



Institute of the Daughters of Mary help of Christians  
*Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco*  
Our Lady of Hope Province – AFE- PDO

**Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Republic of Tanzania  
53rd Session (October – November 2026)**

**Joint Stakeholders' Submission on:**

**Human Rights in the United Republic of Tanzania**

**Submitted by:**

**IIMA - Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di Don Bosco**

**VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for Women,  
Education  
and Development**

**(NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC)**

**And**

**Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Province of East Africa (FMA-AFE) –  
United Republic of Tanzania**

**Geneva, April 2026**

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This stakeholders' report is a joint submission, which highlights critical human rights concerns in the United Republic of Tanzania, focusing specifically on the right to education, birth registration, protection against violence and harmful practices, the rights of vulnerable groups, and the rights of young people.

2. The data and information contained in this report are derived from various sources, including a 2025 community survey conducted in the District of Temeke, in the region of Dar es Salaam (United Republic of Tanzania). This data collection involved direct engagement with youth, teachers, and educators to provide a first-hand assessment of the current human rights situation on the ground. All information concerned the period from December 2021 to April 2026.

3. **IIMA** is an international NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is present in 97 countries, where it provides education to children and adolescents, youth and women, with a primary focus on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors of society.

4. **VIDES International**, established in 1987, is an international NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council operating in 49 countries. It promotes volunteer service at the local and international levels to ensure the implementation of human rights to vulnerable groups, especially children and women.

5. **Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Salesian Sisters of St. John of Don Bosco), Province of East Africa (FMA-AFE)** is a faith-based Catholic charitable organization that envisages a just and harmonious society where young people, women and communities, especially in remote areas and informal urban settlements, are empowered through sustainable development programs and projects. In the United Republic of Tanzania, over the years, the organization managed different social development programs ranging from education, health and livelihoods support. The primary focus has been the education and youth empowerment through interventions in formal and informal education settings, targeting the poor and vulnerable children and youth.

## II. GENERAL REMARKS AND COOPERATION WITH THE UPR MECHANISM

6. This NGO coalition welcomes the constructive participation of the United Republic of Tanzania in the 4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). We note with appreciation that the State accepted 187 recommendations (20 with partial support) out of 252 recommendations following the 2021 review, demonstrating a foundational commitment to the international human rights framework.<sup>1</sup>

7. However, this coalition remains concerned that several critical recommendations remain "noted" or only "partially supported." Notably, the State has yet to ratify several key international treaties, including the Convention against Torture (CAT)<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, a significant legal gap

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<sup>1</sup> Source: UN Doc A/HRC/49/13/Add.1, para 3.

<sup>2</sup> [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=186&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=186&Lang=EN)

persists as the State acknowledges that concepts such as "marital rape" and "family violence" are not yet defined in national policy, leaving women and children vulnerable to abuse without specific legal recourse.<sup>3</sup>

### III. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

8. This NGO coalition welcomes the acceptance by the United Republic of Tanzania of several recommendations related to the right to education in its 2021 UPR.<sup>4</sup> We recognize efforts undertaken by the State to achieve a fee-free education policy for both primary and secondary levels, particularly the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Program (SEQUIP-AEP) under the Ministry of Education. This program has been instrumental in providing alternative educational pathways for young mothers and learners with disabilities to re-enter the formal system through institutions like the Institute of Adult Education.

9. However, we regret that relevant UPR recommendations remain not implemented or partially implemented. We note with concern that families are still required to pay a contribution of approximately 70,000 TZS per child annually to support school operations and the provision of learning materials. While this contribution may be considered as manageable, it remains a prohibitive financial barrier for the most marginalized households, often forcing families to choose which children to enroll.

10. Significant infrastructure challenges persist, which hinder **access to and the quality of education in the country**. While the national teacher-to-pupil ratio has reportedly improved to approximately 1:55<sup>5</sup>, localized disparities remain severe. For instance, Temeke Secondary School serves 2,696 students with only 59 teachers, leading to extreme overcrowding and a high student-to-teacher ratio that limits effective learning and individualized support. Furthermore, there is a marked disparity between public and private education. If public schools face persistent overcrowding, often requiring students and teachers to operate in shifts to manage class sizes. In contrast, private schools offer higher-quality education due to smaller class sizes and more individualized attention, a luxury inaccessible to low-income families.

