

# TANZANIA'S 2020 ELECTION

## Return of the One-Party State

**Michaela COLLORD**

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# Abstract

Beginning with early voting in Zanzibar on October 27 and then continuing through October 28, Tanzanians went to the polls in a general election for district councilors, Members of Parliament (MPs) and the President. As official results began to be declared, it became clear that Tanzania's long-time ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), had won a landslide. After significant opposition party gains in recent elections, these results constituted a dramatic reversal and a *de facto* return to one-party rule. Opposition parties continue to challenge this outcome, denouncing what they affirm was not a genuine election but a state-orchestrated sham.

Reflecting on these dramatic shifts, this study addresses two questions: What explains the election results? And what are the implications for Tanzanian politics going forward? The main point is that the 2020 elections were a result of President John Pombe Magufuli's efforts to consolidate authoritarian control after he first came to power in 2015.

The study outlines how Magufuli used his first term not only to marginalize opposition parties but also to centralize power within the ruling party. It then examines how these processes intensified ahead of the election, culminating in the official declaration of an overwhelming CCM victory at all levels. The note concludes by discussing the implications of this election outcome for Magufuli's second term, focusing on his control of parliament and the possibility of a constitutional amendment lifting presidential term limits.





# Résumé

Les Tanzaniens se sont rendus aux urnes à partir du 27 octobre pour le vote anticipé à Zanzibar et jusqu'au 28 octobre afin d'élire les conseillers de district, les membres du Parlement et le président. Les résultats officiels reflètent une victoire écrasante du parti au pouvoir de longue date, le Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). À la suite de gains considérables de l'opposition lors des élections précédentes, ces résultats représentent un inversement dramatique de la tendance et un retour *de facto* au régime de parti unique. Les partis de l'opposition continuent de contester les scores électoraux en dénonçant ce qui d'après eux ne constituait pas une véritable élection mais une mascarade orchestrée par l'État.

Cette étude propose de prendre du recul par rapport à ces bouleversements en posant deux questions : qu'est-ce qui explique les résultats électoraux ? Et quelles sont les conséquences sur le futur du politique en Tanzanie ? L'argument central est que les élections de 2020 sont le produit des efforts menés par le président John Pombe Magufuli pour consolider le contrôle autoritaire depuis son arrivée au pouvoir en 2015.

L'étude démontre comment Magufuli a utilisé son premier mandat non seulement pour marginaliser les partis de l'opposition mais aussi pour centraliser le pouvoir au sein du parti majoritaire. Elle analyse ensuite comment ces processus se sont intensifiés en amont des élections et ont abouti à la déclaration officielle d'une large victoire du CCM à tous les niveaux. L'étude discute enfin les effets de ces résultats électoraux sur le deuxième mandat de Magufuli, en se concentrant sur son contrôle du Parlement et sur la possibilité d'un référendum constitutionnel visant une levée de la limite de deux mandats présidentiels.



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# Introduction

Beginning with early voting in Zanzibar on October 27 and then continuing through October 28,<sup>1</sup> Tanzanians went to the polls in a general election for district councilors, Members of Parliament (MPs) and the President.<sup>2</sup>

Already there was widespread concern among opposition parties and observers about state-backed obstruction of opposition campaigns. These concerns only grew more pronounced as news spread on polling day of violence and intimidation by state security forces, an internet shutdown, pre-ticked ballots, multiple voting, and other irregularities.<sup>3</sup>

As the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) began to declare results, it became clear that Tanzania's ruling party *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM), in power since independence, had won a landslide. Official figures announced by NEC indicated that the incumbent President and CCM candidate, John Pombe Magufuli, won 84 percent of the vote, all but three out of 264 directly elected parliamentary seats went to CCM, and the ruling party also had a clean sweep of district councils.<sup>4</sup> In the semi-autonomous region of Zanzibar, CCM's victory was equally resounding. Its presidential candidate, Hussein Mwinyi, claimed 76 percent of the vote, and CCM won another overwhelming majority in the House of Representatives.<sup>5</sup>

Tanzania became a de jure one-party state in 1965. Following the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1992, opposition parties gradually increased their vote share, peaking in 2015 with 40 percent of the presidential vote, approximately 45 percent of the legislative vote, and with the leading opposition party, CHADEMA, controlling local government in most urban areas.<sup>6</sup> The 2020 general election results, therefore, constitute a dramatic reversal and a de facto return to one-party rule. Opposition parties

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1. This study was written in early November 2020, immediately after Tanzania's general election. It has not been updated since.

2. In Zanzibar, voters also elected members of the Zanzibari House of Representatives and the President of Zanzibar.

3. D. Paget, "Tanzanian Poll Is Likely to Usher in a New Era of Authoritarianism: Here's Why", *Theconversation.com*, 20 October 2020.

4. "NEC yamtangaza Dk Magufuli Rais mteule wa Tanzania", 30 October 2020, [mwananchi.co.tz](http://mwananchi.co.tz).

5. N. Minde, "Tanzania: How Magufuli Has Steered Tanzania Down the Road of an Authoritarian One-Party State", *Theconversation.com*, 15 November 2020.

6. R. McLellan, *The Politics of Local Control in Electoral Autocracies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2020.

continue to challenge this outcome, denouncing what they affirm was not a genuine election but a state-orchestrated sham.<sup>7</sup>

This note examines the background to Tanzania's 2020 election, the aim being to address two questions: What explains the election results? And what are the implications for Tanzanian politics going forward?

The main point is that the 2020 elections were a result of President Magufuli's efforts to consolidate authoritarian control after he first came to power in 2015. The note first outlines how Magufuli used his first term not only to marginalize opposition parties but also to centralize power *within* the ruling party. It then examines how this process intensified ahead of the election, culminating in the official declaration of an overwhelming CCM victory at all levels. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of this election outcome for Magufuli's second term, focusing on his control of parliament and the possibility of a constitutional amendment lifting presidential term limits.

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7. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com>.

# Magufuli's first term: Five years to consolidate power

President Magufuli was in a seemingly weak political position when he took office in 2015. Opposition parties had just won an unprecedented number of seats in parliament and local councils, and Magufuli himself won the presidency by the narrowest margin of any CCM candidate since the 1992 multiparty transition, albeit still with a healthy 58 percent of the vote.

In addition to this opposition challenge, Magufuli lacked a strong political base within his own party. Although he had served as a government minister for 20 years, he only won the CCM presidential nomination after two rival factions knocked each other out of the running, leaving Magufuli to snatch a largely unexpected victory.<sup>8</sup> Edward Lowassa, who headed one of the defeated CCM factions, then defected from the ruling party to become the presidential candidate of the opposition coalition, *Ukawa*.

Upon taking office, President Magufuli initiated an effort to consolidate his personal hold on power. This process involved, first, undermining the strength of opposition parties and, second, centralizing control within the ruling party. He used a variety of tools to achieve these aims, combining financial and physical coercion while also making use of authoritarian legislation, among other strategies.<sup>9</sup>

## Reigning the opposition

Opposition parties have long faced an uphill battle in Tanzania. CCM has ruled since its creation in 1977 following a merger of the *Tanganyika African National Union* (TANU) and the *Afro-Shirazi Party* (ASP), which had held

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8. M. Collord. "Tanzania – The Ruling CCM Party Unites (for now) Around a Presidential Nominee", 17 July 2015, [presidential-power.net](http://presidential-power.net).

