues risk eroding public trust in digital platforms, stalling economic progress, and deepening social inequalities. The emergence of transformative technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain further underscores the need for a responsive, inclusive, and future-ready governance framework. To champion technological adaptation and democratic digital transformation, TMC and the Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group (IGTWG) operate within a structured, multi-stakeholder framework aimed at fostering accountability, equity, and innovation across the digital ecosystem. The pathway to improving Tanzania's digital governance environment begins with raising public awareness on digital rights, data protection, and internet freedom through digital literacy campaigns, forums, and community dialogues, particularly in underserved areas.

The relevance of this study is rooted in the growing urgency to protect the integrity of Tanzania's digital ecosystem amid these shifts. The report contributes to national, regional, and global conversations around digital governance for the Tanzanian context by providing evidence-based insights grounded in local realities. It aims to:

- Critically assess the effectiveness, gaps, and responsiveness of Tanzania's internet governance ecosystem in addressing legal, institutional, and infrastructural challenges;
- Identify and analyze emerging digital threats, including surveillance, disinformation, internet shutdowns, and AI-related risks and examine their socio-economic, political, and human rights implications;
- Provide actionable, forward-looking recommendations to guide policy reform, strengthen multi-stakeholder governance structures, and build long-term digital resilience.

This foundation fuels advocacy and multi-stakeholder engagement, where civil society, media, private sector, and government actors collaborate on key issues such as surveillance, content regulation, and data governance through platforms like the Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group (IGTWG). In parallel, capacity building and skills development are essential to equip regulators, policymakers, and digital rights defenders with the tools and knowledge to engage effectively, supported by ICT hubs and academic institutions. As awareness, advocacy, and capacity converge, the stage is set for policy reform and institutional strengthening, including the revision of outdated laws and alignment with regional and international frameworks. Collectively, these actions lead to an inclusive, transparent, and resilient digital governance ecosystem that protects rights, fosters trust, promotes digital economy and supports innovation.

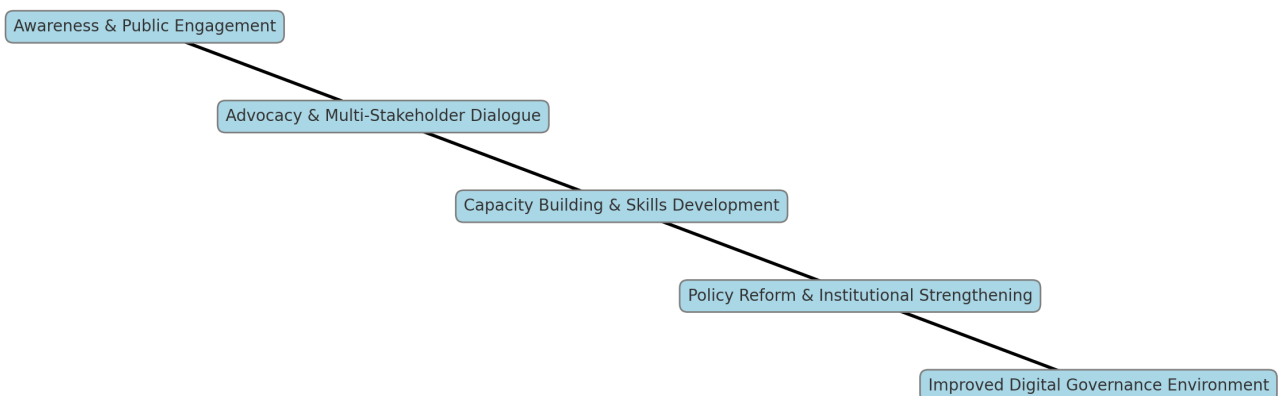


Illustration: Theory of Change: Enhancing Digital Governance in Tanzania

PART II. APPROACH, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGIES USED

2.1 APPROACH

This study employed a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to assess the state of Internet governance and analyze emerging digital threats in Tanzania. It integrates policy analysis, empirical research to provide a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the digital space. By leveraging both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study ensures that findings are well-rounded and actionable. The study was grounded in the multi-stakeholder model, which is widely regarded as a cornerstone of effective Internet Governance. This model emphasized inclusivity from the foundation of the Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group (IGTWG) and involving key players, private sector players, civil society organizations, and technical experts working in digital governance. It also recognizes the importance of balancing competing interests to develop governance policies that are both equitable and practical.^[10]

Additionally, the study situates Tanzania's internet governance practices within the context of global standards, such as the frameworks established by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the African Union's Malabo Convention. By doing so, it identifies areas where Tanzania is performing well, highlights gaps in its current frameworks, and proposes context-specific recommendations to address them.

2.2 SCOPE

The scope of the study spans three critical dimensions: geographic, thematic, and temporal. Geographically, the study focuses on Tanzania, with attention to the disparities between urban and rural regions in terms of internet access, regulatory enforcement, and stakeholder engagement. These disparities exacerbate digital inequality and underscore the need for governance models that address the unique challenges faced by rural communities.^[11] Thematically, the study covers internet governance, legal-frameworks, opportunities, digital threats, emerging technologies and stakeholder

-older engagement. It examines Tanzania's existing governance frameworks, including the roles of institutions like the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) and the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Information Technology. The study also investigates key digital threats, such as cybersecurity risks, misinformation, and privacy violations, analyzing their socio-economic impact on individuals, businesses, and institutions. Stakeholder engagement is another crucial theme, as effective internet governance depends on the active participation of all relevant actors, including the private sector and civil society.

The study examines the evolution of internet governance in Tanzania over the past decade, addressing the lack of coordinated information on the topic. By consolidating these developments, it offers a historical perspective on Tanzania's progress and looks ahead to future challenges and opportunities in internet governance and digital threat mitigation.

2.3 METHODOLOGIES

To generate reliable and actionable insights, the study adopted a combination of research methodologies. These methods are designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative dimensions of internet governance and digital threats in Tanzania.

The research foundation was established through a comprehensive literature review of academic articles, policy documents, and reports from organizations like the ITU and the World Bank. This review created a framework for understanding internet governance principles and Tanzania's challenges while identifying research gaps that the study addressed through empirical analysis.

The study also employed an analysis of case studies which was used to illustrate real Tanzania examples of internet governance challenges and responses to digital threats. These included notable incidents such as internet shutdowns during elections, which significantly affect freedom of expression and economic activity.

^[10]International Chamber of Commerce "Digital Economy: Internet Governance" Accessed on 22nd December 2024.

^[11]Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). (n.d.). TCRA Reports and Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.tcra.go.tz>

The analysis also examined cybersecurity incidents, such as data breaches, and evaluated the lessons learned from these events.^[12] Additionally, the study highlighted local initiatives aimed at addressing misinformation and promoting digital literacy, offering insights into best practices that can be scaled or replicated.

Policy and legal analysis were another critical methodological component. This involved a detailed examination of Tanzania's legal frameworks to evaluate their adequacy in addressing contemporary governance challenges.

By identifying gaps and inconsistencies in Tanzania's legal instruments, the study provides a basis for recommending policy reforms that align with global best practices.

Finally, the study includes a data analysis component to provide empirical evidence supporting its findings. Quantitative data from secondary sources were consulted specifically on internet penetration rates, cybersecurity incidents, and governance metrics, were collected from credible sources such as the ITU^[13] and GSMA.^[14]

PART III. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Internet governance in Tanzania is shaped by a range of laws and policies that aim to regulate digital communication, protect user rights, and promote the growth of ICT infrastructure. These frameworks address key issues such as cybersecurity, data protection, access to information, and freedom of expression. However, their implementation often raises questions about effectiveness, inclusivity, and alignment with international standards. This review critically analyzes the key legal and policy instruments governing internet governance in Tanzania, highlights their strengths and limitations, and offers recommendations for reform.

3.1 DOMESTIC LAWS

3.1.1. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA (1977, AS AMENDED)

The Constitution serves as the supreme law and establishes fundamental rights and freedoms that underpin internet governance.^[15] It contains the Bill of Rights, which are translated in the constitution as fundamental principles or basic rights.^[16] Human rights are central values and

universal as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,^[17] and that should underpin Internet governance principles. Rights that people have offline must also be protected online, in accordance with international human rights legal obligations including the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights.^[18] Those rights include, but are not limited to: Freedom of Expression, Freedom of association, privacy and personal security, Freedom of information and access to information, Accessibility and Equality.

Article 18 guarantees the right to freedom of expression and access to information, which are essential for digital rights and internet freedom.^[19] However, these rights are subject to limitations under Article 30, which allows restrictions for public safety, morality, and other interests.^[20] Additionally, Article 64 (5) of the Tanzania Constitution declares the supremacy of the Constitution and expressly stipulates that any law which is contrary to the Constitution shall be “null and void”.^[21]

Internet governance comprises laws, rules, and practices that manage and regulate the internet, involving governments, businesses, and civil society. Authority in this system is derived from the Constitution.

^[12] International Telecommunication Union (ITU). (2023). Global Cybersecurity Index.

^[13] International Telecommunication Union (ITU). (2023). Measuring the Digital Divide.

^[14] GSMA. (2022). State of Mobile Internet in Sub-Saharan Africa.

^[15] The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977, as amended).

^[16] Ibid, Part III.

^[17] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949.

^[18] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Adopted 16 December 1966, By General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI). Accessed on 18th December 2024.

^[19] The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977, as amended). Art. 18.

^[20] Ibid Art. 30(2).

^[21] Ibid, Art. 64(5).

3.1.2. THE CYBERCRIMES ACT

The Cybercrimes Act is one of Tanzania's foundational laws addressing internet governance, aimed primarily at combating cybercrime and ensuring the security of online systems.^[22] The Act provides a legal framework to address crimes committed using information and communication technologies (ICTs), including offenses like hacking, identity theft, and cyber harassment. Section 14 of the Act criminalizes unauthorized access to computer systems, which is critical for protecting digital infrastructure and maintaining trust in online services.^[23] Similarly, Section 22 establishes penalties for identity-related offenses, which are becoming increasingly prevalent in Tanzania's growing digital economy.^[24] Section 16 of the Act, which prohibits "false or misleading information," aims to combat misinformation and maintain public order.^[25] However, its broad language lacks clear definitions, allowing for potential misuse against journalists, bloggers, and social media users, leading to a chilling effect on freedom of expression. This has resulted in legal actions against those reporting on sensitive issues, hampering public discourse and civic engagement.

While the Act addresses cybersecurity concerns, its implementation has faced criticism for selective enforcement, prioritizing state control over the protection of digital rights. Amendments are needed to clarify vague terms, ensure proportional penalties, and safeguard legitimate online activities.^[26] Furthermore, its enforcement mechanisms should be strengthened to address genuine cyber threats while avoiding misuse against dissenting voices.

3.1.3 THE TCRA ACT AND ITS REGULATIONS

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Act establishes the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority as the primary body overseeing electronic and postal communications in Tanzania.^[27] TCRA plays a pivotal role in internet governance by regulating service providers, ensuring compliance with licen-

-sing conditions, and safeguarding users' rights within the digital ecosystem. Section 6 of the Act grants the TCRA the authority to regulate communication networks and ensure the orderly development of ICT infrastructure.^[28] Through its regulations, the TCRA has implemented measures such as mandatory SIM card registration.^[29] and the licensing of online content creators.^[30] While these initiatives are intended to enhance digital security and accountability, they have sparked concerns about over-regulation and potential overreach.

• 3.1.3.1 THE ELECTRONIC AND POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS (ONLINE CONTENT) REGULATIONS, 2020

The Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, 2020 aim to ensure digital accountability and security in Tanzania's cyberspace but have sparked concerns over their restrictive impact on freedom of expression and innovation.^[31] Regulation 4 mandates that all online content providers, including bloggers and influencers, obtain licenses from the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA).^[32] The associated costs, as outlined in the Second Schedule, disproportionately affect small-scale creators, limiting their ability to contribute to the digital ecosystem.

Regulations 9 and 16 impose strict obligations on licensees to filter and remove prohibited content, which includes a broad range of categories such as hate speech, false information, and content harmful to national unity.^[33] However, the vague definitions of prohibited content grant TCRA significant discretion, raising fears of arbitrary censorship and suppression of dissent. Further, Regulation 8 allows TCRA to revoke or suspend licenses for non-compliance, consolidating substantial control over digital platforms and amplifying the risk of self-censorship.^[34] These regulations aim to enhance cybersecurity but undermine freedom of expression by restricting diverse voices in favor of state-aligned entities. The TCRA's enforcement of Section 26 has been criticized for stifling expression and limiting diversity in Tanzania's digital space.^[35]

^[22] The Cybercrimes Act, Act No 14 of 2015.

^[23] Ibid, s. 14.

^[24] Ibid, s. 22.

^[25] Ibid, s. 16.

^[26] Amnesty International. (2021). Critique of Tanzania's Cybercrime Legislation.

^[27] Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Act No. 12 of 2003.

^[28] Ibid, s. 6.

^[29] The Electronic and Postal Communications (SIM Card Registration) Regulations 2020.

^[30] The Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, G.N No 538 of 2020.

^[31] Ibid.

^[32] Ibid, reg. 4.

^[33] Ibid, reg. 9 & 16.

^[34] Ibid, reg. 8.

^[35] Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Act No. 12 of 2003, s. 26.

3.1.4 THE MEDIA SERVICES ACT

The Media Services Act governs media operations in Tanzania, including digital media platforms.^[36] The Act was enacted in 2016 during the late president John Pombe Magufuli's administration in an attempt to censor journalists, the opposition, and human rights activists. The Act contains some of provisions which curtail or limit the press freedom in Tanzania. For instance, section 19 (1) requires all journalists to be accredited before being allowed to practice journalism.^[37] This means that without an accreditation, a person cannot practice journalism.

The Act defines journalism as the gathering, editing, and presenting of news and information for mass media, restricting this role to accredited individuals. While aimed at improving media services and credibility, it raises concerns about citizens' access to information necessary for independent opinion formation. Additionally, it restricts citizen journalism, which upholds the right to freedom of expression. A less restrictive approach, such as regulating offensive content, could have better enhanced media quality.

Further, the Act grants the Minister's authority over the internet, including editorial powers. Section 58 empowers the Minister to prohibit the importation of publications deemed contrary to public interest, but it does not define what constitutes public interest.^[38] Worse still, the provisions of section 59 empower the Minister to prohibit or sanction the publication of any content which in his opinion jeopardizes the national security or public safety. Strictly speaking these are editorial powers given exclusively to the Minister to monitor the contents of the print media in the country.^[39]

Moreover, the provision of section 7(2) (b) (iv) of the Act, provides that all licensed private media houses shall broadcast or publish news or issues of national importance as the Government may direct; and maintain accountability and transparency.^[40] This gives a room to the government to control issues which these media may publish or broadcast.

Additionally, Sections 35 and 36 of the Media Services Act have significant implications for internet governance in Tanzania, particularly concerning the regulation of defamatory statements published online.^[41] Section 35 defines defamation broadly, covering statements that harm an individual's reputation or subject them to public ridicule or hatred. Section 36 further criminalizes the publication of defamatory material, imposing legal consequences on authors, publishers, and disseminators.

The Act defines "publication" to include digital content, holding online platforms, content creators, and social media users accountable for defamatory statements. While it aims to protect individuals, there are concerns about its potential misuse to suppress freedom of expression. The vague definition of defamatory material and insufficient protections for public interest reporting could hinder critical discourse and whistleblowing, affecting transparency and accountability in governance.