13. **Children with special needs.** In 2021, Botswana had recommended to “Scale up investment in infrastructure, management, certification and learning aids for alternative learning opportunities for out-of-school adolescent boys and girls and people living with disabilities” and the United Republic of Tanzania had supported such recommendation<sup>6</sup>. Although the recommendation calls for increased investment in alternative learning opportunities for out-of-school adolescents and persons with disabilities, implementation measures to date have primarily targeted formal school settings and

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<sup>3</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13/Add.1, p. 6 : 147.120. The State supports the part of the recommendation which reads to take on further measures to prevent domestic violence and ensuring that victims receive necessary assistance as this is among the objective of the National Action Plan to Eliminate Violence against Women and Children of 2016/17 to 2021/22. The State notes the part of the recommendation which reads marital rape as this is yet to be defined in the State’s policies. The concept can continue to be discussed.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the United Republic of Tanzania, 21 December 2021, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13; and its Addendum, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13/Add.1.

<sup>5</sup><https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099706405132591549/pdf/IDU-6e44a2ea-21ca-4997-82cc-aea945ade6ef.pdf#:~:text=Progress%20has%20been%20shown%20in%202024%20Significant,well%20above%20the%20government's%20target%20of%2060.>

<sup>6</sup> Recommendation 145.75. Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the United Republic of Tanzania, 21 December 2021, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13; and its Addendum, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13/Add.1.

enrolled students. Similarly, recommendation n. 145.76 to “Further develop the National Strategy for Inclusive Education 2018–2021, especially for children with disabilities, and ensure their access to quality education, infrastructure, assistive devices and learning materials (Bulgaria)”<sup>7</sup> remains only partially implemented: while the Government has made progress in building inclusive schools for children with disabilities and several public schools now integrate special needs education, advancing equal learning opportunities, most schools lack specialized teachers and often, one teacher manages all special needs students. This makes it hard to provide the needed individualized support.

14. **School Dropout.** Dropout rates in public schools remain high, driven by factors such as peer pressure, drug abuse, poverty, and poor academic performance. Many girls who fail their exams experience disappointment and are often pressured into early marriage, while boys who drop out of school frequently turn to drug abuse, which adversely affects their mental health and overall well-being. For girls, dropping out often leads to early marriages, which lead to higher maternal mortality among young mothers, and increased vulnerability to diseases resulting from early sexual activity.

15. **Human Rights Education.** While Civic Education covers basic rights and the right to freedom of expression, a significant portion of the population still lacks a full understanding of their rights. We note the gap between the State's directives to incorporate human rights into ministerial budgets and the reality that many citizens remain hesitant to voice opinions due to fear of repercussions. There is no specific national program for comprehensive Human Rights Education (HRE) for students and public service officials. As a result, recommendation n. 145.18 to “Extend the human rights training and awareness programme to cater for more categories of public service officials (Zimbabwe)”, supported by the United Republic of Tanzania,<sup>8</sup> remains not implemented.

16. *We recommend the government of the United Republic of Tanzania to:*

- a) Expand the SEQUIP-AEP and alternative learning programs to all rural districts to ensure equitable access for young mothers and learners with special needs;*
- b) Increase the recruitment of teachers for children with special needs and expand the National Strategy for Inclusive Education to at least five to ten additional schools per district in order to ensure that children with disabilities receive quality education and appropriate care within an inclusive and supportive learning environment.*
- c) Abolish school fees to ensure free education for all.*
- d) Systematically integrate Human Rights Education into the national curriculum for both students and public service officials to foster a culture of active civic participation.*

#### **IV. BIRTH REGISTRATION**

17. The coalition welcomes the acceptance of recommendation n. 146.12<sup>9</sup> and commends the State for providing free birth registration and for the progress made in decentralizing the system. We specifically acknowledge the Registration, Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA) mobile

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>9</sup> Recommendation n. 146.12 Continue to increase access to birth registration for all children born in the United Republic of Tanzania, including children of migrants and refugees, thus avoiding statelessness (Eswatini). *Ibidem.*

campaigns conducted during national events and trade fairs to reach underserved populations.

18. Despite these efforts, children born outside of health facilities still face significant barriers to registration. Many individuals only obtain birth certification later in life when required for a National Identification Card. The lack of a birth certificate hinders the exercise of human rights, including the right to education by causing delays in school enrollment.