9. The use of these tools is well-documented in the literature on authoritarian politics. See K. Greene, *Why Dominant Parties Lose: Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; A. Malik and B. Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," *World Development* No. 45, May 2013, pp. 296-313, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2012.12.015>; M. Albertus, S. Fenner and D. Slater, *Coercive Distribution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018; J. Corrales, "The Authoritarian Resurgence: Autocratic Legalism in Venezuela", *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 26, No. 2, 2015, pp. 37-51.

power on the Tanzanian mainland since independence in 1961 and in Zanzibar since the 1964 revolution, respectively. In other words, a version of the same ruling party has retained power in Tanzania for nearly 60 years. In 1992, the Parliament passed a constitutional amendment putting an end to the *de jure* one party-state, but apart from the *Civic United Front* (CUF) in Zanzibar,<sup>10</sup> opposition parties were slow to assert themselves, notably lacking an organic base in the form of strong local elites or civic associations from which to build.<sup>11</sup>

After the collapse of some early experiments in opposition organizing on the mainland,<sup>12</sup> an opposition party began to consolidate and expand its organizational reach from the mid-2000s. *Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo* (CHADEMA) first established roots in Northern Tanzania in the 1990s. Many of its founding leaders and political financiers—alienated by Nyerere's brand of *Ujamaa* or socialist politics—hailed from the relatively affluent Kilimanjaro region.<sup>13</sup> It was not until the 2000s, though, that the party extended its electoral base further north to Lake Zone, notably Mara and Mwanza regions, and southwest to Mbeya with other scattered strongholds emerging in Kigoma, Iringa, Morogoro and in Tanzania's commercial capital, Dar es Salaam.<sup>14</sup> It fielded its first presidential candidate, Freeman Mbowe, in 2005, and although he garnered just under six percent of the vote, the presidential campaign raised CHADEMA's profile. Subsequent efforts to extend the geographic reach of party branch structures between 2005-2010, a successful presidential campaign in 2010 in which CHADEMA won 27 percent of the vote, and renewed party-building thereafter put CHADEMA in a strong position ahead of the 2015 polls.<sup>15</sup> The formation of *Ukawa*, an unprecedented coalition of leading opposition parties, and the defection of Lowassa, a politician with a large national profile and strong personal support base in Arusha region, helped ensure

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10. CUF arguably won elections since the first multiparty polls in 1995, but its victories were repeatedly denied and, in 2015, the entire election was cancelled only to be re-run amidst an opposition boycott.

11. D. Paget, "The Authoritarian Origins of Well-Organised Opposition Parties: The Rise of CHADEMA in Tanzania", *African Affairs*, 2019.

12. M. Mmuya, *Tanzania: Political Reform in Eclipse: Crisis and Cleavage in Political Parties*, Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1998.

13. For a discussion of Chadema's origins and the identity of its early leaders, see the autobiography of its first chèrement: E. Mtei, *From Goatherd to Governor*, Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2009. See also: M. Mmuya and A. Chaligha, *Political Parties and Democracy in Tanzania*, Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1995).

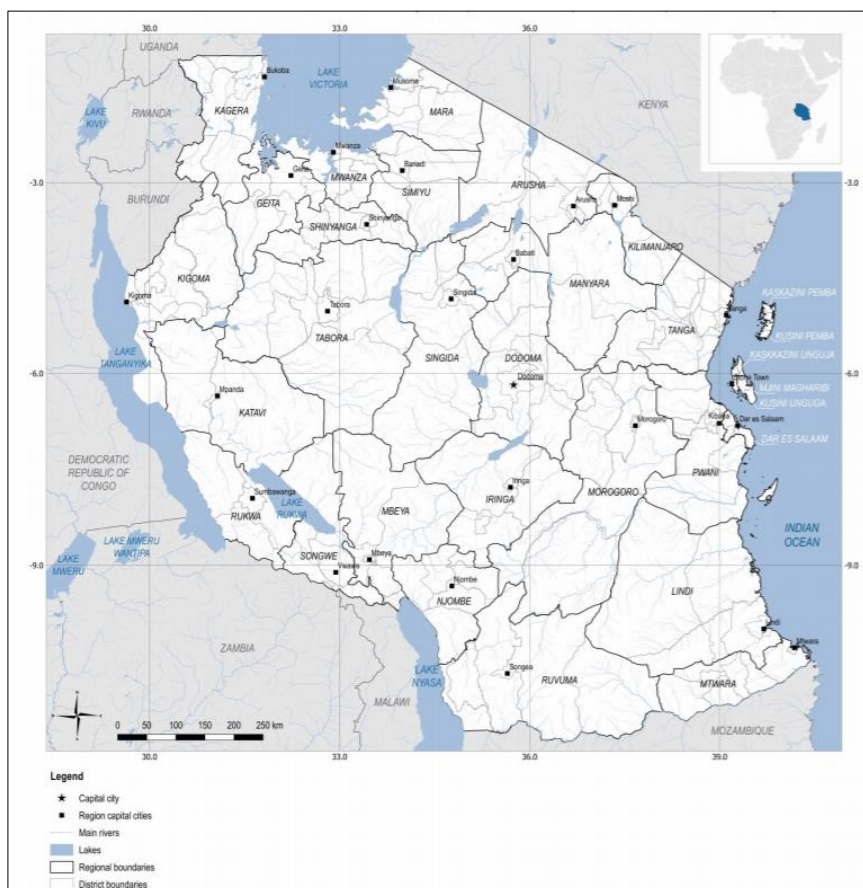
14. For an excellent map of evolving opposition support at district council level through successive multiparty elections, see: R. McLellan, "The Politics of Local Control in Electoral Autocracies", *op. cit.*, p. 48.

15. D. Paget, "Lone Organizers: Opposition Party-building by Parliamentary Candidates in Tanzania", *Party Politics*, forthcoming.



that together, opposition parties could pose a formidable challenge to the ruling CCM.<sup>16</sup>

### Administrative map of Tanzania with regions



Source: "Small Hydro Resource Mapping in Tanzania – Hydropower Atlas: Full Report", World Bank, 2018, <http://documents1.worldbank.org>.

Opposition parties' optimism surrounding the 2015 elections was quickly muted, though. The first blow came early with ZEC's decision to cancel the Zanzibar elections after it became apparent that CUF was winning.<sup>17</sup> There were also widespread allegations of rigging and fraud on the mainland where police raided two parallel vote tallying centers run by

16. There is some debate as to whether Lowassa helped or hindered the opposition's success in 2015. Although he brought additional campaign finance and a support base within CCM, his association with past corruption scandals tarnished the opposition's anti-corruption message. Moreover, the influx of his supporters from CCM, many of whom were rewarded with parliamentary and district council candidacies, likely exacerbated local-level divisions within CHADEMA in many areas. See D. Paget, "Again, Making Tanzania Great: Magufuli's Restorationist Developmental Nationalism", *Democratization* Vol. 27, No. 7, October 2020, pp. 1240-1260.

Interview, unsuccessful CHADEMA candidate, Dar es Salaam, February 2017.

17. "Tanzania Election: Zanzibar Vote Annulled after Fight", BBC, 28 October 2015.

opposition parties and NGOs.<sup>18</sup> It is important to stress that this electoral manipulation occurred under the watch of outgoing CCM President, Jakaya Kikwete, and indeed, was in keeping with a long history of authoritarian intervention in Tanzania since the return of multiparty elections.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, what came next after Kikwete handed over to newly elected President Magufuli was not altogether without precedent. However, while Kikwete allowed the opposition to strengthen during his presidency, only intervening belatedly to prevent a victory, Magufuli's actions throughout his first term suggested his intention to eliminate opposition parties.

Magufuli's strategy for suppressing opposition parties was multi-pronged, evolving and intensifying over his five-year term. This strategy also relied heavily on his role as appointing authority, his penchant for politicized appointments,<sup>20</sup> and thus his direct control of key state institutions, many inherited from the one-party era.<sup>21</sup>

A first, important element of Magufuli's strategy involved direct efforts to *restrict opposition organizing* and mobilization. In June 2016, following several months during which opposition Member of Parliament (MP)s' activities in parliament were restricted,<sup>22</sup> various individuals were charged with insulting the president,<sup>23</sup> and several newspapers suspended,<sup>24</sup> CHADEMA announced plans for a country-wide tour protesting Magufuli's authoritarian leadership style.<sup>25</sup> Shortly thereafter, the police issued an order banning party rallies until the 2020 election.<sup>26</sup> The President soon backed this move, stating in a speech, "we can't allow people to politicize each and every thing, every day," then adding, "When will people work and build the nation?"<sup>27</sup> A blanket ban on public meetings organized by opposition parties was eventually modified so that MPs were allowed to hold rallies but only within their constituencies, thereby hampering continued party-building efforts. Around the same time, the Registrar of Political

18. "Police Raid Observers' Office, Arrest Staff", The Citizen, 30 October 2015.