3.1.5 THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE ACCESS ACT

The Universal Communications Service Access Act is pivotal in bridging the digital divide in Tanzania.^[42] It focuses on extending ICT services to underserved and rural areas, which are often excluded from mainstream internet infrastructure development. Section 4 of the Act establishes the Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF), which finances projects aimed at improving connectivity and fostering digital inclusion.^[43] While the Act has facilitated progress in expanding internet access, significant gaps remain. Rural areas still face challenges such as limited infrastructure, high costs, and a lack of digital literacy programs. These issues undermine efforts to ensure equitable access to internet services, which is a cornerstone of effective internet governance. To address these shortcomings, the government must enhance the implementation of UCSAF projects and prioritize partnerships with private sector actors to deploy innovative and cost-effective solutions in underserved regions.

^[36] The Media Services Act, Chapter 229.

^[37] Ibid, s. 19 (1).

^[38] Ibid, s. 58.

^[39] Ibid, s. 59.

^[40] Ibid, s. 7(2) (b) (iv).

^[41] Ibid, s. 35 and s. 36.

^[42] The Universal Communications Service Access Act, 2006.

^[43] Ibid, s. 4.

3.1.6 THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

The Access to Information Act seeks to promote transparency and accountability by granting individuals the right to access public information.^[44] Section 5 guarantees access to information held by public authorities, while Section 6 outlines exceptions based on national security, public safety, and privacy concerns.^[45] In the context of internet governance, this Act is critical for empowering citizens to demand accountability and participate meaningfully in digital governance processes.

However, the broad and undefined exceptions under Section 7 often result in arbitrary denials of access, undermining the Act's intended purpose. For example, requests for government-held data on internet shutdowns or surveillance practices have been frequently denied under the guise of national security. Strengthening oversight mechanisms and introducing clearer guidelines on permissible exceptions would enhance the Act's effectiveness and promote greater transparency in internet governance.^[46]

3.1.7 THE PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT

The Personal Data Protection Act,^[47] is a landmark law that regulates the processing, storage, and dissemination of personal data in Tanzania. It introduces key principles of data privacy, including accountability, transparency, and consent.^[48] Under section 6 it establishes the Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC).^[49] The Commission, operational since May 2023, oversees the implementation of the Personal Data Protection Act No. 11 of 2022. Its responsibilities include registering data collectors and processors, addressing privacy violation complaints, conducting research, collaborating internationally on data protection issues, and ensuring compliance with international standards.^[50] Additionally, Section 22 mandates data controllers to adopt measures that safeguard personal information against unauthorized access, while Section 26 requires data localization, obliging entities to store Tanzanians' data within the country.^[51]

The Act aligns with international standards like the GDPR but faces enforcement challenges. The data localization requirement imposes high costs on multinational companies, potentially deterring foreign investment. Additionally, Section 35's penalties for violations lack the clarity needed to effectively deter non-compliance.^[52]

3.1.8 THE ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS ACT

The Electronic Transactions Act provides the legal foundation for e-commerce and online services in Tanzania.^[53] It ensures the legal validity of electronic contracts, signatures, and records under Section 9.^[54] Additionally, Section 15 focuses on consumer protection by mandating service providers to disclose terms and conditions transparently.^[55] Despite these provisions, the Act faces significant implementation challenges. Many businesses and consumers remain unaware of their rights and obligations, resulting in weak compliance and limited recourse for disputes. Furthermore, the Act does not address emerging issues such as cross-border e-commerce and the use of blockchain technology. To strengthen its relevance, the Act must be updated to reflect advancements in digital commerce and include provisions for international cooperation in resolving disputes.

3.2 POLICIES GOVERNING INTERNET GOVERNANCE IN TANZANIA

National policies not only serve as the foundation for ICT infrastructure development but also set the tone for innovation, competitiveness, and compliance within the digital economy. In Tanzania, these policies intersect with global digital priorities, such as fostering cross-border data flow, enhancing digital resilience, and promoting universal internet access. Effective governance frameworks are pivotal in navigating challenges like cybersecurity threats, privacy concerns, and digital inequality, while also enabling citizens and businesses to leverage emerging technologies for socio-economic growth. The following is an analysis of key internet governance policies in Tanzania, along with regional and international comparisons.

^[44] The Access to Information Act. Act No. 6 of 2016.

^[45] Ibid, s. 6 and 7.

^[46] Freedom House. (2020). Access to Public Information in Tanzania.

^[47] The Personal Data Protection Act Cap 44 of 2022.

^[48] Ibid.

^[49] Ibid, s. 6.

^[50] Ibid, s. 7.

^[51] Ibid, s. 22 and 26.

^[52] Ibid, s. 36.

^[53] The Electronic Transactions Act (2015).

^[54] Ibid, s. 5.

^[55] Ibid, s. 15.

3.2.1 TANZANIA NATIONAL ICT POLICY

The Tanzania National ICT Policy of 2016 serves as the foundational document guiding the country's digital development strategy.^[56] The policy aims to integrate ICT into socio-economic development to boost productivity and competitiveness. It emphasizes digital inclusion, focusing on bridging the urban-rural digital divide by expanding ICT networks in underserved areas. Additionally, it prioritizes cybersecurity, highlighting the need for strong measures to protect critical digital infrastructure and mitigate risks.^[57] It highlights the importance of enhancing national capacity to address cybersecurity challenges through public awareness campaigns and technical skills training. Furthermore, the policy encourages public-private partnerships (PPPs) to foster innovation and leverage resources from both sectors for ICT development.

Despite its ambitious goals, the policy's implementation has faced several challenges, including being outdated, not covering emerging issues and A.I. limited funding and inadequate inter-agency coordination. For instance, while rural connectivity remains a priority, the slow rollout of infrastructure projects continues to exclude many rural communities from the benefits of digital transformation. Additionally, the absence of measurable benchmarks for success makes it difficult to evaluate the policy's effectiveness.

3.2.2 NATIONAL ICT POLICY (2023 – DRAFT)

The Draft National ICT Policy 2023 sets a clear agenda for Tanzania's digital transformation by addressing critical areas such as infrastructure development, data governance, and cybersecurity.^[58] However, while the policy makes notable strides, several areas require refinement and advocacy to ensure effective Internet governance. The policy emphasizes the development of digital infrastructure, particularly broadband networks, to achieve universal connectivity. Part 3.2.2 identifies the expansion of submarine and last-mile fiber connectivity as priorities.^[59] However, the absence of specific timelines and financial mechanisms for

rural infrastructure deployment highlights a gap that needs attention to ensure equitable access to the Internet. Cybersecurity is addressed comprehensively under Part 4.3.1, which focuses on safeguarding critical digital infrastructure and establishing a National Centre of Excellence in cybersecurity.^[60] While this initiative is promising, the policy does not adequately address the existing shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals. Furthermore, the lack of detailed resource allocation for enforcement mechanisms weakens its potential impact in mitigating cyber threats.

In terms of data governance, the policy supports the principles of transparency and accountability under Part 4.2.3, aligning with the Personal Data Protection Act 2022.^[61] However, the strict data localization requirement under this framework creates barriers for international businesses and hampers cross-border data flows. These provisions need adjustment to balance local security concerns with global competitiveness. Digital skills development is another key focus under Part 3.4.2, which aims to enhance literacy and technical capacity across Tanzania.^[62] While this is commendable, the policy does not provide detailed strategies to address the digital literacy gap between urban and rural populations, a persistent issue that undermines equitable participation in the digital economy.

The 2023 National ICT Policy faces several challenges, notably the lack of concrete plans for prioritizing and funding rural infrastructure deployment, leaving equitable digital access uncertain. Additionally, while cybersecurity mechanisms are introduced, the policy inadequately addresses the critical shortage of skilled professionals and resource constraints for enforcement. Overly strict data localization requirements pose potential barriers to international trade and investment. Finally, despite emphasizing multi-stakeholder collaboration, the policy lacks specific structures to ensure meaningful participation from civil society, academia, and the private sector, hindering inclusive implementation.

^[56] Tanzania National ICT Policy (2016).

^[57] Ibid, paragraph 3.3.

^[58] The Draft National ICT Policy 2023; Accessed on 23rd December 2024.

^[59] Ibid, Part 3.2.2.

^[60] Ibid, Part 4.3.1.

^[61] Ibid, Part 4.2.3.

^[62] Ibid, Part 3.4.2.

3.2.3 THE TANZANIA GOVERNMENT CYBERSECURITY STRATEGY (2022–2027)

The e-Government Cyber Security Strategy 2022-2027 outlines Tanzania's roadmap to strengthen its cyber resilience amidst a growing threat landscape, especially sophisticated cyber-attacks.^[63] It builds on lessons from the 2016-2021 strategy and aligns with the National Cybersecurity Policy (2018) and e-Government Strategy (2022) to safeguard government ICT systems, infrastructure, and data while supporting digital transformation.^[64] The strategy stresses the need for robust research and innovation to address evolving threats. Under Objective A, the government commits to collaborating with local and international partners to improve threat detection and response through advanced technologies.^[65]

The strategy outlines several key objectives to bolster Tanzania's cybersecurity, focusing on protecting critical ICT infrastructure and services. This includes securing government networks, establishing Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) systems, and enhancing system resilience through secure-by-design frameworks and disaster recovery plans.^[66] The initiative also prioritizes human factor improvements via education and training, alongside robust risk management and incident response mechanisms, aiming to operationalize security standards across public institutions. However, the strategy lacks explicit measures to counter the rising threat of AI-powered cyber-attacks, a significant oversight given the increasing sophistication of these threats.^[67]

While the strategy's goals are comprehensive, their successful implementation hinges on adequate funding, strong stakeholder collaboration, and the continuous development of cybersecurity expertise.^[68] These elements are essential for building a secure and inclusive digital environment that can adapt to evolving cyber threats. Without dedicated resources and coordinated efforts, Tanzania may remain vulnerable to new cyber risks. These initiatives are vital in countering sophisticated attacks that exploit human vulnerabilities through AI-enhanced social engineering.

3.2.4 TANZANIA DIGITAL ECONOMY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2024–2034

The Tanzania Digital Economy Strategic Framework 2024-2034 is a transformative plan aimed at positioning Tanzania as a digitally empowered economy.^[69] The framework seeks to leverage digital technologies to drive socio-economic development while fostering inclusivity and resilience. Covering six strategic pillars, it focuses on enabling digital infrastructure, governance and enabling environments, digital literacy and skills development, fostering innovation, nurturing digital inclusion, and expanding digital financial services.^[70]

The framework emphasizes governance as essential for a secure and efficient digital economy. Part 3.2, for example, highlights the need for an institutional and legal environment to support the digital economy agenda.^[71] It aims to create a regulatory framework that encourages innovation while safeguarding users from threats.

The 2024 Tanzania Digital Public Infrastructure Blueprint outlines a comprehensive strategy for secure and inclusive digital service delivery, notably incorporating the pivotal "Jamii Namba" initiative. This digital ID system aims to unify identification processes, enhancing access to services and creating a cohesive digital ecosystem. It emphasizes a strong cybersecurity framework using AI for threat detection and encourages collaboration among government, private sector, and technical communities. Additionally, it prioritizes digital inclusion by improving infrastructure in underserved rural areas and boosting digital literacy for marginalized populations.^[72]

The success of the Digital Economy Strategic Framework in Tanzania depends on addressing challenges like internet shutdowns and the misuse of digital technologies for political control. It requires flexible governance to keep up with rapid technological advancements and relies on sustained investment, effective implementation, and strong collaboration among stakeholders to build a resilient and equitable digital economy.

^[63] The Tanzania Government Cybersecurity Strategy (2022–2027). Accessed on 21st December 2024.

^[64] *Ibid.*

^[65] *Ibid.*, para. 3.5.1.

^[66] *Ibid.*, para. 3.5.2.

^[67] *Ibid.*, para. 3.5.3.

^[68] *Ibid.*, para 3.5.4.

^[69] Tanzania Digital Economy Strategic Framework 2024-2034. Accessed on 2nd January 2025.

^[70] *Ibid.*, Chapter 3.

^[71] *Ibid.*, part 3.2.

^[72] *Ibid.*, part 3.7.

3.3 REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

3.4.1 AFRICAN UNION'S MALABO CONVENTION ON CYBER SECURITY AND PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

The African Union's Malabo Convention, adopted in 2014, is the continent's first comprehensive legal framework for addressing cybersecurity and data protection.^[73] The convention requires member states to harmonize their laws and adopt measures to combat cybercrime, protect personal data, and enhance digital cooperation. Article 8 mandates the establishment of national cybersecurity frameworks, while Article 25 outlines principles for protecting personal data, including user consent, transparency, and accountability.^[74]

The Malabo Convention also promotes regional cooperation, with Article 29 encouraging member states to collaborate on cross-border cybercrime investigations.^[76] Tanzania has not ratified the convention, which limits its ability to participate in regional initiatives aimed at improving digital gov-

-ernance. Ratifying and implementing the convention would strengthen Tanzania's legal framework and facilitate its integration into the broader African digital ecosystem.^[77]

3.3.1 EUROPEAN UNION'S GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is seen as a global standard for data protection, emphasizing principles like data minimization, user consent, and accountability. Article 25 mandates data protection by design, requiring organizations to embed privacy safeguards. Tanzania's Personal Data Protection Act of 2022 reflects some GDPR principles, particularly accountability and transparency in Section 22. However, it diverges by enforcing strict data localization in Section 26, which requires Tanzanian data to be stored domestically. While this aims to enhance security, it poses challenges for multinational companies and cross-border data flows.

PART IV: ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN INTERNET GOVERNANCE

The role and engagement of stakeholders in Tanzania's internet governance are integral to building a resilient and forward-looking digital ecosystem. The government serves as a policy architect, crafting regulatory frameworks that ensure security, inclusivity, and equitable access, while the private sector drives technological innovation and infrastructure development, bridging gaps in service delivery.

Civil society, on the other hand, champions digital rights and advocates for transparency and accountability, ensuring that marginalized groups are included in the digital transformation. The technical community contributes expertise and resources essential for maintaining a robust and secure internet infrastructure. A multi-stakeholder approach not only facilitates diverse perspectives but also fosters collaboration,

enabling stakeholders to collectively address challenges such as cybersecurity threats, digital literacy gaps, and unequal access to resources, while capitalizing on opportunities like emerging technologies and international partnerships. This synergy is pivotal for ensuring an open, sustainable, and inclusive digital landscape that aligns with Tanzania's developmental aspirations.

4.1 GOVERNMENT

The Tanzanian government plays a critical role in shaping the nation's internet governance, acting as both regulator and overseer. Through the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), it is tasked with policy formulation, licensing, and ensuring compliance with laws governing internet usage. Notably, TCRA implements the provisions of the Cybercrimes Act, 2015, particularly Section 16, which criminalizes the unlawful use of computers to disseminate false information, and Section 14, which addresses unauthorized access to computer systems.^[78]

^[73] African Union. (2014). Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.

^[74] Ibid, Art. 8 and 25.

^[75] Ibid, Art. 29.

^[76] Ibid, Art. 29.

^[77] Paradigm Initiative. (2023). Tanzania and Regional Cybersecurity Frameworks.

^[78] The Cybercrimes Act, Tanzania. (2015), Section 16.

