

PRESS RELEASE

African Civil Society Organisations Commend AU and SADC for Condemning Sham Tanzanian Election

Call for Non-Recognition of Illegitimate Government, Transitional Justice, and Fresh Elections

6th November 2025

For Immediate Release

The undersigned African civil society organisations commend the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for their firm condemnation of the fraudulent general elections and ensuing violence in the United Republic of Tanzania. We applaud the regional bodies' decisive stance as a vital affirmation of Africa's collective commitment to democratic governance, constitutionalism, and human rights.

We applaud the AU and SADC for standing with the people of Tanzania and for defending the principles enshrined in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. By calling out the sham election and the violence that followed, our continental institutions have demonstrated leadership, integrity, and fortitude at a time when silence would have meant complicity.

The coalition expresses grave concern over reports of widespread electoral malpractice, the killing of Tanzanian citizens, intimidation of opposition candidates, arbitrary arrests, and the violent suppression of peaceful protests following the 2025 general elections. According to independent observers and credible media accounts, the Tanzanian authorities engaged in serious violations of civil and political rights, effectively undermining the credibility of the entire electoral process. These actions represent a flagrant breach of regional and international democratic norms and principles. The AU and SADC have set an important precedent by rejecting attempts to legitimise authoritarianism through rigged elections.

The legitimacy of governance in Africa cannot rest on fear and manipulation. The AU and SADC have a historic opportunity to reaffirm that democracy—not dictatorship—remains the cornerstone of Africa's future. The coalition therefore urges both regional bodies to move beyond condemnation and to take concrete steps to set Tanzania on a path towards a more democratic order. Specifically, African civil society called on the AU and SADC to:

1. Withhold recognition of the government of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, whose administration emerged from a discredited and violent electoral process that does not reflect the will of the Tanzanian people;

2. Facilitate fresh, transparent, and inclusive elections under independent supervision to ensure a genuine expression of the people's choice; and

3. Demand an immediate end to violence and repression, including the release of political prisoners, restoration of media freedoms, and protection of civic space.

The coalition of African civil society organisations further calls on African governments, international partners, and human rights institutions to stand in solidarity with Tanzanian citizens in their pursuit of justice and democracy. Upholding democratic norms across the continent strengthens peace, prosperity, and people's trust in regional institutions. This is not just about Tanzania, it is about defending the soul of African democracy. When one nation's democracy is stolen, it weakens us all.

Signed by:

African Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders

Centre for Human Rights University of Pretoria

Centre for Democracy and Human Rights

Centre for Strategic Litigation

Ditshwanelo - The Botswana Centre for Human Rights

International Commission of Jurists

LCK Freedom Foundation

Mozambican Human Rights Defenders Network

Public Interest Practice

Rivonia Circle

Southern African Litigation Centre

Tsungu Bamu Law International

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association