19. For a review of obstacles placed in the way of the opposition around the initial transition to multiparty politics, see: M. Mmuya, *Tanzania: Political Reform in Eclipse - Crisis and Cleavage in Political Parties*, *op. cit.*

20. "Let Reason Prevail in Governance, Politics", The Citizen, 28 June 2018; "Will the Real Opposition Emerge under Magufuli's Presidency?", The Citizen, 7 August 2016.

21. B. Mwansasu, "The Changing Role of the Tanganyika African National Union", in B. Mwansasu and C. Pratt (eds.), *Towards Socialism in Tanzania*, Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1979, pp. 169-192.

22. M. Collord, "President Magufuli's First Months in Office", 23 March 2016, [presidential-power.net](http://presidential-power.net); "Bunge Stalemate Spills over into Public Life", The Citizen, 26 June 2016.

23. L. Kuo, "Tanzania Is Threatening More Citizens with Jail for Insulting the President on Social Media", QZ, 15 September 2016.

24. A. Mtulya, "Five Things Tanzania's President 'Bulldozer' Mgufuli Has Banned", BBC, 5 March 2019.

25. "Opposition to Start Defiance Protests in Dar", The East African, 30 June 2016.

26. "Let Reason Prevail in Governance, Politics", *op. cit.*

27. "Enough Politicking, JPM Tells Opposition", The Citizen, 24 June 2016.

Parties,<sup>28</sup> a presidential appointee, exacerbated an internal split within CUF,<sup>29</sup> recognizing and channeling state funding to a minority faction whilst refusing to recognize the faction headed by the party's secretary-general, Seif Sharif Hamad.<sup>30</sup> This intervention ultimately led Hamad's faction to break away in 2019, joining a small opposition party, ACT-Wazalendo, headed by its sole MP, Zitto Kabwe. What remained of CUF appeared to be little more than a state-backed party with minimal support.

Magufuli's government combined these direct efforts to undermine opposition party organizing with numerous more indirect strategies. His arrival in office inaugurated a period of heightened intimidation and violence against opposition leaders and supporters. High profile cases included the abduction in November 2016 of Ben Sanaane by "unknown persons". Sanaane was a CHADEMA activist and assistant to Freeman Mbowe, by then Chairman of CHADEMA and an MP. In September 2017, the firebrand CHADEMA MP and opposition Chief Whip, Tundu Lissu, survived an assassination attempt, again conducted by "unknown persons." Other MPs, meanwhile, reported death threats.<sup>31</sup> Opposition activists and supporters, without the same national platform, were also jailed for mobilizing in their local areas. In August 2020, two months before the election, Mbowe was attacked in his home by unknown assailants and left with a broken leg.

A form of financial coercion, applied to opposition leaders and their parties, was another important theme of Magufuli's first term. Mbowe emerged as a major strategic target in this effort. After becoming CHADEMA Chairman in 2004, he "adopted the role of 'financier in chief'."<sup>32</sup> He brought his own money as well as a network of other private financiers. Following the 2015 election, however, Mbowe's business interests were systematically targeted. A famous Dar es Salaam nightclub owned by Mbowe was closed after the state-owned National Housing Corporation, from whom Mbowe rented the property, ordered its demolition. In his constituency of Hai, Kilimanjaro region, the District Commissioner—appointed by Magufuli—closed a hotel owned by Mbowe and later threatened him with hefty fines and the closure of his company, Kilimanjaro Veggie Ltd.<sup>33</sup> Mbowe's

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28. The Registrar of Political Parties oversees the registration of political parties and can de-register a party if it is found to contravene the Political Parties Act, recently amended in a manner criticized for being antidemocratic, or if it otherwise ceases to qualify as a party.

29. "Parties Registrar on the Spot over Deepening CUF Crisis", *The Citizen*, 11 April 2017.

30. For a summary, see Paget, 2017, p. 157.

31. "Tanzania MP Zitto Kabwe Gets Death Threats over World Bank Loan", BBC, 3 February 2020.

32. D. Paget, "The Authoritarian Origins of Well-Organised Opposition Parties: The Rise of CHADEMA in Tanzania", *op. cit.*, pp. 705-706.

33. "Mbowe Given 14 Days to Pay Levy for Hotel", *The Citizen*, 22 January 2017.

newspaper, *Tanzania Diama*, was also repeatedly suspended.<sup>34</sup> Other opposition leaders received similar treatment, such as the former Prime Minister, Frederick Sumaye, who defected from the ruling party to CHADEMA alongside Lowassa. He later claimed that the government confiscated two of his farms because “they want me to return to CCM.”<sup>35</sup> Mbowe, meanwhile, has decried how, since 2015, “The wealth, land and even businesses of opposition leaders have been seized or nationalized.”<sup>36</sup>

CCM and Magufuli’s government further weakened the opposition through a series of legal and electoral interventions. CCM encouraged a wave of defections by elected councilors and MPs from the opposition to CCM, defections that then triggered by-elections in which CCM selected the former opposition politicians as its candidates.<sup>37</sup> These newly minted CCM candidates invariably won their by-elections amidst widespread allegations of irregularities.<sup>38</sup> Opposition politicians also faced detention and numerous legal charges, forcing them to appear for routine court hearings and, thereby, distracting them from their other work. In March 2020, Mbowe and eight other co-accused were found guilty of 12 out of 13 charges against them and sentenced to pay fines totally Tsh350 million (\$151,000).<sup>39</sup> In another authoritarian legal maneuver, the CCM majority in Parliament voted to amend the Political Parties Act in January 2020, granting the Registrar of Political Parties sweeping new powers, which opposition politicians warned would entrench “one-party” rule.<sup>40</sup> Among other things, the new amendments make it easier to de-register parties and give the Registrar the authority to revoke individuals’ party membership and thereby remove them from party leadership. Finally, in a development that directly prefigured the 2020 elections,<sup>41</sup> CCM won 99 percent of the 12,000 village chairmanships and 4,000 street-level leadership positions contested in the November 2019 “street” elections.<sup>42</sup> This result came after the NEC rejected the nominations

34. F. Ng’wanakilala, “Tanzanian Police Arrest Opposition Leaders as Tensions Rise”, Bloomberg, 23 June 2020.

35. “Sumaye: Confiscation of my Arms Is a Political Game”, The Citizen, 23 August 2017.

36. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://m.facebook.com>.

37. “Mbowe awalipua madiwani Chadema waliohamia CCM”, 21 February 2018, [mwananchi.co.tz](http://mwananchi.co.tz).

38. “CCM yaeleza siri ya ushindi”, 18 September 2018, [mwananchi.co.tz](http://mwananchi.co.tz); “Chadema wadai kuporwa ushindi,” 18 September 2018, [mwananchi.co.tz](http://mwananchi.co.tz); “Chadema Wants By-election Suspended”, The Citizen, 19 July 2018.

39. “Chadema Accused Slapped with 350M Fines or 60 Months Jail”, IPP Media, 11 March 2020.

40. F. Ng’wanakilala, “Tanzania MPs Grant Government Sweeping Powers over Political Parties”, London South East, 30 January 2019; “Upinzani: Mswada wa vyama umejaa makosa ya jinai,” 9 December 2018, [mwananchi.co.tz](http://mwananchi.co.tz).