Another key regulatory tool is the Electronic and Postal Communications Act (EPOCA), 2010, which governs the licensing of service providers under Section 4, regulates content dissemination under Section 114, and imposes penalties for contraventions under Section 118.^[79] In addition, the Data Protection Act, 2022, aims to safeguard personal data, with Section 22 outlining obligations for data controllers, including transparency and accountability in data processing.^[80] However, implementation remains a significant challenge, as the capacity to enforce these laws is constrained by limited resources and technical expertise.

While the government has taken steps to address digital threats, some of its actions, such as internet shutdowns, undermine inclusivity and transparency. For instance, during the 2020 general elections, the government invoked Section 124 of EPOCA, which grants discretionary powers to regulate or restrict communications services, to execute a partial internet shutdown. This action, criticized by civil society and international organizations, raised concerns about the trade-offs between national security and freedom of expression.^[81] Comparatively, Tanzania lags behind countries like Kenya,

which has embraced more transparent and rights-respecting governance mechanisms. Kenya's Data Protection Act, 2019, for example, aligns with global standards such as the GDPR, providing a stronger framework for personal data protection.^[82] Despite these domestic challenges, Tanzania demonstrates a growing commitment to international and regional internet governance frameworks.

In 2022, Tanzania was elected to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council for a four-year term (2023–2026), receiving 141 out of 180 votes, underscoring its rising leadership in ICT governance. Furthermore, Tanzania actively participates in the Council of Administration (CA) and the Postal Operations Council (POC) of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), showcasing its dedication to advancing global communication and postal systems. Demonstrating regional leadership, Tanzania co-hosted the Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa 2023 (FIFAfrica23) in Dar es Salaam, facilitating critical discussions on internet freedom across the continent.

Additionally, Tanzania contributes to global discussions on internet governance and digital inclusion through its participation in the UN's Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and will host the 14th African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) in 2025, further solidifying its role as a pivotal player in shaping the continent's internet governance landscape. This dual approach balancing domestic regulation with active international engagement, characterizes Tanzania's evolving internet governance strategy.

4.2 PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector, including internet service providers (ISPs), telecommunications companies, and tech startups, is a key driver of Tanzania's digital economy. Companies like Vodacom Tanzania and Airtel Tanzania have expanded internet infrastructure, particularly mobile broadband, which accounts for over 95% of internet access in the country.^[83] Startups and innovation hubs like Sahara Ventures and Seedspace support local entrepreneurship, fostering innovation in areas such as e-commerce, fintech, and health tech.^[84]

The role of ISPs is governed by licensing requirements under Section 6 of EPOCA, which mandates adherence to quality standards and user protection protocols. However, regulatory inconsistencies and high operational costs, such as spectrum licensing fees, pose significant challenges. The Data Protection Act, under Section 26, imposes data localization requirements, which compel companies to store data within Tanzanian borders, increasing operational costs for multinational firms.^[85] The private sector also collaborates with the government on cybersecurity initiatives, as required under Section 7(1) of the Cybercrimes Act, 2015, which mandates ISPs to report cyber incidents and cooperate with authorities. However, these partnerships are often strained due to the lack of clear communication channels and mutual trust. For example, ISPs have expressed concerns over the government's demands for user data under Section 32 of EPOCA, citing risks to user privacy and data security.^[86] Tanzania can learn from South Africa's successful public-private partnerships that have boosted internet access and innovation. For example, Microsoft has opened two new cloud data centers in South Africa to enhance digital infrastructure, while IBM and Cisco also contribute to the tech landscape.^[87]

^[79] The Electronic and Postal Communications Act (EPOCA), Tanzania. (2010), Sections 4, 114, and 118.

^[80] The Personal Data Protection Act, Tanzania. (2022), Section 22.

^[81] Amnesty International. (2020). Internet Shutdowns During Tanzanian Elections. Also see: Zaina Foundation (2020), Internet Shutdown Report in Tanzania 2020. Accessed on 21st December 2024.

^[82] Data Protection Act, Kenya. (2019), Sections 25–27.

^[83] Vodacom Tanzania. (2022). Impact of Digital Services.

^[84] Sahara Ventures. (2023). Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Tanzania.

^[85] The Personal Data Protection Act, Tanzania. (2022), Section 26.

^[86] EPOCA, Section 32.

^[87] CA Global Africa Recruitment; 10 Global Tech Companies Investing in Africa Also see: CIO South Africa.

4.3 CIVIL SOCIETY

Tanzania has emerged as a pivotal force in shaping digital governance by harnessing the strength of its civil society and local organizations to advocate for digital rights, raise awareness, and ensure that citizens' voices are central to policymaking. Civil society organizations have actively opposed restrictive laws such as the Cybercrimes Act whose broad definitions risk suppressing dissent and have promoted digital literacy and inclusivity for marginalized groups, including women, youth, and rural communities, despite challenges like limited funding and occasional governmental constraints.

At the heart of Tanzania's success is its ability to localize global internet governance instruments. The country has transformed international frameworks into context-specific solutions through the active contributions of groups such as the Internet Society – Tanzania Chapter, the Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group, the Digital Rights Coalition, the Digital Agenda for Tanzania Initiative, the Tanzania Internet Service Providers Association (TISPA), and Tech and Media Convergency (TMC). These organizations have not only spearheaded legislative advocacy and policy reform but have also worked diligently to create a safe, open, and inclusive digital environment by aligning local practices with global standards.

TMC, in particular, has played a critical role in advocating for ICT policy reforms, promoting digital information literacy, promoting good practices on data governance and enhancing conversations on emerging technologies and AI. With the IGTWG, they have a series on Internet Governance to inform policy reviews and drive a harmonization of digital practices that prioritize transparency, accountability, and accessibility amplified through the Tanzania Digital Collaboration Program^[88].

Beyond its domestic impact, Tanzania has asserted a significant regional influence through its central role in establishing platforms such as the African Platform on Internet Governance (APNIG).^[89] This achievement highlights the country's broader strategy of integrating localized digital policies with international frameworks.^[90] Tanzania has shown its commitment to multi-stakeholder dialogue and regional leadership in digital transformation through landmark events like the 2024 Tanzania Internet

Governance Forum, which united government officials, civil society, private sector representatives, and international organizations. These efforts highlight Tanzania's ability to combine global best practices with local solutions, establishing it as a benchmark for internet governance in the region through effective civil society advocacy, legislative reform, research-driven insights, and inclusive public forums.

4.4 TECHNICAL COMMUNITY

The technical community, comprising organizations such as Tanzania Privacy Professionals Association (TPPA), The Tanzania AI Community, the Tanzania Blockchain Association (TBA), plays a critical role in promoting and maintaining internet infrastructure and standards. Its contributions include training programs to enhance skills, safety, awareness, advising policymakers on emerging technologies, and participating in global technical standard-setting forums.^[91]

The technical community also fosters innovation and collaboration by creating platforms where professionals, researchers, and enthusiasts can exchange ideas and develop solutions to local and global challenges. Through hackathons, tech meetups, and partnerships with academic institutions, these organizations nurture a culture of creativity and entrepreneurship, paving the way for groundbreaking advancements in fields like artificial intelligence, blockchain, and data science. Their efforts not only strengthen Tanzania's digital ecosystem but also position the nation as a competitive player in the global tech arena. However, the technical community often struggles with limited funding and representation in policymaking forums, which reduces its impact on governance processes.^[92]

4.5 ACADEMIA

Academia plays a pivotal role in advancing internet governance in Tanzania by contributing research, innovation, and capacity-building initiatives. Universities and research institutions serve as hubs for knowledge production, offering critical insights into the socio-economic and policy dimensions of internet governance. Academic contributions complement the multi-stakeholder approach by

^[88] TMC Partners with U.S. Embassy Dar es Salaam for a Groundbreaking "Tanzania Digital Collaboration" Initiative. (2025).

^[89] The Parliamentary Network. (n.d.). Neema Lugangira: Board and Governance.

^[90] Internet Governance Forum. (2024). Parliamentarians' Contribution to Effective Data Governance on the African Continent.

^[91] Internet Governance Forum (IGF). (n.d.). Multi-Stakeholder Engagement in Internet Governance.

^[92] Internet Society Tanzania Chapter (ISOC). (2023). Cybersecurity Training Initiatives.

by providing evidence-based frameworks that inform decision-making, enhance policy development, and guide the implementation of governance strategies. In Tanzania, institutions such as the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) have engaged in research projects that explore issues such as digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and the impact of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence.^[93] For example, studies from these institutions have highlighted the digital divide in rural and urban areas, offering data that policymakers and civil society organizations can use to design targeted interventions.^[94] Academia also plays a key role in capacity building by offering training programs, developing curricula, and equipping students and professionals with the technical skills needed to address internet governance challenges. These programs align with global trends that emphasize the importance of technical and policy expertise in fostering sustainable governance frameworks. For instance, courses in cybersecurity and ICT law offered at UDSM

provide a pipeline of talent for both the public and private sectors, thereby enhancing Tanzania's human capital in this critical area.^[95] Currently, NM-IST and SUA are actively being involved in IoT research and its application in agriculture. They explore IoT-based solutions for various agricultural challenges, such as smart irrigation systems, livestock monitoring, and pest detection. On the other hand, Muhimbili National Hospital has implemented IoT solutions to monitor patient health remotely, track medical equipment, and manage energy consumption.^[96]

However, the potential of academia in internet governance remains underutilized due to limited funding for research, weak linkages between academic institutions and other stakeholders, and minimal representation in policymaking forums. Unlike in countries like Rwanda, where universities are integral to national ICT policymaking, Tanzania's academic sector is often sidelined in multi-stakeholder discussions.^[97]

PART V: EMERGING DIGITAL THREATS

As Tanzania's digital ecosystem expands, so too do the complexities and vulnerabilities that accompany increased connectivity, platform use, and data-driven systems. While progressive strides have been made in policy formulation and civic tech mobilization, 2024 exposed a growing landscape of emerging digital threats that challenge both user safety and systemic resilience. These threats are not always overt or easily classifiable, they evolve through subtle shifts in surveillance practices, politicized use of legal tools, algorithmic discrimination, and coordinated online-offline repression. From online violence and platform censorship campaigns to the unauthorized use of personal data and abductions of digitally vocal individuals, these incidents reveal a concerning trend: digital spaces are becoming both critical battlegrounds for civic expression and sites of deepening risk. This section explores the patterns, manifestations, and

institutional blind spots that characterize Tanzania's digital threat environment, highlighting the urgent need for adaptive governance, user protections, and multi-stakeholder vigilance.

5.1 CYBERSECURITY THREATS

Cyberbullying and harassment on online platforms have become major concerns in Tanzania, significantly affecting individuals' mental health and well-being. Cyberbullying in terms of harassing or harming others, thus resulting in psychological distress.^[98] With the rise of online TV and an increasing number of freelancers seeking influence, the prevalence of cyberbullying has surged. Proactive strategies are necessary to mitigate the negative effects of cyberbullying. There are Data breaches, caused by hacking and leaks, exposing sensitive information, raising privacy concerns, and potentially leading to identity theft.^[99] Allowing cybercriminals to exploit vulnerabilities, while leaks involve the unauthorized release of confidential data. These breaches have wide-reaching consequences,

^[93] University of Dar es Salaam. (2022). Digital Inclusion in Tanzania: Research Reports.

^[94] Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology. (2023). ICT Research Initiatives.

^[95] University of Dar es Salaam. (2023). Curriculum on Cybersecurity and ICT Law.

^[96] The Tanzania's Digital Economy Strategic Framework 2024–2034, pg. 11.

^[97] Rwanda ICT Policy Review. (2022). Integration of Academia in Governance Frameworks.

^[98] H. Z. Onditi and J. D. Shapka, "Cyberbullying and Cybervictimization in Tanzanian Secondary Schools: Prevalence and Predictors," *J. Educ. Humanit. Sci.*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2019.

^[99] E. Nfuka, C. Sanga, and M. Mshangi, "The rapid growth of cybercrimes affecting information systems in the global: is this a myth or reality in Tanzania?," *Int. J. Inf. Secur. Sci.*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 182–199, 2014.

affecting both individuals and businesses by compromising critical information. Ransomware attacks are a growing threat in Tanzania, disrupting businesses and critical infrastructure. Malicious software encrypts files, and cybercriminals demand hefty payments, often in cryptocurrency, for access restoration. These attacks emphasize the need for proactive cybersecurity strategies. Additionally, the popularity of cryptocurrencies has led to an increase in scams and fraudulent investment schemes, causing financial losses for individuals and businesses.^[100] These scams emphasize the importance of educating the public about the risks associated with cryptocurrency investments and implementing regulatory measures to combat fraudulent activities.

Financial fraud encompasses various threats, including phishing scams, online banking malware, credit card fraud, and mobile money fraud, each posing risks to individuals and businesses. Phishing deceives people into sharing sensitive information, while malware grants unauthorized access to banking systems. Credit card fraud leads to identity theft and financial losses, and mobile money fraud has recently increased, with scammers tricking victims into sharing PINs or using fake apps. In Tanzania, scammers often use the phrase "*Tuma Pesa kwa Namba Hii*" (Send to this number) to solicit money, alongside other success-related scams.

According to the Tanzania Computer Emergency Response Team (TZ-CERT), which is a team with the responsibility of coordinating response to cyber security incidents at the national level and cooperating with regional and International entities involved with the management of cyber security incidents, established under section 124 of the Electronic and Postal Act (EPOCA) no 3/2010 within the structure of TCRA.^[101] Honeypots Weekly Report by of 15th of December, 2024 to 21st of December, 2024, there were a total of 907,984 network attacks recorded compared to the previous week's 178,153 attacks within the period of the report.^[102] This shows how much the attacks have been increasing in Tanzania taking into account of the digital transformation in the country.

5.2 MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

The spread of false information during elections, for instance, can sway voter opinions, undermine democratic processes, and escalate social tensions. Similarly, for example during health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation about the virus or vaccines leads to harmful behaviours and resistance to public health measures.^[103] The prevalence of misinformation and disinformation requires robust strategies, including media literacy education, fact-checking initiatives, and regulation of online platforms, to mitigate their harmful effects.

5.3 PRIVACY AND SURVEILLANCE

Privacy and surveillance are major digital threats in Tanzania due to the widespread use of digital technologies. The growth of online platforms and mobile devices often leads to the collection and sharing of personal data without individuals' full understanding or consent, increasing the risk of data breaches, identity theft, and misuse of information.^[104] Surveillance by both state actors and private companies raises significant concerns about individual privacy rights. Government mass surveillance can infringe on freedoms like expression and association, creating fear and self-censorship. Meanwhile, private entities collect vast amounts of data on online behaviors, which can be exploited for profit or shared without proper consent.^[105]

The attempted assassination of opposition figure Tundu Lissu in 2017 underscores issues of surveillance and political repression. On September 7, Lissu was shot, leaving him permanently disabled. While the attack received media coverage, details about prior surveillance emerged later. On September 24, 2024, The Guardian reported that telecommunications company Millicom (Tigo) allegedly conducted 24-hour surveillance of Lissu, sharing his phone calls and location data with Tanzanian government officials via WhatsApp. Former investigator Michael Clifford testified about Tigo's role in this monitoring.^[106]

^[100] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2022). Cyber Threats and Security Challenges in Tanzania: Phishing, Ransomware, and Critical Infrastructure. UNODC. Retrieved from www.unodc.org

^[101] The Tanzania Computer Emergency Response Team Accessed on 26th December 2024.

^[102] Ibid.

^[103] U. Sambo, B. Sule, M. I. Zamfara, and M. G. Nakitende, "Financial Cybercrimes During COVID-19 Pandemic: The Case of Africa," in *Concepts, Cases, and Regulations in Financial Fraud and Corruption*, IGI Global, 2023, pp. 317–343.

^[104] United Nations Special Rapporteur on Privacy. (2022). Surveillance and Privacy Threats in Tanzania: A Focus on the Impact of Governmental Monitoring on Civil Liberties. UN Report. Retrieved from www.ohchr.org on 21-12-2024.

^[105] Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. PublicAffairs.

^[106] The Chanzo Initiatives, "Tanzania Opposition Leader Tundu Lissu Set to Sue Telecom Firm Following Revelation Linking Them to His 2017 Attempted Assassination" Accessed on 27th December 2027.

On September 25, 2024, Lissu announced at his party headquarters in Dar es Salaam that he instructed his lawyer, Robert Amsterdam, to take legal action against the Tanzanian government and Millicom. He seeks evidence from Tigo's internal records to identify those behind the surveillance, highlighting concerns about accountability in Tanzania's use of digital technologies. Lissu's case raises alarming questions about how many others have faced similar violations without recourse. Surveillance capitalism, as described by Prof. Shoshana Zuboff, is the commodification of personal data at the expense of human rights.^[107] This case illustrates how unchecked surveillance fosters impunity, weakens democracy, and threatens fundamental freedoms. Without stronger oversight, regulation, and accountability mechanisms, surveillance practices will continue to undermine privacy and create an environment of fear and injustice in Tanzania.

5.4 AI AND AUTOMATION RISKS

Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation present both risks and opportunities for Tanzania's digital ecosystem, especially as the country modernizes its digital infrastructure. While AI technologies such as deepfakes pose unique challenges in areas like misinformation and cybersecurity, they also hold significant potential for addressing cybercrime, transforming industries, and fostering innovation. AI's misuse, particularly through technologies like deepfakes, represents a growing digital threat. Deepfakes use advanced AI to create fabricated videos or audio recordings that are nearly indistinguishable from authentic contents.^[108]

In Tanzania, where digital literacy is still developing, these technologies can be exploited to manipulate public opinion, defame individuals, or spread misinformation, particularly during critical periods such as elections.^[109] Deepfake content could undermine trust in public figures, erode faith in the media, and incite political unrest. This risk is exacerbated by the increasing accessibility and sophistication of AI tools, making it difficult for ordinary users to discern manipulated content from genuine information.^[110] However, AI also offers transformative potential in combating these threats and strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure.

With its ability to learn from data, recognize patterns, and predict outcomes, AI can play a pivotal role in enhancing digital defenses. AI-powered systems can identify anomalies in network traffic, detect unusual behaviors, and adapt to evolving threats more efficiently than traditional cybersecurity methods.^[110] In Tanzania, where cybersecurity infrastructure and IT expertise remain underdeveloped, adopting AI-based solutions could significantly reduce vulnerabilities and improve data protection.

AI-based automation minimizes the burden on cybersecurity teams by automating critical processes, such as threat detection and incident response. For instance, AI can continuously monitor systems for suspicious activity and neutralize potential breaches before they escalate. These tools are especially beneficial for Tanzanian institutions like banks, telecommunications providers, and government agencies, which are frequent targets of cyberattacks.^[111]

AI and automation are transforming the job market in Tanzania and globally. While some repetitive jobs may be displaced, new opportunities are arising in fields like AI development, data analysis, and cybersecurity. To benefit from these changes, Tanzanian workers need to enhance their skills through targeted training. The Tanzania AI Community, for example, empowers individuals to leverage AI for personal and national advancement, fostering collaboration to tackle local challenges and boost economic growth.^[112]

Automation and AI facilitate flexible work arrangements, such as remote work and freelance opportunities, enhancing job accessibility for rural populations. However, to maximize these benefits, businesses and governments need to invest in infrastructure and digital literacy initiatives to prepare workers for the evolving job market. When used responsibly, AI and automation can drive innovation and efficiency in Tanzania's digital landscape. While challenges like deepfakes exist, proactive adoption of AI solutions can help mitigate these risks. By promoting continuous learning and investing in AI technologies, Tanzania can turn challenges into opportunities for a secure digital future.

^[108] Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. PublicAffairs.

^[109] Article 19. (2020). Deepfakes and the Threat to Freedom of Expression. Retrieved from <https://www.article19.org>.

^[110] Sanga, C., & Simbeye, P. (2022). Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Threat Landscape in Tanzania: Addressing the Growing Risks of AI-Driven Cyberattacks and Deepfakes. *East African Cybersecurity Review*, 18(2), 101-115.

^[110] Flashnet, 2024 "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Tanzanian Cybersecurity Defense" Accessed on 21st December 2024.

^[111] Ibid. Also see: Flashnet, October 25, 2024 "The Future of IT in Tanzania: Emerging Technologies and Their Impact on Businesses" Accessed on 21st December 2024.

^[112] Tanzania AI Community. (n.d.). About Us. Retrieved from <https://ai.or.tz>

5.5 DIGITAL INEQUALITY

Digital inequality remains a pressing challenge in Tanzania, particularly in the disparity between rural and urban access to digital technologies.^[113] While the telecommunications sector is making significant strides, as evidenced by the 5.4% surge in SIM card and fixed-line subscriptions between June and September 2024, rural communities continue to face barriers that hinder their ability to participate fully in the digital economy. According to the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), active subscriptions grew from 76.6 million to 80.7 million during this period, reflecting a robust and competitive telecommunications market. However, the benefits of this growth are unevenly distributed, with urban areas such as Dar es Salaam leading with 14.8 million active subscriptions, compared to much lower figures in rural regions like Unguja North and Pemba South.^[114]

The divide extends beyond subscription numbers to network coverage and device penetration. While 3G and 4G coverage have reached 90.1% and 84.9% of the population respectively, 5G technology, which promises faster speeds and improved connectivity, is still limited to 18% coverage. Smartphone penetration also increased to 33.85% by September 2024, but this leaves a significant majority reliant on feature phones, which often lack the capabilities needed for advanced digital services.^[115] These disparities are more pronounced in rural areas, where inadequate infrastructure, low digital literacy, and limited affordability of digital devices restrict access to mobile and internet services.

Globally, the GSMA Mobile Economy Report 2024 highlights similar challenges. Although 69% of the global population subscribes to a mobile service and 58% uses mobile internet, a significant usage gap remains, with 3 billion people worldwide living in areas covered by mobile broadband but not using it. This highlights the dual challenge of infrastructure development and addressing barriers to usage, such as affordability, literacy, and relevance.^[116] In Tanzania, this digital inequality escalates existing socio-economic disparities. Rural communities, where agriculture is the economic mainstay, are disproportionately affected.^[117]

Digital inequality in Tanzania is marked by disparities in internet access (urban-rural divide, with 47.9M mobile internet subscriptions compared to 22.3M still using 2G networks, predominantly in rural areas), affordability (where the cost of 1GB of data remains high for many rural poor), digital literacy (evidenced by a low ranking in digital skills among African nations), and gender inclusion (with a significant gap in mobile internet access between men and women). Socio-economic factors such as poverty and education levels, coupled with regional infrastructure disparities, exacerbate these issues.^[118]

The "Digital Tanzania" project and the Tanzania Digital Economy Strategic Framework 2024-2034 aim to address these challenges. Furthermore, The Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF) plays a crucial role in addressing digital inequality in Tanzania. Established under the Universal Communications Service Access Act, UCSAF's primary goal is to ensure that all Tanzanians, regardless of their location, have access to telecommunication services. By 2024, it had facilitated the construction of over 1,600 towers, connecting millions of people in rural wards and villages. This includes efforts under the Digital Tanzania Project to build additional towers and upgrade existing infrastructure to 3G and 4G in underserved regions.

Bridging the digital divide requires an inclusive internet governance framework that promotes affordable access and digital rights. Multistakeholder engagement, involving the government, private sector, and civil society organizations, is crucial for developing relevant and inclusive policies. Sustainable strategies include implementing affordability models, continuous infrastructure investment, developing tailored digital literacy programs, supporting local content development, and adopting gender-sensitive approaches to ensure equitable access and benefits from digital transformation.^[119] Continued efforts focusing on these areas are essential for achieving digital equity. Addressing digital inequality in Tanzania requires a holistic approach that combines infrastructure development, policy reform, and targeted initiatives to enhance digital literacy and gender inclusion.

^[113] World Bank Group. (2021). Digital Economy for Tanzania: Bridging the Rural-Urban Divide. World Bank. Retrieved from www.worldbank.org on 21-12-2024 at 17:30

^[114] Daily News, 24th October 2024 "Simcards, Fixed Line Subscriptions Surge By 5.4%".

^[115] Ibid.

^[116] GSMA, 2024 "The Mobile Economy 2024 Report" accessed on 15th December 2024.

^[117] Massawe, B. S. (2022). Access to Digital Technology and Rural-Urban Socio-Economic Differences in Tanzania. Tanzania Development Review, 20(1), 98-115.

^[118] The Chanzo, (November 2023); UNICEF DATA, April 2023

^[119] UNESCO, n.d.; AFI Global, August 2016

PART VI: CASE STUDIES FROM TANZANIA

6.1 INTERNET SHUTDOWNS AND DISRUPTIONS

Internet shutdowns and disruptions in Tanzania, as well as across the East African region, have emerged as significant obstacles to freedom of expression, access to information, and democratic participation. Article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and the ability to seek, receive, and disseminate information without boundaries. However, repeated incidents of internet disruptions, whether caused by technical failures, state actions, or mobile service providers, highlight the fragility of these rights in the digital era.

A recent example of internet disruption caused by technical issues was the breakdown of the SEACOM and EASSy undersea cables, which disrupted internet traffic across several East African countries, including Tanzania. On August 13, 2024, global web monitor NetBlocks reported significant connectivity issues in Tanzania and the French Indian Ocean Island of Mayotte. The faults in the cables, located between Mozambique and South Africa, caused medium-impact outages in Mozambique and Malawi, with less severe disruptions in neighboring countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, and the Comoros.^[120]

In Tanzania, where 39.3 million people depend on internet services 21 million using mobile broadband the disruption severely impacted users. This incident highlighted the vulnerability of regional internet infrastructure due to reliance on undersea cables.

While service restoration was quick in Kenya, many Tanzanians faced slow speeds and inconsistent access for days. Safaricom activated redundancy measures to minimize disruptions, but similar actions have not been uniformly adopted by Tanzanian service providers.^[121] Furthermore, Tanzanian government's history has a record of restricting

internet access during elections raises concerns about democratic accountability. In the 2020 General Election, an internet shutdown limited access to platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Telegram, hindering civic participation and public debate.^[122]

The action faced widespread condemnation from national and international communities, including human rights organizations like Access Now, which noted the social and economic impacts of the shutdown. A similar situation occurred before the 2024 local government elections, with access to X restricted on August 30 and 31.^[123] The restriction affected millions of Tanzanians who use social media for electoral information and public discourse. IGTWG condemned the actions, stressing the need for open dialogue and transparency during elections.^[124]

Statements by influential figures, such as the CCM Youth Chairperson Comrade Kawaida, who advocated for a shutdown of social media platforms to "maintain order," underscore the political motivations behind such restrictions. These actions directly contradict constitutional guarantees and international norms, stifling democratic participation when it is most needed.^[125]

Mobile service providers have also been implicated in facilitating internet restrictions. In 2024, mobile operators were reportedly instructed to block access to X during the election period, contributing to the broader suppression of digital freedoms. While the local government elections of 2024 saw fewer disruptions compared to the 2020 General Election, questions remain about the potential for similar restrictions in the upcoming 2025 General Election.

The role of mobile service providers in enforcing state directives to restrict internet access highlights a critical governance issue. These companies operate under government licenses, leaving them vulnerable to political pressure, yet they are also expected to uphold user rights and international standards for internet freedom.^[126]

^[120]VOA Africa. (2024). Undersea Cable Breakdown Disrupts Internet Traffic in East Africa.

^[121]NetBlocks. (2024). Internet Disruptions in Tanzania Following Undersea Cable Faults. Retrieved from <https://netblocks.org>.

^[122]Zaina Foundation "Internet Shutdown Report in Tanzania 2020 General Election" Available at: Accessed on 18th December 2024.

^[123]See: Techpoint Africa: "Tanzania reportedly blocks access to X amid political tension" accessed on 17th December 2024.; Tech in Africa "Tanzania Block Twitter Use As Political Tensions Intensifies" accessed on 17th December 2024.

^[124]Access Now. (2020). Victims' Stories on Internet Shutdown During 2020 General Election. Accessed on 23rd December 2024.

^[125]IGTWG. (2024). Statement on Coordinated Campaigns for Shutting Down of the "X" Social Media Platform. Retrieved from <https://thecitizen.co.tz>. Also see: IGTWG Statement on Coordinated Campaigns for Shutting Down of the "X" Social Media Platform - Tech & Media Convergence (TMC).

^[126]Access Now. (2024). Who Blocked X in Tanzania? Report on 2024 Internet Restrictions.

6.2 SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND DEMOCRATIC IMPACTS

The impacts of internet shutdowns and disruptions extend beyond the suppression of civic space. Social media platforms, which are essential for public debate, grassroots advocacy, and voter mobilization, are rendered inaccessible, silencing voices and stifling democratic processes. Journalists, election monitors, and civil society organizations are unable to disseminate information or hold stakeholders accountable, raising concerns about transparency in the electoral process.^[127]

Global internet shutdowns in 2024 resulted in a staggering economic loss of \$7.69 billion, as detailed in a Top10VPN.com report.^[128] The analysis of 167 major intentional outages across 28 countries reveals how such disruptions inflict severe financial damage on businesses and digital ecosystems, undermining economic growth and public trust in digital governance. Nations like Pakistan, Myanmar, and Sudan experienced losses in the billions, underscoring the extensive repercussions of restricting digital access.

In Tanzania, the impact of internet shutdowns in 2024 was significant. A total economic cost of \$1.4 million, with disruptions lasting 1,116 hours and affecting around 14 million users, ranking it 25th in the global index. While these figures might appear modest compared to global totals, they represent a considerable setback for a country where digital connectivity is essential for education, commerce, and democratic participation. The prolonged disruptions have not only hampered business operations but have also eroded public confidence in the ability of regulatory frameworks to support rather than suppress digital engagement.

6.3 DIGITAL INFORMATION LITERACY

Digital information literacy in Tanzania is gaining attention as the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) leads efforts to equip citizens with essential digital skills. Through its campaign “Ni Rahisi,” TCRA educates the public on topics like digital security, identifying fake news, and cyber phishing, using

both physical and virtual platforms for widespread reach. This initiative has garnered positive feedback for its creativity and relevance in addressing everyday digital challenges.^[129] Complementing TCRA’s efforts, other organizations such as TMC play a pivotal role in fostering digital literacy. TMC has been particularly active in training journalists on digital security through programs like Women at Web Web Tanzania, which also emphasizes protecting journalists from online gender-based violence (OGBV). TMC’s report, A Comprehensive Analysis: Uncovering Journalistic Perspectives on Online Gender-Based Violence in Tanzania, highlights the digital literacy challenges faced by women journalists and proposes actionable steps to build their resilience in the digital space.^[130] Nukta has also contributed significantly to digital literacy efforts^[131]. Nukta’s campaigns focus on equipping young people with critical thinking skills to combat misinformation.