41. Afterwards, CCM Secretary General, Bashiru Ally, said CCM would win a landslide victory in the 2020 General Election just as it had in the November local polls. See “Dk Bashiru azungumzia ushindi wa CCM mwaka 2020”, 26 November 2019, [mwananchi.co.tz](http://mwananchi.co.tz).

42. Accessed 6 November 2020: [www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com).

of all but 6 percent of CHADEMA candidates on the mainland, prompting opposition parties to call a boycott.

The above review offers a taste of the diverse strategies Magufuli used to constrain opposition parties during his first term, everything from imposing direct restrictions on opposition organizing and mobilizing to physical coercion and intimidation to financial pressure to legal interventions and electoral manipulation. The review also highlights how he relied on presidential appointees in key state institutions—the NEC, the Registrar of Political Parties, Regional and District Commissioners, intelligence services and the police, among others—to pursue this agenda. The above is not an exhaustive account nor does it address how the President sought to limit dissent beyond the formal opposition, notably by targeting the media, NGOs and the like.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, it should be clear that—long before the October 2020 polls—Magufuli initiated a systematic campaign to marginalize the opposition.

## Disciplining CCM

President Magufuli did not only marginalize the opposition; he also worked to suppress rival factions and, thereby, to centralize power within CCM. To achieve this aim, he again combined physical intimidation, financial pressure, and authoritarian manipulation of state institutions, as he had with the opposition. He also drew on CCM's strong institutional legacy, reforming the party's formal structures and procedures to further reinforce his top-down control.

The CCM Magufuli inherited when he became President and then party Chairman was a significantly weaker, more fractious version of its past self.<sup>44</sup> In the immediate post-Independence period, TANU and later CCM strengthened institutionally, enhancing the control of the Central Committee and National Executive Committee at the top, while extending its national reach through multiple layers of regional, district and branch structures.<sup>45</sup> CCM's institutional strength and cohesion nevertheless began to erode in the 1980s amidst economic crisis and the effects of liberalizing economic reforms.<sup>46</sup> These reforms enabled the expansion of a new business

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43. D. Paget, "Tanzania: Shrinking Space and Opposition Protest," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2017, pp. 153-167; Amnesty International, "Lawfare: Repression by Law Ahead of Tanzania's General Elections", 12 October 2020.

44. This section draws on chapters 3-4 in: M. Collord, "The Political Economy of Institutions in Africa: Comparing Authoritarian Parties and Parliaments in Tanzania and Uganda", University of Oxford, 2019.

45. B. Mwansasu, "The Changing Role of the Tanganyika African National Union", *op. cit.*; D.-C. Martin, *Tanzanie : l'invention d'une culture politique*, Paris: Karthala, 1988.

46. M. Mmuya, *Tanzania: Political Reform in Eclipse - Crisis and Cleavage in Political Parties*, *op. cit.*



elite who, from the 1990s, became central to internal CCM politics. By 2000, then President Benjamin Mkapa (1995-2005) lamented the “privatization” of the party.<sup>47</sup> He was alluding to the growth of factional networks backed by private financiers within CCM. These factions or *mitandao*—which stretch from the local level up to national party elites<sup>48</sup>—intensified intra-party tensions, notably during the primaries ahead of the 2000 elections. The strength of rival factions continued to grow during Kikwete’s presidency (2005-2015), and this despite his repeated claims that he would fight corruption. As one long-time analyst of Tanzanian politics noted, “rent-seeking of all types was used to advance the interests of groups of rentiers intent on taking control of the party.”<sup>49</sup> At the same time, CCM institutional structures and disciplinary procedures were breaking down under the pressure of these factional struggles. For instance, parliamentary primaries—alluded to above—were increasingly a free for all with limited to no effective regulation of bribery. By 2015, there was also no attempt on the part of higher party organs—the Central Committee or National Executive Committee—to veto primary winners, once a common practice in CCM.<sup>50</sup>

Somewhat paradoxically, Magufuli’s own victory in the 2015 CCM presidential nomination was largely a product of the factional tensions within CCM. As briefly noted earlier, he won after the supporters of two rival factions, led by Bernard Membe and Edward Lowassa, eliminated their preferred candidates from the race.<sup>51</sup> The “unexpected” nature of Magufuli’s win, coupled with Lowassa’s defection to the opposition, presented Magufuli with both a challenge and an opportunity. A challenge in that he did not have a strong political base in a divided party and an opportunity in that one of the strongest factions, Lowassa’s, had lost its chief patron.

Magufuli quickly set about consolidating his hold on power within the party. One strategy was to use financial pressure, either indirectly or directly limiting opportunities for private business elites to bankroll CCM factions. Among the direct efforts was the revocation of government tenders, the seizure of land and property and prosecution of businessmen for a range of

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H. Gray, “The Political Economy of Grand Corruption in Tanzania,” *African Affairs*, Vol. 114, No. 456, 2015, pp. 382-403.

47. M. Collord, “The Political Economy of Institutions in Africa: Comparing Authoritarian Parties and Parliaments in Tanzania and Uganda”, *op. cit.* p. 120.

48. For some insight into the structure of these factions, see: T. Kelsall, “Shop Windows and Smoke-Filled Rooms: Governance and the Re-Politicisation of Tanzania”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 2002, pp. 597-619.

49. B. Cooksey, “Public Goods, Rents and Business in Tanzania”, *Africa Power and Politics*, London: Overseas Development Institute, 2011, pp. 72-73.

50. M. Collord, “The Political Economy of Institutions in Africa: Comparing Authoritarian Parties and Parliaments in Tanzania and Uganda”, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.

51. M. Collord, “The Ruling CCM Party Unite”, *op. cit.*

crimes from tax evasion to money laundering.<sup>52</sup> For example, Yusuf Manji, a prominent businessman and former backer of Lowassa, first relinquished a tender from the Kinondoni municipality in response to pressure, apologizing to Magufuli as he did.<sup>53</sup> The Regional Commissioner of Dar es Salaam later included him on a public list of drug abusers, government confiscated some of his land on the grounds that he had failed to develop it,<sup>54</sup> and the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) shut down one of his firms over Tsh300m worth of tax arrears, among other challenges to hit his ailing businesses.<sup>55</sup> In some instances, these financial pressures were backed up by physical coercion, such as in the case of Mo Dewji, Tanzania's then richest man, who was abducted by "unknown" persons but seemingly by state security forces and held for a week before being released.<sup>56</sup> Dewji too was a prominent CCM financier and former MP. Government action also touched more directly on Dewji's business interests, for instance, by confiscating land.<sup>57</sup>

These are only examples of the financial and physical coercion that CCM financiers faced after Magufuli took office. While the government may well have been justified in some of its actions, for instance, collecting tax arrears, the focus and intensity with which it pursued certain individuals suggests a political intent. Indeed, there is reason to believe that Magufuli's parallel anti-corruption campaign, launched at the start of his presidency, was routinely diverted to serve political ends.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, aside the policing of private sector rivals, Magufuli also cultivated a new set of winners amongst the economic elite, for instance, by awarding them with lucrative procurement contracts.<sup>59</sup> Some erstwhile rivals keen to resuscitate their flagging business interests also renegotiated entry into the President's inner circle. Rostam Aziz—long-time Lowassa backer and one-time billionaire—

52. M. Collord, "The 'New' CCM, Same as the Old CCM? Continuity and Change in Authoritarian Parties", 26 September 2018, [presidential-power.net](https://presidential-power.net).

53. "Manji Pulls Out of Coco Beach Ownership Row", *The Citizen*, 25 June 2017.

54. "Now Government Takes Back Manji Land", *The Citizen*, 14 September 2017.