Their grassroots approaches ensure that underserved populations can access reliable digital tools and information, thereby narrowing the digital divide. Jamii Forums, known for its commitment to free speech and transparency, actively fought misinformation during the 2024 Local Government Elections. Partnering with the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) through the African Digital Rights Fund (ADRF), they launched the Safeguarding Electoral Integrity project. This initiative aimed to combat electoral misinformation and promote informed public participation, ensuring voters made decisions based on factual information and protected the democratic process.^[132] Launch Pad has made progress in building digital skills among youth, emphasizing internet safety, innovation, and entrepreneurship^[133]. Their programs help young people use digital tools for growth while staying safe from online violence.

All these Civil societies empower vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and people with disabilities, to access reliable online information. These initiatives promote safe internet practices, critical thinking, and effective use of digital tools, enhancing individual resilience and fostering social cohesion and democratic participation in Tanzania.

^[127]The Citizen. (2024). Impact of Internet Shutdowns on Tanzania's Democratic Processes.

^[128]TOP10VPN (2025). Government Internet Shutdowns Cost \$7.69 Billion in 2024.

^[129]TCRA. (2024). Ni Rahisi Campaign on Digital Literacy. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/tcra_tanzania.

^[130]TMC. (2024). A Comprehensive Analysis: Uncovering Journalistic Perspectives on Online Gender-Based Violence in Tanzania.

^[131]Nukta. (2024). Digital and Story Telling Trainings.

^[132]Jamii Forums (2024). Safeguarding Electoral Integrity Project Report. Accessed on 21st December 2024.

^[133]LaunchPad Tanzania (2024). Digital Skills Capacity Building.

6.4 THE UNIQUE NUMBER ID (JAMII NAMBA)

Tanzania has taken a significant step toward digital transformation with the introduction of its Unique Number ID, popularly known as Jamii Namba. This initiative aims to unify identity management systems and streamline access to essential services provided by both public and private sectors. By replacing fragmented identity systems such as National IDs, birth certificates, driving licenses, and tax identity numbers, Jamii Namba addresses inefficiencies and promotes inclusivity in service delivery.^[134] The Jamii Namba platform integrates systems managed by various government agencies, including the National Identification Authority (NIDA), the Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA), the Immigration Department, and Zanzibar's Civil Status Registration Agency. Beyond integration, it also serves as a "One Stop Service Centre," enabling citizens to access critical services such as healthcare, education, and financial systems under a single framework.^[135]

The Jamii Namba initiative is crucial to Tanzania's Digital Economy Strategic Framework 2024/2034, aiding the transition to a digital economy. Its key benefits include: economic inclusion and efficiency for the private sector.^[136] Drawing lessons from successful implementations such as India's Aadhaar system and Estonia's e-governance framework, Jamii Namba positions Tanzania to enhance its domestic governance and contribute to regional integration efforts under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).^[137] It is a transformative milestone in Tanzania's digital journey. With strategic planning, robust data protection measures, and collaborative stakeholder engagement, it has the potential to redefine identity management, enhance public trust, and contribute significantly to Tanzania's socio-economic development.

6.5 DATA BREACHES OR CYBERSECURITY INCIDENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The rapid growth of Tanzania's digital economy has spurred the use of e-commerce, digital banking, and online services by government agencies. Additionally, digitalization plays a key role for those advocating for democracy and social justice.^[138] Recent advancements have made Tanzanian businesses,

activists, and government bodies more susceptible to cybercriminal activities like phishing, ransomware, and data breaches. The repercussions of these cyberattacks extend beyond financial losses; for companies, the compromise of client information undermines trust and damages reputations, while activists face risks to their causes and personal safety. This situation underscores the urgent need for strong cybersecurity frameworks, improved digital literacy, and proactive measures to protect sensitive data. Key lessons from these breaches emphasize the importance of strong encryption, ongoing cybersecurity training, and collaborative efforts to strengthen resilience against cyber threats.

6.6. TCRA SUSPENSION OF MEDIA HOUSES LICENCES

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) suspended online content licenses for three platforms operated by Mwananchi Communication Limited (MCL) for 30 days.^[139] The Citizen, Mwananchi Digital, and Mwanaspoti were penalized after a viral animated clip by The Citizen was released on October 1, 2024. The TCRA stated that the clip violated Regulation 16 of the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations 2020, as it threatened national unity and social peace. A controversial animation gained attention on social media by featuring a female character resembling Tanzania's President, showcasing abductions and disappearances in the country. Inspired by real cases, it referenced individuals like Edgar Mwakalebela and their families. Despite being removed from platforms like Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) within a day, the TCRA proceeded with a suspension, highlighting the serious impact of the content.^[140]

MCL removed the animation to clarify its intent after misinterpretations. The Managing Editor of The Citizen noted the clip aimed to raise awareness of sensitive issues but raised safety concerns instead. This suspension impacted The Citizen and platforms like Mwananchi Digital and Mwanaspoti, reflecting TCRA's strict enforcement of online content regulations. Tanzania's media regulation changes have raised concerns about media freedom for platforms like Mwanaspoti.

^[134] MobileIDWorld; "Tanzanian Officials Prepare Launch of Digital ID"

^[135] The Chanzo Initiatives: "Work to Develop the Tanzania Universal Identity Number Jamii Namba Has Started"

^[136] TMC. (2024). What Does the Unique Number ID (Jamii Namba) Mean for Tanzania's Digital Economy?

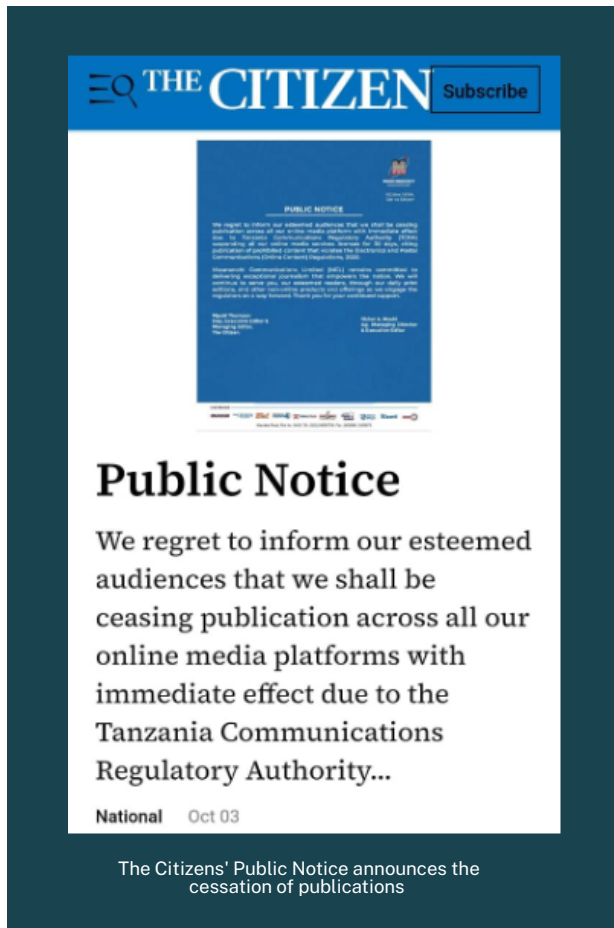
^[137] Ibid.

^[138] Flashnet, October 25, 2024 "The Future of IT in Tanzania: Emerging Technologies and Their Impact on Businesses", Accessed on 21st December 2024.

^[139] The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) Public Notice on 03rd October 2024.

^[140] The Chanzo; October 3, 2024 "Tanzania Regulator Suspends Online Content Licenses for Three Mwananchi Communication Publications Following Viral Animation by The Citizen" Accessed on 27th December 2024.

In response, Mwananchi Communication reiterated its commitment to quality journalism, planning to continue print editions while seeking a resolution with TCRA. The case illustrates the tension between regulatory oversight and freedom of expression in Tanzania's digital space, emphasizing the need for a balance between national unity, social peace, and the public's right to information.



6.7 DISAPPEARANCES LINKED TO CIVIC-TECH

The year 2024 witnessed a disturbing surge in the disappearances and abductions of civic-tech users and activists in Tanzania, revealing a deeply troubling trend. Cases such as Edger Edson Mwakabela, known as Sativa,^[141] Deusdedith Soka,^[142] Shadrack Chaula,^[143] and Kombo Mbwana, all occurring within this year, are not isolated anomalies, but rather stark indicators of a systemic

issue where individuals utilizing technology for civic engagement face heightened and targeted risks. These incidents, often characterized by ambiguity and allegations of state actor involvement, represent a calculated effort to silence dissenting voices and suppress critical perspectives. The conspicuous lack of transparent investigations, combined with the apparent impunity of perpetrators, underscores a profound governance deficit. This environment cultivates a pervasive climate of fear, effectively chilling free expression and undermining the potential of civic-tech to drive positive social change. The urgent establishment of robust accountability mechanisms and the initiation of independent investigations are paramount to restore public trust and safeguard fundamental freedoms within Tanzania's evolving digital sphere in 2024 and beyond.

6.8 TCRA TO PERMIT INTERNATIONAL ISPS IN TANZANIA

Several international Internet service providers, including Elon Musk's Starlink, have applied for permits to provide internet services in Tanzania. Starlink's entry is expected to transform the country's connectivity landscape. In November 2024 TCRA announced that Starlink and other companies are seeking national network facilities and application services licenses.^[144] This satellite technology will provide high-speed internet to underserved areas in Tanzania, addressing spectrum rights and data protection regulations while helping to bridge the digital divide.^[145]

This satellite high-speed internet service can significantly enhance Tanzania's socio-economic development by improving connectivity in rural areas, leading to better access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. TCRA's regulatory framework ensures compliance with local data security standards, protecting user privacy. The 14-day public consultation period demonstrates a commitment to transparency and stakeholder participation. Moreover, reliable connectivity can support critical events, such as elections, preventing disruptions to democracy while promoting long-term digital inclusion and equity.^[146]

^[141]THRDC. (2024). [Press Statement on Sativa's Abduction](#).

^[142]Deusdedith Soka, a young civic activist in CHADEMA's Temeke branch, disappeared on August 18, 2024, with two colleagues, Jacob Godwin Mlay and Frank Mbise. Just days prior, on August 13, he had warned on X (formerly Twitter) that his life was in danger and a plan was underway to abduct him.

"The truth I will make clear before God and all my friends is that there is a plot to harm me because I am vocal and radical. If anything happens to me, let it inspire others to keep fighting for justice" See: The Chanzo. (2024). [Pressure Mounts Over the Fate of Missing Activist Deusdedith Soka and His Two Colleagues](#); The Chanzo. (2024). [Abducted Activist Deusdedith Soka Feared for His Life but Had Limited Protection Options](#).

^[143]Artist Shadrack Chaula, [convicted under the Cybercrimes Act for a viral video burning the president's portrait, disappeared shortly after his release in 2024](#), raising concerns of politically motivated suppression of free expression.

^[144]Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) Public Notice 15th November 2024.

^[145]The Guardian, Nov 16 2024 "TCRA set to licence Elon Musk's internet subsidiary" Accessed on 25th December 2024.

^[146]African Wireless Community "Starlink Turns Eyes to Tanzania" Accessed on 24th December 2024.

6.9 MONITORING DIGITAL HIGHLIGHTS & DIGITAL INCIDENTS

TMC, in collaboration with The Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group, in its commitment to comprehensive reporting, meticulously documented digital incidents across Tanzanian regions throughout 2024, aiming to identify trends and enhance national cybersecurity frameworks.^[147] This effort aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the evolving digital landscape, highlighting both advancements and challenges. Incidents were selected based on stringent criteria, focusing on those with a measurable impact on digital rights, cybersecurity, or internet governance, those that revealed significant trends in national digital activity, and those that represented notable shifts within the digital ecosystem.

The monitoring process resulted in 49 documented incidents, each meticulously analyzed and categorized to provide insight into Tanzania's digital development and overall internet governance landscape. This report includes a detailed timeline of these occurrences, highlighting positive, neutral, and negative incidents. Such categorization enables a balanced evaluation of prevailing trends, identifying areas of progress as well as opportunities for enhancement. For stakeholders requiring a deeper understanding, Appendix Two offers comprehensive descriptions of each incident, serving as a valuable resource for assessing the state of internet governance in Tanzania. These findings aim to equip key stakeholders with actionable insights to foster a more inclusive, secure, and resilient digital ecosystem in Tanzania.

PART VII: RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 THE GOVERNMENT

i/ Amendment of restrictive laws that limit internet governance.

- Section 124 of EPOCA to restrict discretionary powers for internet restrictions, requiring judicial approval for any proposed shutdowns.
- The Personal Data Protection Act (2022) to refine data localization requirements and align cross-border data transfer policies with global standards like the GDPR. Also, section 22 to comply with the decision of the case of Tito Magoti v. AG.
- Update legal frameworks, including Tanzania's Cyber Crimes Act of 2015, to address advancements in technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). The Act currently lacks provisions for modern innovations, underscoring the need for timely amendments to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in regulating emerging technologies and safeguarding digital rights.
- Eliminate restrictive regulations, such as the TCRA Online Content Regulations, that limit the operations of journalists, CSOs, and bloggers without accreditation, broadening the spirit of citizen journalism.

- Eliminate restrictive regulations, such as the TCRA Online Content Regulations, that limit the operations of journalists, CSOs, and bloggers without accreditation, broadening the spirit of citizen journalism.

ii/ Fully operationalize of the Strategies, Frameworks and Guidelines related to ICT. For instance the National Cybersecurity Centre and strengthen enforcement mechanisms under the National Cybersecurity Strategy (2022–2027), The Tanzania Digital Economy Strategic Framework 2024–2034.

iii/ Grant operational licences to international companies to provide reliable and accessible internet to enhance internet transparency and accountability while considering issues of citizens' data and digital security.

iv/ The government, through UCSAF, should establish a dedicated foundation and set aside specific funds to advance information literacy and digital governance skills, working in close collaboration with civil society organizations already engaged in this space to ensure inclusive and sustainable impact.

v/ Ensure that civic space remains safe and inclusive for all individuals, particularly those engaging in civic-tech and digital advocacy, by establishing independent investigative mechanisms to address forced disappearances, intimidation, and related cases.

7.2 NON- STATE ACTORS^[147]

i/ Raise awareness about the risks of internet shutdowns and surveillance through campaigns and policy briefs targeting policymakers and the public.

ii/ Offer training programs on digital rights, online safety, and civic engagement to marginalized communities, especially in rural areas.

iii/ Document and report on digital governance incidents of internet disruptions, restrictions, or rights violations to hold the government accountable.

iv/ Advocate for ethical AI and emerging technologies regulations.

v/ Non-State Actors are advised to have a unified coordination in implementing projects on internet governance, especially during critical moments like elections to make full use of available resources to have a bigger impact.

vii/ Mandate all new ICT policies and laws to undergo a Digital Human Rights Impact Assessment (DHRIA) to ensure alignment with constitutional freedoms and international standards before implementation.

7.3 ACADEMIA

i/ Provide evidence-based studies on the socio-economic impacts of Internet Governance and disruptions, offering actionable insights for policymakers.

ii/ Create “Research-to-Policy Briefing Labs” within universities that translate academic research into actionable, plain-language recommendations for respective institutions, ministries, decision makers, MPs, and CSOs.

iii/ Encourage more informative social research on internet accessibility and affordability between rural and urban communities to monitor trends in the future of internet.

iv/ Develop programs to train cybersecurity experts and data protection officers, bridging the skills gap in Tanzania’s digital ecosystem.

v/ Offer scholarships, mentorship programs, and research assistantships focused on internet governance and emerging tech policy, especially for underrepresented groups.

vi/ Actively participate in national and global forums on digital and internet governance dialogues to shape policies, address emerging challenges, and foster collaborative solutions for a sustainable digital future.

7.4 THE PRIVATE SECTOR

i/ The private sector should begin publishing annual transparency and accountability reports that disclose the number and nature of government data requests, content takedowns, and any enforced internet disruptions, while also outlining the measures taken to protect user rights and maintain public trust.

ii/ Private companies, especially those deploying artificial intelligence and automation should embed ethical standards into their technologies by developing internal AI ethics guidelines, ensuring fairness in algorithmic decision-making, and preventing misuse such as surveillance or deepfake manipulation, particularly in sensitive areas like finance, HR, and civic-tech.

iii/ The private sector should actively support Tanzania’s innovation ecosystem by establishing or partnering with accelerators that focus on civic-tech, health-tech, ed-tech, and agritech, while also providing regulatory guidance, digital security support, mentorship, and targeted investment to early-stage and women-led startups.

iv/ Private sector actors should position themselves as champions of ethical digital transformation by collaborating with government and civil society in shaping AI policy, strengthening cybersecurity strategies, and supporting public education initiatives that promote digital inclusion, rights, and safety for all users.

7.5 TECHNICAL COMMUNITY

i/ Provide technical expertise to improve cybersecurity frameworks and protect critical infrastructure, especially during elections.

ii/ Develop a test-bed for cybersecurity innovations, ethical hacking, and coordinated incident response simulation, led by technical community actors with government support.

iii/ Advocate for the adoption of open standards and principles to ensure that internet access remains inclusive and interoperable.

^[147] Non-State Actors include Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Media, and Concerned Citizens.

7.6 DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

i/ Shift from short project-based funding to long-term, multi-year support for digital governance, digital security, and civic-tech ecosystems in Tanzania, especially for organizations working on freedom of expression, privacy, and access.

ii/ Fund targeted capacity building programs at national and regional level for judges, legislators, journalists, women leaders, and CSOs on personal data protection, AI ethics, internet shutdown accountability, and cybersecurity frameworks.

PART VIII: CONCLUSION

As we move toward the 2025 general elections, a critical moment that will test the strength of Tanzania's democratic institutions and digital resilience; there is an urgent need to safeguard digital rights, uphold access to information, and prevent the recurrence of internet shutdowns and intimidation of civic-tech actors. The evolving digital decade also brings with it rapid technological shifts from the rise of artificial intelligence to increased datafication and surveillance, demanding not just responsive policies, but visionary, ethical, and inclusive digital governance. Now is the time to act with courage to confront the challenges, with clarity to prioritize rights-based solutions, and with collaboration across all sectors to shape a digital future that works for every Tanzanian, regardless of geography, gender, age, or ability.

In this pivotal moment of Tanzania's digital transformation journey; the choices made today will determine whether technology becomes a tool for empowerment, transparency, and inclusion, or a means of control, exclusion, and repression. This report has laid bare the complex interplay between legal frameworks, stakeholder engagement, emerging technologies, and rising digital threats that continue to shape the nation's internet governance landscape. While commendable progress has been made such as the enactment of the Personal Data Protection Act, the expansion of connectivity infrastructure, and Tanzania's rising leadership on regional forums like the upcoming 2025 Africa IGF; these strides are undermined by persistent challenges. These include vague and restrictive laws, inconsistent enforcement, internet disruptions during critical democratic processes, increasing surveillance, and the shrinking space for civic-tech actors and independent media.

The emerging threats posed by artificial intelligence, deepfakes, disinformation, and surveillance capitalism demand urgent, anticipatory, and ethical responses. However, these challenges cannot be addressed by government efforts alone. The future of internet governance in Tanzania must be co-created through a deliberate, inclusive, and accountable multi-stakeholder approach that prioritizes human rights, equity, and transparency at its core. In line with this vision, this report has been developed through the Tanzania Digital Collaboration Program, one of whose components is dedicated to promoting internet governance. Through the advocacy platform of the IGTWG, the aim is to translate evidence such as that captured in this report into concrete action, guided by the IGTWG's broader action plan and anchored in its commitment to inclusive, accountable, and citizen-centered digital governance in Tanzania.

This study calls on the government, private sector, civil society, academia, and development partners to not only address current gaps but to build a shared digital future that reflects Tanzanian values, safeguards freedoms, and leverages technology for inclusive development. As we move toward the 2025 general elections and the rapidly evolving digital decade ahead, now is the time to act — with courage, with clarity, and with collaboration.

APPENDIX I: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

"Advocacy"	Any activity undertaken to influence public policy, legislation, or decisions. This can include speeches, campaigns, writing, petitions, protests, performances, and digital actions aimed at shaping public affairs.
"Artificial Intelligence (AI)"	The simulation of human intelligence by machines, particularly computer systems, enabling them to perform tasks such as decision-making, pattern recognition, or language processing.
"Civic Space"	The environment that enables individuals, journalists, and civil society organizations to participate freely in public discourse and decision-making without fear of repression or discrimination.
"Civic-Tech"	Technology platforms and tools designed to promote transparency, participation, and accountability in governance by enhancing citizen engagement and access to information.
"Cybersecurity"	Measures taken to protect internet-connected systems—including hardware, software, and data—from cyber threats, unauthorized access, and malicious attacks.
"Data Localization"	Legal or regulatory requirements that mandate data generated within a country be stored or processed within its national borders.
"Data Protection"	Frameworks and practices that govern the collection, use, and management of personal data to ensure individuals' privacy rights are respected.
"Deepfake"	AI-generated synthetic media (images, video, or audio) manipulated to misrepresent individuals or create false content, often used to deceive or spread disinformation.
"Digital Divide"	The disparity between individuals or communities that have access to modern information and communication technology and those that do not.
"Digital Governance"	The use of digital technologies and regulatory frameworks to manage societal affairs, encompassing internet policy, data governance, and digital transformation.
"Digital Inclusion"	Policies and practices aimed at ensuring that all individuals and communities, especially marginalized ones, have access to and the ability to use digital technologies effectively.
"Digital Literacy"	The skills and knowledge required to navigate, evaluate, and engage responsibly with digital content, tools, and platforms.
"Disinformation"	False or misleading information that is deliberately created and spread to deceive or manipulate public opinion.
"Freedom of Expression"	The right to seek, receive, and share information and ideas through any media, without censorship or interference—protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
"Governance"	The processes, institutions, and systems through which authority is exercised, decisions are made, and public affairs are managed. It includes conflict resolution and accountability mechanisms.
"Heritage and Traditions"	Cultural and ideological identity markers, including African systems such as Ubuntu, that influence local governance and socio-political values.
"Internet Governance (IG)"	The development and application of shared principles, norms, rules, and decision-making processes that shape the evolution and use of the internet.
"Internet Shutdown"	A deliberate disruption of internet or digital communications, rendering them inaccessible or unusable for a targeted population or region.
"Movement Building"	The process of mobilizing individuals and communities to collectively push for social, political, or technological change.
"Multi-Stakeholder Approach"	A governance model that brings together government, private sector, civil society, technical experts, and academia in policy-making and implementation processes.
"Personal Data"	Any information that relates to an identified or identifiable individual, such as names, national IDs, online identifiers, or location data.
"Platform Accountability"	The responsibility of digital platforms to uphold human rights, ensure transparency in decision-making, and manage content and user data responsibly.
"Surveillance"	The monitoring of individuals or groups—often by government or corporate entities—using digital tools to collect, analyze, or store personal information.
"Surveillance Capitalism"	An economic model where personal data is commodified and monetized—often without users' full knowledge or consent—by digital platforms and service providers.
"Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)"	Any act of gender-based harm or abuse that is committed, assisted, or amplified through digital technologies, including online harassment, cyberstalking, doxxing, and non-consensual image sharing.
"Tanzania Digital Collaboration Program"	A multi-stakeholder initiative supported by the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of African Affairs, aimed at advancing internet governance, digital inclusion, and rights-based digital transformation in Tanzania.
"Universal Service"	The principle that all people, regardless of geographic or socio-economic status, should have access to essential communication and internet services.

APPENDIX II

Tanzania State of Internet Governance Series

The 2024 Tanzania Digital Rights Index

April 2025

PRODUCED BY:

Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)

The 2024 Tanzania Digital Rights Index serves as an appendix to the report titled “The State of Internet Governance and Analysis of Emerging Digital Threats in Tanzania – 2024.”

APPENDIX II: DIGITAL RIGHTS INDEX 2024: THEMATIC AND IMPACT ANALYSIS

The Digital Rights Index is a strategic intervention within the broader framework of Internet Governance series in Tanzania, anchoring it in the principles of transparency, accountability, human rights, and multi-stakeholder participation. Drawing from the need of understanding the scope of digital rights violations in Tanzania, including politically motivated abductions, censorship of online platforms, surveillance, data breaches, and TFGBV. These incidents often occurred in legal and institutional grey areas, where existing Internet Governance mechanisms either failed to respond or were misused to suppress dissent. Yet, there was no unified system to document, analyze, and reflect on how digital spaces were being governed or undermined.

The Digital Rights Index addresses this gap by serving as a living, evidence-based tool that monitors the state of digital freedoms and the exercise of power across Tanzania's online ecosystem. It strengthens Internet Governance by providing timely insights into how laws like the Cybercrimes Act and the Data Protection Act are applied, how state and non-state actors influence platform governance, and how civic actors respond to repression and opportunities alike. In doing so, it amplifies the voices of those traditionally left out of digital policymaking and reinforces TMC's commitment to a rights-respecting, inclusive, and transparent digital future. The Index is not just a tracker of incidents, it is a governance tool that helps shape norms, guide reforms, and ensure that the Internet in Tanzania evolves as a space that is open, safe, participatory, and accountable to its users.

To qualify as an incident within the Digital Rights Index for Tanzania, an event must demonstrate clear and documented impact or risk to digital freedoms, civic space, or individual safety. This includes violations of digital human rights such as freedom of expression, privacy, or access to information—whether through censorship, unlawful surveillance, or intimidation. An incident should also reflect a tangible threat to personal safety, such as abductions, torture, or harassment, particularly targeting individuals engaging in civic discourse online. Additionally, any case that causes a chilling effect on digital participation where individuals self-censor or withdraw due to fear of repercussions.

The Index also captures cases where there is evidence of institutional neglect, denial, or lack of accountability, as well as instances where civil society, legal advocates, or the media have mounted a documented response or challenge. These impact-driven criteria ensure the Index remains rooted in the lived realities of Tanzanian digital actors and responsive to evolving patterns of repression and resistance.

By including these broader dynamics, the Index ensures it captures not only the immediate chilling effects but also the structural drivers that perpetuate a climate of fear and suppression. This comprehensive approach reinforces its utility as a tool for advocacy and reform, providing actionable insights for stakeholders seeking to safeguard digital freedoms in Tanzania.

In 2024, Tanzania's digital landscape was marked by a dynamic and often volatile intersection of technological growth, political tension, civic engagement, and institutional response. The Digital Rights Index addresses this gap by serving as a living, evidence-based tool that monitors the state of digital freedoms and the exercise of power across Tanzania's online ecosystem. A total of 49 incidents were recorded for 2024, classified under three main tones (green for progressive, yellow for neutral, red for regressive) as indicated;

 **Progressive (18)**

 **Neutral (7)**

 **Regressive (24)**

Progressive incidents represent positive developments in the protection, promotion, or advancement of digital rights, freedoms, and governance structures. Where as Neutral incidents are events that reflect procedural or administrative developments with limited immediate effect on digital rights; and Regressive incidents signify harmful actions or patterns that curtail digital rights, restrict civic participation, or reflect abuse of regulatory power.

Nature of Incident		Reference	Tone
1	19/1/2024 TCRA WARNS UNAUTHORIZED COMMUNICATION SERVICE PROVIDERS The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), issued a stern warning against the provision of unlicensed communication services, including cybersecurity, internet services, and data center facilities.	Daily News https://dailynews.co.tz/tcra-warns-unauthorized-communication-service-providers/	Neutral
2	1/1/2024 REPORTS OF WIDESPREAD PHISHING ATTEMPTS EXPLOITING VULNERABILITIES IN MOBILE MONEY SYSTEMS The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), issued a stern warning against the provision of unlicensed communication services, including cybersecurity, internet services, and data center facilities.	International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR) https://dailynews.co.tz/tcra-warns-unauthorized-communication-service-providers/	Neutral
3	12/03/2024 TANZANIA BANKS WARNED OF CYBERSECURITY THREAT During the Tanzania Conference of Financial Institutions (COFI), Prof. Olanyika David-West, Associate Dean at Lagos Business School, warned that digital transformation in the financial sector has opened serious cybersecurity vulnerabilities.	The Chanzo https://thechanzo.com/2024/03/12/tanzanian-bank-warned-of-cybersecurity-threats-robbers-dont-come-in-through-the-front-door-anymore/	Regressive
4	21/03/2024 TANZANIA SECURES SATELLITE SPACE AND READIES FOR DIGITAL RADIO BROADCASTING TCRA announced the acquisition of an orbital slot for Tanzania's first communications satellite. Alongside this, the TCRA and UCSAF plan to expand digital radio broadcasting infrastructure in underserved areas, advancing national connectivity and access to information.	TCRA https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/documents/en-1715423692-The%20Regulator%20JAN-MAR%202024%20ENGLISH.pdf	Progressive
5	28/3/2024 TCRA BLOCKS OVER 17,000 FRAUDULENT PHONE LINES In a crackdown on online fraud, TCRA blocked over 17,300 phone lines suspected of fraudulent activity within a three-month period, with high incidents reported in Rukwa and Morogoro regions.	Media Wire Express https://mediawireexpress.co.tz/tcra-blocks-over-17000-fraudulent-phone-lines-in-crackdown/	Neutral
6	01/04/2024 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE TANZANIA WORKING GROUP (IGTWG) Tech & Media Convergency (TMC) and partner civil society established the IGTWG to promote inclusive, transparent, and accountable internet governance in Tanzania. The initiative seeks to bridge the gap in civic-tech engagement, digital rights, and policy participation.	TMC Blog https://tmc.co.tz/the-internet-governance-working-group-in-tanzania/	Progressive
7	03/04/2024 LAUNCH OF THE PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION COMMISSION (PDPC) President Samia Suluhu Hassan inaugurated the PDPC under the Personal Data Protection Act, 2022, marking a significant step towards safeguarding citizens' personal information.	The Citizen https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/samia-launches-personal-data-protection-commission-4577672	Progressive
8	11/04/2024 ABDUCTION AND TORTURE OF A NETIZEN, KENNEDY MWAMLIMA IN MBEYA Kennedy Mwamlima, a TikTok user known for civic engagement, was abducted by individuals identifying as police as cited by The Bar Association of Tanzania Mainland - The Tanganyika Law Society (TLS). He was later found in Tabora on April 16, 2024, severely injured.	TLS Public Statement https://tls.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Tamko-Kutekwa-na-Kuteswa.pdf	Regressive

Nature of Incident

Reference

Tone

9

13/05/2024

LEGAL CHALLENGE TO THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT (PDPA)

Human rights advocate Tito Magoti filed a constitutional petition challenging 13 provisions of the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA), arguing they infringed on fundamental rights. The High Court of Tanzania ruled that Sections 22(3) and 23(3)(c)(e) were vague and prone to misuse. The court directed that these sections be amended within one year to ensure legal clarity and better safeguard citizens' digital rights.