55. "TRA Closes Manji's Office over Sh300 Million Tax Bill", *The Citizen*, 27 October 2017; F. Kapama, "Tanzania: Dar Court Orders Business Tycoon Manji to Pay Over 33bn", *Daily News*, 10 December 2018; F. Kapama, "Court Seals Manji's Dream to Own Tigo", *Daily News*, 16 July 2020.

56. "Mohammed Dewji: Africa's 'Youngest Billionaire' Abducted in Tanzania", BBC, 11 October 2018.

57. "Janga linguine kwa Mo Dewji", IPP Media, 15 January 2019.

58. M. Collord, "The 'New' CCM, Same as the Old CCM?", *op. cit.*

59. For instance, one CCM member recounted how some of his family, who were also long-time friends of Magufuli, saw their construction business boom after they began winning a string of lucrative government contracts. Another member of the same family was appointed to a senior administrative position in government. Meanwhile, a prominent businessman and friend of the Prime Minister was repeatedly offered a range of investment opportunities. A high school friend of Magufuli's was awarded the contract to build a new airport in Chato, Magufuli's home district.

Interviews with CCM activists and business advisers, Dar es Salaam, July 2018; interview with opposition MP, London, September 2018; Jamii Forums, 'Kampuni inayojenga uwanja wa ndege Chato inamilikiwa nan ani na ilipataje tenda hiyo?', November 2017.

managed just such a re-entry. After a period of seemingly self-imposed exile following Magufuli's election, he returned to Tanzania, met privately with Magufuli, and brokered the highly anticipated return to CCM of Lowassa, who had significant business interest of his own. Aziz's business initiatives then seemed to gain momentum with a major investment, a \$60m liquefied gas plant, inaugurated by Magufuli.<sup>60</sup>

The attempt to eliminate rival factions was further reinforced by Magufuli's efforts, as CCM Chairman, to reform party institutions, to create the "new" CCM. For instance, in December 2016, the party's National Executive Committee—closely guided by Magufuli and the Central Committee—approved a set of recommended reforms to the CCM constitution.<sup>61</sup> These were then voted on at a National Congress meeting in March 2017, which coincided with a wave of expulsions from CCM of "traitors", meaning people linked to Lowassa. The National Congress rubber stamped the proposed reforms. These included slashing the frequency of party meetings and reducing the membership of key party organs. The size of CCM's National Executive Committee was halved while the Central Committee shrank from 34 to 26 members, a larger proportion of whom are now directly appointed by Magufuli as Chairman.

Observers saw these moves as designed to marginalize established networks that dominated these bodies.<sup>62</sup> Also, would-be political entrepreneurs could no longer infiltrate the party structures in the same way as before. As noted by one CCM activists, there were previously "some people who were actually hunting to be a member of the Central Committee".<sup>63</sup> That was because "you [were] privileged to know every development within the party and country," which was a particular "advantage" for some politicians "doing business as well [as politics]". After the 2017 reforms, and due to heightened top-down control over the internal CCM elections later that same year, "hunting to be a member of the Central Committee" was no longer an option.

This is still only a sketch of the institutional changes within CCM since 2015; it nevertheless gives some sense of how these changes were geared towards creating structures that reinforce his central control. Indeed, the Chairman used party reform as a further means, in addition to state-backed coercion and financial pressure, to disorganize rival patron-client factions

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60. *Africa Confidential*, 26 July 2019.

61. CCM 2017b; *Mwananchi*, 14 December 2016.

62. Magufuli and CCM's Secretary General, Bashiru Ally, have also stressed that party reforms are about rooting out factions in CCM, although they present this effort as principled rather than as a political strategy to consolidate power, as critics suggest. See Magufuli 2016; *Raia Mwema*, 18-22 July 2018; Interviews with CCM activists and observers, July-August 2018.

63. Interview with CCM activist, Dar es Salaam, July 2018.



and to prevent new ones from forming. Overall, Magufuli used his first term both to side-line the opposition and strengthen his hold on power within his own party. Admittedly, repression aside, he also used a range of strategies to appeal to the general electorate and thereby to legitimize his governing style.<sup>64</sup> However, his actual popularity remains doubtful. The only research organization to conduct repeated opinion polls, Twaweza, reported a sharp decline in Magufuli's approval ratings from an eye-watering 96 percent in 2016, to just 55 percent in 2018.<sup>65</sup> That was a record low and all the more concerning in a context where survey participants tend to exaggerate their support. After Twaweza published its 2018 results, the Tanzanian government accused the organization of conducting the poll without the necessary research permit and confiscated the passport of its Director on grounds that he was not a Tanzanian citizen. An authoritarian trend was thus apparent from early in Magufuli's tenure, and the steps taken during that period were also crucial in paving the way for the 2020 elections.

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64. T. Jacob and R. Pedersen, "Political Settlement and the Politics of Legitimation in Countries Undergoing Democratisation: Insights from Tanzania," ESID Working Paper, 2019; D. Paget, "Again, Making Tanzania Great: Magufuli's Restorationist Developmental Nationalism".

65. D. Mumbere, "Tanzania Threatens Pollster That Said Magufuli's Popularity Has Reduced by 41%", *Africa News*, 13 July 2018.



# Campaign season 2020

As campaigns kicked off ahead of the October 28 election, the Magufuli government continued to place obstacles in the way of the main opposition parties. Meanwhile, within CCM, the internal party primaries and the election campaigns themselves reinforced previous efforts to centralize control, in this case, ensuring the election of disciplined candidates loyal to Magufuli.

## Obstacles for the opposition

The interventions of state organs—led by Magufuli appointees—intensified ahead of the elections, multiplying the hurdles confronting opposition parties. Helpful reviews of these actions appear elsewhere, notably in reports published by Tanzania Election Watch,<sup>66</sup> a regional initiative launched after the government refused access to international and many experienced domestic election observers. It is nevertheless worth reviewing a few key points.

First, in a manner reminiscent of the November 2019 “street” elections, the opposition encountered serious difficulties nominating its candidates.<sup>67</sup> On the day ahead of the nomination deadline, August 26, CHADEMA and ACT reported numerous irregularities, using social media to get the news out while official media channels remained largely silent. In this way, reports circulated of parliamentary and council candidates being arrested by police and attacked by “unknown” persons. Returning officers at constituency and ward levels, many of whom were reportedly political appointees and members of the ruling party, also played an active role in obstructing the nomination process.<sup>68</sup> They shut their offices early, refused to accept candidates’ nomination forms, and the like. Ultimately, opposition parties reported that dozens of parliamentary candidates and thousands of ward councilor candidates failed to get themselves nominated. While the National Electoral Commission later reinstated some of these candidates, 28 CCM parliamentary candidates and 873 councilors still ran unopposed.<sup>69</sup>

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66. Tanzania Election Watch, “At the Edge of Democracy: Tanzania Towards 2020”, October 2020.

67. M. Collord and D. Paget, “Tanzania Elections: Opposition Report Widespread Nomination Interference”, 26 August 2020, [africanarguments.org](https://africanarguments.org).

68. Tanzania Election Watch, “At the Edge of Democracy: Tanzania Towards 2020”, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

69. “Tanzania Elections: At-a-glance Summary”, *The East African*, 28 October 2020.

Once nominations were complete, state organs used numerous strategies to undermine opposition campaigns. The NEC barred both Tundu Lissu and Seif Sharif Hamad, leading presidential candidate for Zanzibar via ACT, from campaigning for one week, each on grounds that they had made seditious statements.<sup>70</sup> Several parliamentary candidates were slapped with similar bans.<sup>71</sup> Police also disrupted opposition campaign rallies, using teargas to disperse crowds.<sup>72</sup> In several constituencies, opposition parliamentary candidates also reported that their campaign offices were raided by police, property like computers confiscated and party activists arrested.<sup>73</sup> Some CHADEMA offices were also torched by more “unknown persons.”<sup>74</sup> As polling day neared, opposition parties confronted yet another hurdle when Returning Officers—administrators responsible for overseeing elections at the constituency level—refused to swear in opposition polling agents. Even where polling agents were sworn in, opposition worried that they would not be effective as Returning Officers were no longer required to supply polling agents with copies of the vote tally.<sup>75</sup>

## Managing the CCM campaigns

While much of the election coverage focused on the repression of opposition parties and their candidates, understanding how the campaigns played out for the ruling party is also crucial. The focus within CCM was on securing candidates loyal to Magufuli, thereby diminishing the prospect of future dissent or intra-party splits.