Geneva Internet Platform Dig Watch

- <https://dig.watch/updates/high-court-of-tanzania-rules-calls-for-clarity-on-personal-data-protection-act>

Progressive

10

11/06/2024

CAMPAIGNS ON X SHUT DOWN INSTIGATED BY CHAIRPERSON OF THE CCM YOUTH WING AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

A coordinated campaign was launched by the Chairperson of the CCM Youth Wing, with strong backing from both Muslim and Christian leaders, calling for a ban on the X platform (formerly Twitter), citing moral concerns including pornography. This was widely viewed as a politically motivated crackdown on online civic engagement ahead of elections. Within days, TCRA acted by deleting two X accounts associated with these groups, raising alarm over freedom of expression and digital repression.

The Chanzo
Pan African Vision

- <https://thechanzo.com/2024/06/11/political-heat-on-x-twitter-forces-ruling-party-supporters-to-call-for-app-ban-in-tanzania-citing-pornography/>
- <https://panafricanvisions.com/2024/06/tanzanias-ruling-party-pushes-x-ban-amid-election-prep-online-crackdown-sparks-controversy/>

Regressive

11

17/06/2024

MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGES CALLS TO SHUT DOWN X AND CONFIRMS TCRA REVIEW UNDERWAY

In response to growing calls from ruling party youth leaders and religious figures to ban X (formerly Twitter), Hon. Nape Nnauye, Minister for Information, Communication, and Information Technology, stated via his official X account that he is aware of the issue and that TCRA is assessing the situation to ensure digital spaces remain safe, particularly for children.

Mwananchi Digital

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JNHIGmVr9c>

Regressive

12

23/06/2024

ABDUCTION AND REAPPEARANCE OF DIGITAL ACTIVIST "SATIVA" (EDGER EDSON MWAKABELA)

On June 23, 2024, digital activist Edger Edson Mwakabela, widely known as "Sativa," was abducted in the Ubungu area of Dar es Salaam under unclear circumstances. Four days later, he was found severely injured in Katavi National Park, raising widespread concern and condemnation from civil society and political observers. The case triggered a national outcry over digital repression, the shrinking civic space, and the safety of activists. THRDC issued a statement, and the incident became a symbol of the risks faced by Tanzania's outspoken digital youth.

Pan African Visions. (2024)
THRDC. (2024)

- <https://panafricanvisions.com/2024/07/tanzanias-sativa-abduction-sparks-political-firestorm-as-fundraising-controversy-erupts/#:~:text=Sativa%20vanished%20on%20June%2023,Hospital%20for%20urgent%20medical%20care>
- <https://thrdc.or.tz/PressReleasefiles/PRESS%20STATEMENT%20ON%20SATIVA%27s%20ABDUCTION.pdf>

Regressive

13

23/06/2024

TCRA REMOVES ALL ITS ACCOUNTS FROM X (TWITTER)

Just 6/7 days after coordinated campaigns led by ruling party youth leaders and religious figures calling for a ban on X, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) removed both its official and customer care accounts from the platform. The sudden withdrawal without any official explanation, intensified public concern about potential state censorship, signaled institutional disengagement from digital public spaces, and raised alarm over shrinking avenues for civic engagement and access to information.

Jamii Forums
Tanzania Digest

- <https://www.jamiiforums.com/threads/akaunti-ya-tcra-imeondolewa-x-twitter-kuna-nini.2227966/>
- <https://www.digest.tz/navigating-the-controversy-over-banning-x-in-tanzania-what-is-tcra-planning/#:~:text=In%20a%20public%20statement%20issued,questions%20about%20the%20TCRA's%20intent>

Regressive

14

02/07/2024

PRESIDENT SAMIA PAYS MEDICAL COSTS FOR ABDUCTED ACTIVIST SATIVA

President Samia Suluhu Hassan paid Tsh. 35 million to cover the medical costs of activist Edgar "Sativa" Mwakabela, who had been abducted, tortured, and shot before being found in Katavi National Park. His case triggered the #WhereIsSativa campaign on X and emergency response by civil society, including THRDC, Zitto Kabwe, and ordinary users. While many welcomed the President's support, they also demanded an independent investigation, official condemnation, and action against suspected state involvement in abductions.

The Chanzo

- <https://thechanzo.com/2024/07/02/president-samia-covers-medical-cost-for-kidnap-victim-stakeholders-urge-independent-investigation-and-end-to-abductions/>

Progressive

Nature of Incident

Reference

Tone

15

03/07/2024

THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE TANZANIA WORKING GROUP (IGTWG) ISSUES STATEMENT ON PROPOSED X SHUTDOWN

The IGTWG issued a public statement firmly opposing the calls to shut down the X platform. The group argued that such a ban lacks merit, and would severely infringe on digital rights, freedom of expression, and access to information. They urged the government to adopt a rights-based and inclusive approach to internet governance that respects both cultural values and constitutional freedoms.

The Citizen
Tanzania Digest

- <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/internet-body-slams-proposed-x-platform-ban-in-tanzania-4682016>
- <https://www.digest.tz/navigating-the-controversy-over-banning-x-in-tanzania-what-is-tcra-planning/>

Regressive

16

04/07/2024

ADVOCATE JEBRA KAMBOLE EXPLAINS IGTWG'S STATEMENT

The Executive Director of Law Advocates, Adv. Jebra Kambole, a member of the Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group (IGTWG), clarified the group's position regarding the proposed shutdown of the X platform. He emphasized IGTWG's commitment to promoting responsible and culturally respectful use of X, especially among youth, without infringing on rights. The statement reinforces the group's stance on upholding freedom of expression and access to information, while countering the moral panic driving shutdown calls.

The Chanzo

- <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/internet-body-slams-proposed-x-platform-ban-in-tanzania-4682016>

Progressive

17

05/07/2024

TANZANIAN NETIZEN ACTIVIST JAILED FOR CYBERCRIME AFTER BURNING PRESIDENT'S PHOTO

Shadrack Chaula, a 24-year-old portrait artist, was sentenced to two years in prison or fined TZS 5 million then equivalent to (USD 1,890.35) after being found guilty under Tanzania's cybercrime laws. He was accused of recording and sharing a video in which he burned a photo of President Samia Suluhu Hassan while verbally insulting her on Social Media.

BBC
Ghana Web

- <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c25l04r4v1ko>
- <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/africa/Tanzanian-artist-who-burned-president-s-picture-jailed-1938882>

Regressive

18

06/07/2024

POLITICAL FIRESTORM ERUPTS OVER FUNDRAISING TRANSPARENCY FOR SATIVA'S MEDICAL CARE

Following the abduction and injury of activist Edgar "Sativa" Mwakabela, a national fundraising campaign sparked a political firestorm. While President Samia Suluhu Hassan contributed Tsh. 35 million (13,461.54 USD) to cover hospital costs, debates erupted online over the transparency and political motivations behind the support. Figures like Zitto Kabwe and THRDC played key roles, but criticism arose over delayed acknowledgments and public posturing. Meanwhile, Home Affairs Minister Hamad Masauni Soft-pedaled political links to abductions, claiming Tanzania is "safe," despite rising concerns.

Pan African Visions
The Citizen

- <https://panafricanvisions.com/2024/07/tanzanias-sativa-abduction-sparks-political-firestorm-as-fundraising-controversy-erupts/>

Progressive

19

09/07/2024

SHADRACK CHAULA RELEASED FROM JAIL AFTER CIVIC TECH COMMUNITY PAYS HIS CYBERCRIME FINE

Shadrack Chaula, a 24-year-old portrait artist, was sentenced to two years in prison or fined TZS 5 million then equivalent to (USD 1,890.35) after being found guilty under Tanzania's cybercrime laws. He was accused of recording and sharing a video in which he burned a photo of President Samia Suluhu Hassan while verbally insulting her on Social Media.

BBC
The Citizen

- <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c99wgpdk9ko>
- <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/artist-imprisoned-after-burning-the-president-s-photo-is-set-free-4683972>

Regressive

20

10/07/2024

PRESIDENT SAMIA PUBLICLY CALLS ON TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO CONDEMN KIDNAPPINGS

In a public address, President Samia Suluhu Hassan urged traditional chiefs to take a proactive stance against the rising wave of kidnappings in Tanzania. She cited high-profile cases like those of Edgar "Sativa" Mwakabela and Kombo Mbwana, framing them as violations of Tanzanian values and threats to national reputation. The President called on chiefs to educate their communities, uphold cultural integrity, and reject any political justification for such acts.

The Citizen

- <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/president-samia-calls-on-chiefs-to-condemn-kidnapping-incidents-4696850>

Progressive

Nature of Incident		Reference	Tone
21	18/07/2024 CCM YOUTH WING CHAIR GIVES 4-MONTH ULTIMATUM FOR X SHUTDOWN DECISION Ali Kawaida, Chairperson of the CCM Youth Wing (UVCCM), who initiated the campaign to shut down X (formerly Twitter), publicly declared that he is giving the government a four-month period; starting June 2024 to reach a decision regarding the platform. He stated that if no action is taken within that time, he will resume and intensify his campaign to remove X from Tanzania.	Mwanzo TV Tanzania Digest https://mwanzotv.com/ccm-politician-calls-on-twitter-shutdown-in-tanzania/ https://www.digest.tz/navigating-the-controversy-over-banning-x-in-tanzania-what-is-tcra-planning/	Regressive
22	17/07/2024 MINISTER CLAIMS SUPPORT FROM TELECOMS, RAISING PRIVACY CONCERNS During a public address in Kashai, Minister for Communications and Information Technology Hon. Nape Nnauye stated that he has "five telecommunications companies on his side." This statement triggered public outcry over the safety and privacy of citizens' data, fueling fears of possible government access to private communications. Majority of interpreted the remarks as a revelation of undue influence over telecom providers, raising urgent questions about the independence of service providers and the integrity of Tanzania's digital privacy safeguards.	Mwananchi IPP Media https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/wadau-wamshukia-nape-kauli-ya-ushindi-nje-ya-boksi-4693362 https://www.ippmedia.com/nipashe/habari/kitaifa/read/wadau-waibuka-kauli-ya-nape-2024-07-17-103439	Regressive
23	17/07/2024 TITO MAGOTI'S CASE OVER 2020 ELECTION INTERNET SHUTDOWN BROUGHT TO COURT Human rights advocate Tito Elias Magoti brought a case before the court, challenging the government's decision to shut down the internet during the 2020 General Elections. Filed against the Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania, the petition argues that key provisions in the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) violate constitutional rights — including access to information and freedom of expression.	iFreedoms https://ifreedoms.co.ke/2024/07/a-petitioner-challenges-tanzanias-internet-shutdown-in-2020/	Regressive
24	30/07/2024 TCRA RESPONDS TO IGTWG, DISTANCES ITSELF FROM SHUTDOWN CALLS ON X In response to concerns raised by the Internet Governance Tanzania Working Group (IGTWG) regarding political and religious calls to shut down the X platform, TCRA clarified it had not issued any directive to ban or restrict access to any social media platform. In a formal letter, TCRA emphasized that any regulatory action would only be taken if there were clear violations of Tanzanian law.	The Chanzo https://thechanzo.com/2024/07/30/tcr-a-distances-itself-from-calls-to-ban-some-social-media-platforms-in-tanzania/	Neutral
25	30/07/2024 PRIVACY VIOLATION AND CONSENT MISMANAGEMENT IN DIGITAL CONTENT SHARING The High Court of Tanzania upheld a lower court ruling in Safari Automotive Ltd vs. Godwin Danda (Civil Appeal No. 978 of 2024), finding that Safari Automotive violated Danda's privacy rights by recording and sharing a video of him and his vehicle on Instagram without his consent. Despite arguments that the video was educational and non-commercial, the court ruled in favor of the respondent, affirming the right to privacy and awarding TZS 80 million (29,735 USD) in damages.	Bowmans https://bowmanslaw.com/insights/tanzania-privacy-rights-civil-appeal-no-978-of-2024-safari-automotive-limited-appellant-vs-godwin-danda-respondent/	Progressive
26	02/08/2024 DISAPPEARANCE OF ARTIST SHADRACK CHAULA PRIORLY ASSOCIATED TO THE CYBER CRIME RELATED CASE Shadrack Chaula, a 24-year-old artist from Mbeya Region, known for his previous arrest and conviction for burning a picture of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, was reportedly abducted by unidentified individuals on August 2, 2024, approximately 20 days after his release from prison. His father, Yusuph Chaula, has appealed to the government for assistance in locating his son.	The Citizen https://www.instagram.com/the_citizenz/p/C-X2xuwop7-/?locale=us&hl=am-et&img_index=1	Regressive

Nature of Incident

Reference

Tone

27

08/04/2024

AMPLIFIED TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (TFGBV) THROUGH MASSIVE CIRCULATION OF NCII OF A RAPE VICTIM

A disturbing video circulated across X, WhatsApp, Telegram and other social media platforms showing a young girl being gang raped by men claiming to act under a female police orders. While some users shared the video to demand justice, the act of sharing further exposed the victim to TFGBV. The incident raises urgent concerns around digital ethics, consent, and the amplification of trauma online. It illustrates the harmful intersection of sexual violence, state complicity, and unregulated digital spaces. The case triggered national outrage, police investigations, and public debates about privacy, platform accountability, and victim-centered justice in the digital age.

Daily News
The Citizen

- <https://dailynews.co.tz/police-mounts-probe-on-gang-rape-incident/>
- <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/police-probe-five-officers-accused-of-rape-sodomy-4714228>

Regressive

28

06/08/2024

STATEMENT ISSUED CONDEMNING CIRCULATION OF TFGBV CONTENT ON NCII

In response to the circulation of a video depicting the sexual assault of an underaged girl, TMC issued a public statement through its digital safety initiative. The statement strongly condemned both the violent act itself and the unethical sharing of the video online, categorizing it as a form of TFGBV and Non-Consensual Intimate Imagery (NCII). TMC called for the identification and prosecution of the perpetrators and urged the public to stop sharing the content, citing the harm it causes to survivors, the violation of privacy rights, and the need to uphold safe, ethical digital spaces.

TMC Blog

- <https://tmc.co.tz/public-appeal-on-promoting-online-abuse-and-amplifying-tfgbv/>

Regressive

29

07/08/2024

ARREST OF AN INDIVIDUAL FOR CIRCULATING FALSE NEWS ONLINE

An individual known as Amos wa Tegeta was arrested for allegedly spreading false information online about the death of the underaged girl involved in the viral gang rape case. Authorities stated the victim was alive and receiving care. The arrest is framed as part of efforts to curb misinformation in digital spaces.