The key interventions came mainly during the CCM nomination of parliamentary candidates, which featured more top-down control than in recent election cycles. In 2020, a primary election first took place at the level of the constituency congress after which point the Central Committee reviewed the names of primaries winners, recommending who should be selected to the National Executive Committee, which made the final decision.<sup>76</sup>

Party leaders celebrated the high level of participation, suggesting it was a mark of CCM's internal democracy. Publicity and Ideology Secretary, Humphrey Polepole, reported that 10,367 party members sought the party nomination for only 264 parliamentary seats.<sup>77</sup> However, the reasons for this

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70. “Chadema to Respect Lissu Campaign Ban”, *The Citizen*, 5 October 2020.

71. “Mdee kufunguka madai kusimamishwa kampeni”, *IPP Media*, 13 October 2020.

72. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com>.

73. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com>.

74. “Torching of Chadema Offices Irks”, *The Citizen*, 21 August 2020.

75. F. Karume, “Tanzania Election 2020: Neither Free nor Fair”, 25 October 2020, [medium.com](https://medium.com).

76. On the 2017 reforms to the primary process, see: H. Polepole, “Mabadiliko ya katiba ya CCM 2017 yamegusa maeneo gani?”, 26 March 2017, [ccmchama.blogspot.com](http://ccmchama.blogspot.com).

77. “Shuffling Act as CCM Unveils Final List”, *The Citizen*, 21 August 2020.

high participation rate were likely more complicated. One alternative motivation was to get attention, perhaps increasing future job prospects. During his first term, Magufuli drew from the pool of failed 2015 parliamentary aspirants when appointing District Executive Directors and other district level bureaucrats.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, some businesspeople allegedly participated in the primaries to signal their loyalty to CCM and, thereby, to advance their economic interest.<sup>79</sup>

The “democratic” nature of the CCM primaries was further impaired by the increased number of primary winners passed over by the Central Committee and National Executive Committee. In 2015, these top party organs did not intervene to change the results of any CCM parliamentary primary. In 2020, by contrast, they selected the second, third and even fourth runners up in at least 19 constituencies. In two more instances, the Central Committee intervened to break a tie, in one case eliminating an incumbent MP and former Minister, Kangi Lugola, with whom Magufuli had fallen out. In at least 10 of the 19 cases, the Central Committee and National Executive Committee selected former opposition politicians who had defected to CCM but then lost their constituency primary. For instance, Petrobas Katambi—formerly of CHADEMA—came fourth in the Shinyanga Town primary with only 12 votes but was selected over the incumbent CCM MP, Stephen Masele, who won the primary with 152 votes.<sup>80</sup> The party leadership also intervened *ahead of the primaries*, helping to prepare the victory of its favored aspirants, such as Tulia Ackson, a lawyer whom Magufuli nominated as MP in his first term, controversially paving the way for her to become Deputy Speaker of Parliament.<sup>81</sup>

The vetoing of CCM primary winners ahead of the 2020 polls indicates the power of the party leadership over its elected politicians. “He who can make the nominations is the owner of the party,” wrote the political scientist Schattschneider.<sup>82</sup> Magufuli himself emphasized the importance of using the nominations to ensure party discipline. Addressing the National Executive Committee, he said, “It was not an easy task to scrutinize and prune the names and get those selected out,” adding, “The aim was to make sure that we get *obedient* and competent candidates [...]” (emphasis added).<sup>83</sup> Magufuli further emphasized his own *personal* role in securing candidates’

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78. On the partisan character of DEDs, see: Tanzania Election Watch, “At the Edge of Democracy: Tanzania Towards 2020”, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

79. Accessed 6 November 2020: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

80. “Shuffling Act as CCM Unveils Final List”, *The Citizen*, 21 August 2020.

81. “Outcry as Parliament Picks Deputy Speaker”, *The Citizen*, 20 November 2015.

82. E. E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (Transaction Publishers, 1942). On candidate selection, see also: G. Rahat and R. Hazan, “Candidate Selection Methods: An Analytical Framework,” *Party Politics* Vol. 7, No. 3, 2001, pp. 297-322.

83. “Shuffling Act as CCM Unveils Final List”, *The Citizen*, 21 August 2020.

selection. At a rally in Kawe constituency in Dar es Salaam, he told the assembled crowd, “The winner of the primary election was my nephew, but *as a Chairman, I dropped his name.*”<sup>84</sup> Magufuli then emphasized, “He [the winner] could never compete with Gwajima,” referring to the Kawe CCM candidate. Gwajima is a celebrity preacher and former backer of Magufuli’s rival, Lowassa. Gwajima and Magufuli later reconciled, each apparently finding some benefit in their alliance.

The deference of defeated parliamentary aspirants further attests to the heightened control exerted by the CCM leadership within the party. The primary winners who were later eliminated in favor of runners up all accepted the result, even if in few words. For instance, veteran CCM politician Andrew Chenge won his primary with 442 votes but was dropped for another candidate. When asked about this result, Chenge simply said, “I was very happy.”<sup>85</sup> This acceptance again contrasts with previous years when primaries were hotly contested and candidates protested when dropped by the top party organs.<sup>86</sup> The acquiescence of disappointed primary winners in 2020 is likely due to a combination of carrots and sticks. As discussed earlier, Magufuli’s first term taught CCM politicians that there is little to be gained from opposing the President. At the same time, Magufuli has explicitly promised rewards to primary winners later vetoed by the CCM leadership. For example, in the earlier mentioned Shinyanga Town constituency, Magufuli promised the former CCM MP, Masele, a job should Magufuli win the election.<sup>87</sup>

As for the election campaign itself, CCM leaders made it very clear that candidates were expected to continue to show deference to the party leaders. CCM Secretary General, Bashiru Ally, reiterated this point emphatically. “A CCM candidate during the campaign period has no personal life, meaning I want to know even where he sleeps, what he eats,” Bashiru insisted. He then continued, “I want to know his everyday routine. I want to know what he has said, with whom he has met, what he has planned so that we achieve victory. Therefore, this is a candidate *under CCM*” (author’s translation).<sup>88</sup>

In sum, just as state organs worked to obstruct the opposition during the election campaigns, CCM leaders worked within the ruling party to control the nominations, to discipline candidates on the campaign trail, and overall, to assert power over individual CCM politicians.

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84. “Magufuli Promises Heaven on Earth for Dar City”, *The Citizen*, 10 October 2020.

85. “Waliokatwa CCM watoa ya moyoni”, *IPP Media*, 22 August 2020.

86. M. Collord, “The Political Economy of Institutions in Africa: Comparing Authoritarian Parties and Parliaments in Tanzania and Uganda”, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

87. “Magufuli Promises Former MP a Job at Campaign Rally”, *The Citizen*, 4 September 2020.

88. “Bashiru anika sababu kuingilia mvutano Kigwangalla, Mo Dewji”, *IPP Media*, 16 September 2020.

# The election and its aftermath

As noted at the begin, the election itself was a wipe out for the opposition, an outcome that was five years in the making. The following discussion summarizes key developments relating to the election itself. The conclusion then considers the wider significance for Tanzanian politics going into Magufuli's second term.

## A fraudulent election, implausible results

The election process featured the same form of state-orchestrated intervention as witness in the previous by-elections and the November 2019 “street” elections. This effort ensured an overwhelming CCM victory, reversing years of opposition gains from local council seats through to the presidency.

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) and Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) as well as state security forces were complicit in widespread irregularities not only in the run-up to the election but also during the vote tallying process itself. Although restrictions on election observation and media coverage limit the information available, photos, videos and eye-witness testimony shared on social media point to irregularities including blocking opposition polling agents from accessing polling stations,<sup>89</sup> multiple voting, pre-ticked ballots,<sup>90</sup> fake polling stations,<sup>91</sup> use of violence and intimidation by police at polling stations and more.<sup>92</sup> There were also widespread reports of a prolonged internet shutdown mainly affecting use of popular social media, like twitter and WhatsApp, which people were using information about electoral manipulation.<sup>93</sup>

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89. Examples of opposition social media posts, accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/ChademaTz>; <https://twitter.com/ACTwazalendo>; <https://twitter.com/UpendoPeneza>; <https://twitter.com/HildaNewton21>; <https://twitter.com/ChademaTz>.

90. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/zittokabwe>; <https://twitter.com/MariaSTsehai>.

91. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/ChademaTz>.

92. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/ChademaTz>; <https://twitter.com/HilmiHilal88>; <https://twitter.com/ChademaTz>.

93. “Matokeo ya uchaguzi Tanzania 2020: Siku tatu mfululizo mitandao ya kijamii yaendelea kuminya”, BBC, 29 October 2020.

As for the results themselves, the scale of the CCM victory is not plausible. Local councils with large opposition majorities in the past are now wholly controlled by CCM.<sup>94</sup> Opposition parliamentary strongholds have swung to CCM and by huge margins. The below graphs, which compare the 2015 and 2020 results in a few previously CHADEMA-held seats, illustrate this stark reversal.

At the end of the day, there are only six opposition MPs left in parliament out of a total of 264 directly elected constituency legislators. Whereas after the 2015 elections, CCM held 73 percent of legislative constituency seats, it now holds 99 percent, unprecedented since Tanzania's return to multiparty politics in 1992 and an especially notable reversal of opposition gains in the last two election cycles.

As for the presidential election results, official results announced by the NEC give incumbent CCM presidential candidate, John Magufuli, 84 percent, up from 58 percent in 2015.<sup>95</sup> By contrast, the leading opposition presidential candidate, Tundu Lissu, a mere 13 percent, down from 40 percent for the lead 2015 candidate, Edward Lowassa. Turnout this year was down from 67 percent of registered voters in 2015 to a 51 percent this time round as many voters presumably saw the result as a foregone conclusion.<sup>96</sup>

## The post-election crackdown

The leading opposition parties and their supporters—as well as Tanzanians without partisan ties—reacted to the election process and the official results with disgust. Aikande Kwayu, scholar and CHADEMA supporter, tweeted, “There was no election in Tanzania,” adding, “What happened on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020 was a countrywide criminal process.”<sup>97</sup> Still, most observers were not surprised. Or, if they were, only by the sheer scale of the election rigging, which set it apart from earlier examples of CCM electoral manipulation.<sup>98</sup>

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The case of Vodacom, part of the UK-based multinationale group Vodafone Plc, has attracted particular attention, accused of complicity in aiding government censorship of political messages. See: N. Cheeseman, “How Western Companies Undermine African Democracy”, *The Africa Report*, 16 November 2020.

94. “CCM Karatu yarejisha halmashauri baada ya miaka 20”, 29 October 2020, [mwananchi.co.tz](https://mwananchi.co.tz).

95. “NEC yamtangaza Dk Magufuli Rais mteule wa Tanzania”, 30 October 2020, [mwananchi.co.tz](https://mwananchi.co.tz).

96. C. Du Plessis, “Magufuli Wins a Second Term Amid Observer Concerns of Low Voter Turnout, Pre-filled Ballot Boxes and Excess Ballots at Voting Stations”, *Daily Maverick*, 2 November 2020; “Election 2020: Nearly Half of 29 Million Registered Voters Stayed Away”, *The Citizen*, 1 November 2020.

97. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/aikande>.

98. Accessed 6 November 2020: [https://twitter.com/fatma\\_karume](https://twitter.com/fatma_karume).



Meanwhile, protests over the conduct of the election itself and the results were met with violence and arrests by the police. Already before early voting began in Zanzibar on the 27<sup>th</sup>, there were reports of deaths and injuries.<sup>99</sup> ACT, the leading opposition party on the isles, recorded that on 26 and 27 October, a total of 10 people were killed, 89 injured and 96 held in police custody. The violence in Zanzibar then continued through election day and, on the 29<sup>th</sup>, ACT leaders were arrested and some brutally beaten.<sup>100</sup>

On the mainland, similar reports of deaths and arrests emerged in Mara,<sup>101</sup> Arusha,<sup>102</sup> Katavi and elsewhere.<sup>103</sup> On Oct 31, CHADEMA and ACT issued a joint press release,<sup>104</sup> reporting over 20 people killed and “hundreds” injured. The statement demanded a new election be called and announced plans for a “peace march” starting 2 November. Ahead of the planned march, though, several CHADEMA leaders were pre-emptively arrested by the police and charged with terrorism,<sup>105</sup> an unbailable offense that many feared could see them languishing in jail for a prolonged period.<sup>106</sup> Some leaders were later released on bail provided they report back to the police regularly.<sup>107</sup> Meanwhile, particularly in Zanzibar, other party leaders and activists continued to languish in police custody without charge.<sup>108</sup> The planned protests themselves never materialized,<sup>109</sup> although there were reports of more sporadic protests. For instance, the Regional Commissioner in Lindi reported that people angered by the election results had burned government-owned cars and buildings.<sup>110</sup> The police also engaged in a cat and mouse chase with opposition supporters accused of causing “chaos” with some people in Dodoma region allegedly hiding in the bush.<sup>111</sup>

With so many scattered instances of protest, violence and intimidation countrywide, it was difficult to get a complete picture of the scale and intensity of the post-election crackdown. But what did become clear was that

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99. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/RealHauleGluck>.

100. “ACT Wazalendo Post-election Briefing”, 29 October 2020, [actwazalendo.or.tz](http://actwazalendo.or.tz). See: <https://twitter.com/ACTZanzibar>.

101. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/pandaget>.

102. Accessed 6 November 2020: [https://twitter.com/godbless\\_lemama](https://twitter.com/godbless_lemama).

103. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/ChademaTz>.

104. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/ACTwazalendo>.

105. “Chadema’s Mbowe and Lema Arrested for Planned Demos”, The Citizen, 2 November 2020.

106. Accessed 6 November 2020: [https://twitter.com/fatma\\_karume](https://twitter.com/fatma_karume).

107. “Mbowe, Zitto and Other Opposition Leaders Released on Bail”, The Citizen, 3 November 2020.

108. “Police Holding Mazrui, Man Stabbed to Death in Riots”, The Citizen, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020.

Accessed 17 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/ACTwazalendo>.

109. “Role of Demonstrations in Bringing Change in Tanzania”, The Citizen, 3 November 2020.

110. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/WateteziTV>.

111. “Vijana wilayani Mpwapwa wakimbilia milimani kukwepa kukamatwa na polisi”, 3 November 2020, [mwananchi.co.tz](http://mwananchi.co.tz).

security forces would tolerate no protest or popular mobilization, the one exception being celebratory marches reportedly organized by CCM and featuring the Dar es Salaam police chief.<sup>112</sup>

## The regional and international response

Both before and after the election, there were numerous calls for the “international community” to intervene. The international community was, however, divided while foreign critics of the elections had proved—at least at the time of writing—largely ineffectual.

Speedy recognition of CCM's victory came from close allies in Zimbabwe and Uganda as well as from other countries in the region whose relationship with Magufuli's government has sometimes proved fraught, including Kenya and South Africa. China, another key economic partner, was also quick to endorse the result.