Global Publishers
The Citizen

- <https://globalpublishers.co.tz/amos-wa-tegeta-akamatwa-kwa-tuhuma-za-kusambaza-taarifa-za-binti-wa-yombo-kufariki-wakati-yupo-hai-video/>
- <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/man-arrested-for-spreading-false-information-about-the-death-of-rape-victim-4717468>

Neutral

30

09/08/2024

TLS PRESS RELEASE ON FORCED DISAPPEARANCE AND TORTURE INCLUDING CIVIC TECH CASES

The Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) issued a press release documenting 83 cases of kidnapping, forced disappearance, and torture. The majority of the cases involved cyber activists and government critics, highlighting growing concerns over digital repression, state accountability, and human rights violations.

TLS Blog

- <https://tls.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Tamko-Kutekwa-na-Kuteswa.pdf>

Regressive

31

22/08/2024

DISAPPEARANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVIST DEUSEDITH SOKA AND TWO COLLEAGUES JACOB GODWIN MLAY AND FRANK MBISE

On August 18, 2024, youth activist and CHADEMA leader Deusedith Soka was reportedly abducted along with Jacob Godwin Mlay and Frank Mbise in the Buza area. Soka had recently warned on X that his life was in danger following his release from an earlier arrest. Prior to his disappearance, he had called for a demonstration against enforced disappearances in Tanzania. Police denied involvement despite reports implicating the Temeke OCCID. A human rights lawyer has filed a petition demanding police produce him. The incident triggered widespread public concern and digital advocacy.

The Chanzo

- <https://thechanzo.com/2024/08/22/pressure-mounts-over-the-fate-of-missing-activist-deusedith-soka-and-his-two-colleagues/>

Regressive

32

30/08/2024

BLOCKAGE OF X PLATFORM ACCESSIBILITY FOR SOME NETWORK USERS IN TANZANIA

Users across several major telecommunications networks in Tanzania began experiencing difficulty accessing X (formerly Twitter), a platform widely used for civic engagement and political dialogue.

Techish
African Folder

- <https://techish.com/2024/08/30/tanzania-x-twitter-blocked-tension/>
- <https://africanfolder.com/tanzania-blocks-access-to-x-formerly-twitter-amid-political-tensions/>

Regressive

Nature of Incident

Reference

Tone

33 31/08/2024 IGTWG CONDEMNS X PLATFORM BLOCKAGE

The IGTWG issued a public statement strongly condemning the restriction of access to X (formerly Twitter) in Tanzania. The group emphasized that the blockage is a violation of fundamental rights including freedom of expression and access to information and called for the immediate restoration of access. The statement also warned against the increasing trend of digital censorship and urged the government to adopt a rights-based approach to internet governance.

Tanzania Digest

- <https://www.digest.tz/igtwg-condemns-x-platform-restriction-tanzanias-renewed-censorship-amid-political-tensions/>

Regressive

34 09/09/2024 GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL DENIES INTERNET SHUTDOWN IN TANZANIA

During a high-level panel hosted by Tech & Media Convergency (TMC) at the Tanzania Internet Governance Forum (TzIGF), the Director General of the ICT Commission publicly denied the occurrence of any internet shutdowns in Tanzania, stating that “we have never experienced an internet shutdown; only occasional network glitches.” The statement contradicts user experiences and documented evidence.

The Chanzo
TMC Blog

- <https://thechanzo.com/2024/09/09/tanzanias-internet-accessibility-official-denies-shutdowns-cites-only-glitches/>
- <https://tmc.co.tz/building-tanzanias-multistakeholder-digital-future-insights-from-the-tanzania-internet-governance-forum-2024/>

Regressive

35 12/09/2024 TANZANIA RANKED TIER 1 GLOBALLY IN CYBERSECURITY PRACTICES BY ITU

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in its 5th Edition of the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024, ranked the United Republic of Tanzania among ‘Tier 1’ countries the highest level of cybersecurity standards globally. This reflects an enhanced national focus on cybersecurity, capacity building, and legal frameworks. While the ranking is commendable, civil society remains vigilant over how these standards are implemented in practice, particularly with respect to digital rights and surveillance safeguards.

ITU

- https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Documents/GCIv5/2401416_1b_Global-Cybersecurity-Index-E.pdf

Progressive

36 19/9/2024 ARREST AND DETENTION OF PROMINENT SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVIST BONIFACE JACOB OVER ALLEGATIONS OF PUBLISHING FALSE INFORMATION ON X

Boniface Jacob, also known online as Boni Yai and a former Mayor of Ubungu (CHADEMA), was arrested on 18 September 2024 and held in detention for nearly 20 days before being released on police bail on 7 October 2024. He was accused of publishing false information on the X platform. His prolonged detention raised concerns over due process, freedom of expression, and selective enforcement of cybercrime laws. His legal team stated that the denial of bail was tied to the case originating from Police Headquarters in Dodoma, limiting local authority intervention.

Media Wire Express
Jamii Forums

- <https://mediawireexpress.co.tz/activist-boniface-jacob-denied-bail-again/>
- <https://www.jamiiforums.com/threads/boniface-jacob-akwama-kortini-akipinga-kuiipa-polisi-password-za-simu-zake.2284180/>

Regressive

37 25/09/2024 ALLEGATIONS OF TELECOM SURVEILLANCE AND HACKING OF PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS

In hearings at the London Employment Tribunal, it was alleged that the mobile network provider Tigo tracked and shared private phone records and location data of opposition leader Tundu Lissu with Tanzanian authorities in the weeks leading up to the 2017 assassination attempt. Reports indicate the surveillance began on August 22, 2017, and continued up to the day of the attack. While Tigo denied the claims, the revelations have reignited debates over telecom complicity in state surveillance and violation of the right to privacy in Tanzania.

The Reuters
Deutsche Welle (DW)

- <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/tanzania-opposition-asks-telecoms-firm-respond-data-sharing-accusation-2024-09-25/>
- <https://www.dw.com/sw/lissu-kuishitaki-serikali-ya-tanzania-kimataifa/a-70324986>

Regressive

38 30/09/2024 LIFE SENTENCES FOR GANG RAPISTS IN VIRAL TFGBV RAPE CASE

Four men, including a soldier and a prison officer, were sentenced to life imprisonment in Tanzania for the gang rape and sodomy of a girl under 18. The attack gained national attention after a video of the assault went viral online in August 2024. The court also ordered each perpetrator to compensate the victim.

BBC

- <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c243z03j9pgg>

Progressive

Nature of Incident

Reference

Tone

39

03/10/2024

SATIVA ISSUES 90-DAY LEGAL NOTICE TO SUE IGP, AG, AND HOME AFFAIRS MINISTRY

Edgar Edson Mwakabela, known as "Sativa," has issued a 90-day notice of intent to sue the Inspector General of Police (IGP), the Attorney General (AG), and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Sativa alleges physical pain, torture, and humiliation following his abduction in June 2024. He demands 5 billion Tanzanian shillings in compensation. His legal team, led by lawyers Tito Magoti and Jebra Kambole, has warned that failure to comply will result in formal legal action and possibly the involvement of international human rights organizations.

Mwananchi

- <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/sativa-atoa-notisi-kuwashitaki-igp-ag-akidai-fidia-ya-sh5-bilioni-4771550>

Progressive

40

03/10/2024

30-DAY BAN OF MWANANCHI (THE CITIZEN) MEDIA OUTLET

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) suspended the online licenses of Mwananchi Communications Ltd's three platforms, including The Citizen, for 30 days. The ban was issued over allegations that the outlet had published content likely to cause public panic.

Deutsche Welle (DW)
The Chanzo

- <https://www.dw.com/sw/tanzania-yafungia-kwa-muda-mitandao-ya-gazeti-la-mwananchi/a-70395864>
- <https://thechanzo.com/2024/10/03/tanzania-regulator-suspends-online-content-licenses-for-three-mwananchi-communication-publications-following-viral-animation-by-the-citizen/>

Regressive

41

10/10/2024

TCRA FILES CHARGES AGAINST JAMBO TV

(TCRA), through its Content Regulation Committee, filed charges against Jambo TV following the broadcast and online posting of an aired interview of opposition leader Hon. Tundu Lissu.

Jambo TV X platform official page

- <https://x.com/jambotv/status/1844416317018763665?s=46>

Regressive

42

12/10/2024

GOVERNMENT ISSUES GUIDANCE NOTE ON DIGITAL LENDERS

In response to growing public complaints about digital money lenders violating privacy rights, the government released an official guidance note aimed at regulating the practices of digital lending platforms. Complaints included lenders sharing personal photos and debt information with borrowers' relatives and contacts, a direct violation of privacy. The guidance is a step toward protecting personal data and upholding the right to digital dignity in Tanzania's rapidly growing fintech sector.

The Chanzo

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n5CM1JOWWs>

Progressive

43

21/11/2024

BANK OF TANZANIA BANS 69 UNAUTHORIZED DIGITAL LENDING PLATFORMS

The Bank of Tanzania (BoT) issued a public notice banning 69 digital lending platforms and applications, including well-known names such as TALA, CashMama, and Boba Cash, for operating without proper licenses. The ban is based on the Guidance Note on Digital Lenders Under Tier 2 Microfinance Service Providers, issued on August 27, 2024, which mandates fair practices, ethical debt collection, data privacy protections, and financial transparency.

BOT

- <https://www.bot.go.tz/Adverts/PressRelease/en/2024112512091545.pdf>

Progressive

44

22/11/2024

A CALL FOR CITIZENS TO DOUBLE CHECK HOW MANY MOBILE NUMBERS HAVE BEEN REGISTERED USING THEIR NATIONAL ID'S

The Bank of Tanzania issued a public notice banning several unauthorized digital loan platforms and applications from continuing operations. These platforms were found to be operating without proper licenses and in violation of the 2024 Guidelines for Tier 2 Microfinance Service Providers.

East Africa TV
Michuzi TV

- <https://x.com/eastafricatv/status/1859981144869007551?s=46>
- <https://www.michuzi.co.tz/2024/11/serikali-yaweka-mikakati-ya-suluhu-ya.html>

Progressive

Nature of Incident

Reference

Tone

45 23/11/2024 GOVERNMENT FORMS INTER-AGENCY TEAM TO FIGHT CYBERCRIME

A multi-agency task force was launched by the government to combat rising incidents of cybercrime in Tanzania. The team brings together experts from four ministries and key sector institutions. This move highlights a national strategy to enhance digital security and resilience. While largely welcomed, observers stress the importance of rights-respecting implementation that avoids abuse of cybercrime frameworks to suppress dissent.

ITV News
Daily News

- https://x.com/dr_dgwajima/status/1860363142724800947?s=46
- <https://dailynews.co.tz/tanzania-reaffirms-commitment-to-combat-all-forms-of-cybercrime/>

Neutral

46 28/11/2024 BONIFACE JACOB – CRIMINAL CASE NO. 26918 OF 2024 (KISUTU RMC)

In Criminal Case No. 26918/2024 at the Court of Resident Magistrates of Dar es Salaam at Kisutu, the state filed a Miscellaneous Criminal Application seeking access to Boniface Jacob's mobile phone data under the Cybercrimes Act. The application requested court authorization to compel access during ongoing investigations. Boniface opposed this on privacy grounds, but his application to block the order was struck out by the High Court as incompetent.

Jamii Forums
TANZLII

- <https://www.jamiiforums.com/threads/boniface-jacob-akwama-kortini-akipinga-kuiipa-polisi-password-za-simu-zake.2284180/>
- <https://tanzlii.org/akn/tz/judgment/tzhc/2024/9797/eng@2024-11-28>

Neutral

47 02/12/2024 ABDUCTION AND ASSAULT OF ACT WAZALENDU YOUTH LEADER ABDUL NONDO

Abdul Nondo, a youth leader of the opposition party ACT Wazalendo, was abducted in Dar es Salaam shortly after returning from campaign activities in the western regions. He was found the next day at Coco Beach, beaten and blindfolded, with injuries requiring hospitalization. His abductors threatened to kill him if captured again. Police confirmed the case and launched an investigation.

BBC
The Chanzo

- <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr56n49md6po>
- <https://thechanzo.com/2024/12/01/act-wazalendo-says-its-youth-wing-leader-abdul-nondo-has-been-abducted/>

Regressive

48 03/12/2024 UCSAF ACTIVATES 306 OUT OF 758 PLANNED TOWERS

The government, through Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF), reported that 306 out of 758 communication towers under construction across 713 wards are now active, benefiting underserved communities. The project, funded with TZS 126 billion, aims to serve 8.5 million people and is scheduled for completion by May, 2025.

UCSAF

- <https://www.ucsaf.go.tz/news/306-out-of-758-towers-have-started-providing-services-to-the-public>

Progressive

49 31/12/2024 DEADLINE FOR DATA CONTROLLERS AND PROCESSORS TO REGISTER WITH THE PDPC

Following the launch of Tanzania's Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC) on April 3, 2024, the deadline for all data controllers and processors to register under the Personal Data Protection Act, Cap 44 of 2022 was set for 31 December 2024. The Act mandates compliance with core data protection principles such as transparency, data minimization, accuracy, and accountability. It also enshrines rights of data subjects, including access, objection to processing, rectification, and protection from automated decisions. Registration certificates are valid for five years.

KPMG

- <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/ke/pdf/tax/2025/Regulatory%20Alert%20-%20Data%20Privacy%20-%20KPMG%20in%20Tanzania%202025.pdf>

Progressive

SUMMARY OF RECORDED INCIDENTS (2024 DIGITAL RIGHTS INDEX – TANZANIA)

While Tanzania has witnessed numerous cases of forced disappearances in recent years, only those directly connected to civic tech and digital activism were included to maintain thematic relevance. Additionally, The Chanzo and Mwananchi Media stood out as leading platforms in documenting and amplifying digital rights issues contributing significantly to public scrutiny, civic engagement, and the visibility of online freedoms. A total of 49 incidents were documented in the 2024 Digital Rights Index for Tanzania. Of these, 24 incidents (49%) were categorized as **Regressive**, indicating a persistent pattern of digital repression ranging from enforced disappearances of netizens, misuse of cybercrime laws, censorship, TFGBV, to violations of privacy and data protection. 18 incidents (37%) were marked as **Progressive**, representing advances in digital governance, legal reforms, institutional accountability, and strong civil society responses. The remaining 7 incidents (14%) were **Neutral**, denoting procedural updates or state actions with limited direct impact on digital rights.

1. African Child Projects (ACP)
2. Builders for Future Africa (BFA)
3. Center for Strategic Litigation (CSL)
4. Center for Youth Dialogue (CYD)
5. Digital Agenda for Tanzania Initiative (D4TI)
6. Dunia Salama Foundation (DUFASO)
7. East Africa Law Society (EALS)
8. Foundation for Civil Society (FCS)
9. Gidabuday Sports Tourism Foundation (GSTF)
10. Internet Society Tanzania Chapter (ISOC-Tz)
11. Kuza Stream Generation (KSG)
12. Law Guard Advocates (LGA)
13. Media for Development and Advocacy (MEDEA)
14. Mwanga Hub
15. Restless Development
16. Tangible Initiatives
17. Tanzania AI Community
18. Tanzania Internet Service Providers Association (TISPA)
19. Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA)
20. Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)
21. The Chanzo Initiative
22. Voice of Youth Tanzania (VOYOTA)
23. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)
24. Zaina Foundation and The Digital Rights Coalition
25. Zanzibar Fighting Against Youth Challenges Organization (ZAFAYCO)

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*"Championing Technological Adaptation and Digital Transformation
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