By contrast, several western powers—from whom Magufuli has distanced himself, likening them to “imperialists”<sup>113</sup>—withheld their endorsements.<sup>114</sup> None of these foreign critics, however, made clear whether they would follow their criticisms with any more concrete action, or what that action might entail. The United Kingdom, for instance, issued a statement declaring, “We join others in calling for a transparent investigation by the electoral authorities into reported irregularities, and for all involved, including the security forces, to act with restraint to ensure the peaceful resolution of tensions.”<sup>115</sup> There did not appear to be a serious consideration of how this statement might be answered given that the “electoral authorities” called on to investigate irregularities were themselves largely responsible for overseeing those very same irregularities. The weakness of this critical response was further revealed on 2 November when opposition presidential candidate, Lissu, was arrested outside the EU, German, Dutch, and UK embassies, from whom he had sought protection, fearing a potential arrest.<sup>116</sup> Although Lissu was later released and, indeed, briefly stayed at the residence of the German ambassador, the incident did

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112. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/RealHauleGluck>.

113. S. Awami, “Tanzania's John Magufuli – The Man Vowing to Defeat Coronavirus and Imperialism”, BBC, 17 June 2020.

114. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/CanadaTanzania>; <https://twitter.com/AnnLinde>. Press statement, “Widespread Irregularities Observed during the Tanzanian Elections”, 2 November 2020; “US Envoy Voices Concern over Detention of Opposition Leaders”, The Citizen, 2 November 2020.

115. Press release, “Presidential Elections in Tanzania: UK Statement”, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020.

116. W. Nyamasege, “Tundu Lissu Released after Being Arrested as He Begged Foreign Missions in Tanzania for Asylum”, 2 November 2020, [kahawatungu.com](http://kahawatungu.com).

suggest the limited appetite of western countries to take concrete action, even when the opportunity was knocking at their door.

In part due to this seemingly lackluster response, in part out of principle, in part out of distrust of would-be democratic champions, some voices both within Tanzania and regionally emphasized the need to focus on protest and dialogue at home or else to work through African regional institutions, as demanded by one of the South Africa's opposition parties, the Economic Freedom Fighters.<sup>117</sup>

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117. S. Nyamsenda, "Q&A with Sabatho Nyamsenda on Magufuli's Re-election", 4 November 2020, [udadisi.org](https://udadisi.org). See also <https://twitter.com/EFFSouthAfrica>.



# Conclusion

Tanzania is now—bar a handful of elected opposition politicians—a *de facto* one-party state. This outcome was five years in the making. As outlined in this note, Magufuli used his first term to marginalize the opposition and to centralize power within CCM. The question now is, what are the implications of the 2020 election result for the next five years?

Opposition parties are, clearly, in an extremely difficult position going forward. With many of their leaders in jail and many more reportedly rounded up countrywide,<sup>118</sup> the government does not appear willing to tolerate any form of opposition organizing for the foreseeable future, except perhaps from a scattering of micro-parties that have endorsed the election outcomes.

Even if the government would tolerate opposition organizing, it is still unclear how parties like CHADEMA and ACT could move forward. With the loss of their elected representatives, they have lost both a key element of their organizational infrastructure and a key source of party finance. Elected councillors and MPs are central to local opposition organizing. Political parties also get a subsidy from the government proportional to the number of MPs they have in parliament. That was an important lifeline for CHADEMA, in particular, over the past five years when other sources of political finance dried up.

As for CCM, the important question is whether it is the party that is now in control or whether it is President Magufuli. The party obviously has near complete control countrywide. But whereas under previous presidents, notably Magufuli's immediate predecessor, Jakaya Kikwete, there was considerable factional jockeying led by different political heavyweights within the ruling party, this note has shown how Magufuli used his first term to centralize control in his own hands. This means he will be in a unique position to continue his agenda through the next term.

Among other priorities, we can expect Magufuli to continue pursuing his developmental agenda, involving a more statist approach to economic management. Whatever the pros and cons of that agenda, it will likely face little to no public scrutiny either from within CCM or, obviously, from any

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118. "Viongozi na wafuasi wa Chadema Singida watupwa rumande", 2 November 2020, [mwananchi.co.tz](http://mwananchi.co.tz). Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/pandaget>.

formal opposition in parliament. Despite its weakness over the past five years, Parliament and notably the opposition in Parliament as well as some dissident CCM MPs (now defeated) did at least help draw attention to potentially controversial actions pursued by the government.<sup>119</sup> Now any remaining efforts to influence the President's agenda will likely be informal and behind the scenes, or else, possibly channeled through popular protest.

Another point that has attracted considerable attention is whether Magufuli will attempt to remove presidential term limits, and whether this attempt could be successful. Of course, any answer to this question is speculative, but it is worth considering possible scenarios, which is a first step in understanding what options would be available to counter them.

First, it is not unreasonable to anticipate that Magufuli will try to lift term limits, despite repeated claims in recent months that he will not. Indeed, during his first term, CCM MPs and even the then Speaker of Parliament, Job Ndugai, indicated support for the lifting of term limits.<sup>120</sup> Magufuli could follow the example of President Museveni in Uganda, who recently used backbench MPs to drive the legislative push to remove presidential age limits. Similarly, in Tanzania, CCM MPs could help lead an agenda to remove term limits, seemingly distancing the President himself from the effort.

If this were to happen, the question becomes whether it will split CCM or whether Magufuli can keep the party united behind him and get the two-thirds parliamentary majority he needs for a constitutional amendment. Sceptics point out that ambitious politicians within CCM will want to preserve presidential term limits in hopes of protecting their own chances of one day becoming president. Moreover, efforts to remove presidential term limits might offer a rallying point for those (quietly) opposed to Magufuli within CCM to organize and challenge him.

However, a counterargument is that many CCM MPs, while they cannot realistically hope to become President, will want to retain their parliamentary seats. What's more, many of them owe their seat—and thus their loyalty—to Magufuli. As noted earlier, at least 21 CCM candidates lost their primaries but were nevertheless selected by Magufuli and the Central Committee of CCM to contest the election. They thus have the President to thank for their success. Other CCM candidates who won their primaries were nevertheless assisted ahead of time as clear presidential favorites. Finally, MPs who won in opposition strongholds and hotly contested constituencies may well conclude that their victory depended on government interference,

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119. C. Chachage, "Democracy Needs Dissent", 3 June 2020, [africasacountry.com](https://africasacountry.com).

120. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/mariastsehai>.

which the Magufuli government orchestrated. Reports of crowds booing CCM MPs at post-election rallies further illustrate how these politicians may well depend on the state for political survival going forward.<sup>121</sup>

All of these MPs together can provide a strong base from which to mobilize support from within Parliament in favor of lifting term limits. Dissident CCM MPs would then have a major challenge should they want to regroup and counter-mobilize.

Of course, there would likely be opposition from outside parliament as well, perhaps in the form of popular protest and dissent from various political and business elites, including those aligned with CCM. In both instances, it matters what coercive tools Magufuli can use to counter this potential opposition, notably on the willingness of the security forces (police, military, intelligence) to put down any protest. Given their recent role in assisting the government to orchestrate CCM's overwhelming CCM election victory, they may well continue supporting the President going forward, all the more so as Magufuli appoints their leaders.

Again, this discussion of term limits is speculative. The least we can say, though, is that parliament will be docile and parties largely under presidential control in the coming years.

By way of conclusion, and on a possibly more optimistic note, there are organizations—cooperatives, traders' associations, smallholder farmer networks, unions—that continue to organize and represent the interests of their members. Moreover, there is some evidence—albeit limited—that government was responsive to the demands of these groups during Magufuli's first term. Beyond political parties, these organizations—more grassroots, more centered around people's existing economic interests—may provide some basis from which to influence Magufuli's government going forward.

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121. Accessed 6 November 2020: <https://twitter.com/halimamdee>.