19. *We recommend the government of the United Republic of Tanzania to:*

- a) Increase the frequency of mobile registration clinics in rural and remote areas to reach families born outside of formal health facilities;*
- b) Launch a national awareness campaign specifically targeting parents of children born at home to ensure universal certification and explain the legal benefits of birth registration.*

## V. PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE AND HARMFUL PRACTICES

20. Recommendations n. 147.71 and 147.121 concerning the abolition of **corporal punishment** were only noted by the United Republic of Tanzania in the 2021 UPR.<sup>10</sup> While approximately 10% of incidents of caning in school settings are still reported, longitudinal data indicates a more systemic issue; during the previous cycle, it was reported that 1 out of 2 children experience physical violence at the hands of teachers. This practice remains widely accepted as a disciplinary measure rather than being perceived as abusive.<sup>11</sup>

21. Regarding **child marriage**, this NGO coalition welcomes the acceptance of recommendations n.145.90, 147.44, 147.109, 147.117 and 147.123<sup>12</sup> and notes the State's claim that the Law of Marriage Act (1971) is currently under review. We understand that the National Assembly has directed the Government to embark on broad-based consultations following a Court of Appeal decision.<sup>13</sup> However, the practice of child, early and forced persists due to poverty and deep-rooted cultural traditions. We note with deep concerns that early marriages lead to higher maternal mortality

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<sup>10</sup> Recommendations n. 147.71 Prohibit all forms of corporal punishment (Zambia); 147.121 Protect children's rights to access to health and education by abolishing corporal punishment in schools (Norway). Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the United Republic of Tanzania, 21 December 2021, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13; and its Addendum, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13/Add.1.

<sup>11</sup> See Section IV, titled "ILL TREATMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN", in IIMA-VIDES Joint UPR-Submission on Tanzania, 3rd cycle, 24 March 2021, available at: <https://iimageneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IIMA-VIDES-Joint-UPR-Submission-on-Tanzania-3rd-cycle-March-24-2021.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Recommendations n.145.90 Take further measures to eradicate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (Italy); 147.117 Adopt legislative and policy measures to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including by addressing the issue of child marriage and ensuring access to education for pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers (Finland); 147.123 Revise the Law of Marriage Act of 1971 to establish the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for both girls and boys with a view to ending child, early and forced marriages (Belgium). 147.44 Promote the elimination of discrimination against women and girls – in particular child marriage, female genital mutilation and the expulsion of pregnant girls and young mothers from schools – in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Burkina Faso); 147.109 Strengthen the policies and the legal framework to ensure marriage registration to address cases of early child marriage (Uganda). Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the United Republic of Tanzania, 21 December 2021, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13; and its Addendum, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13/Add.1.

<sup>13</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13, para 9.

among young mothers, and increased vulnerability to diseases resulting from early sexual activity.

22. **Gender based violence.** We welcome the acceptance by the United Republic of Tanzania of several UPR recommendations aiming to combat all forms of violence against women and girls.<sup>14</sup> Among the measures undertaken to implement the National Plan of Action to End Violence against Women and Children, there is the establishment of 153 gender-based violence (GBV) desks at police stations.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, with the growing use of social media, more women are now speaking out by sharing videos and stories of the abuse they experience. This increased visibility has prompted action from the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and other civil society actors.

23. Nevertheless, cases of violence against women remain widespread in the country, particularly within households where women are often denied their rights to inherit or own property after the death of their husbands. The main perpetrators of such injustices are sometimes corrupt police officers, spouses, and even close relatives, while victims are often uneducated, financially dependent women, and women coming from low-income families. This lack of education and economic independence makes them more vulnerable to abuse and limits their ability to seek justice or access necessary support services.

24. *We recommend the government of the United Republic of Tanzania to:*

- a) *Prohibit de facto corporal punishment in all settings, including schools and homes, and promote non-violent disciplinary approaches;*
- b) *Finalize the amendment of the Law of Marriage Act to set the minimum age at 18 for both boys and girls;*
- c) *Strengthen the capacity of Gender-Based Violence desks and ensure they are accessible in rural wards, accompanied by specialized training for officers to handle cases with confidentiality.*

## VI. RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

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<sup>14</sup> Recommendations n. 145.8 Continue efforts aimed at the implementation of the National Plan of Action to End Violence against Women and Children in Tanzania 2017/18–2021/22, including the elimination of the gender-based violence (Georgia); 145.86 Continue efforts to enhance the capacity of law enforcement officials to combat violence against women and children (Tunisia); 145.87 Continue actions to combat violence against women and to reduce gender gaps (Cuba); 145.88 Enhance efforts to combat all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic and sexual violence (Ukraine); 145.89 Continue to reinforce relevant measures to ensure the elimination of violence against women, including by prohibiting all harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (Ghana); 145.91 Take more measures to implement more effectively the national action plan to end violence against women and children (Lebanon); 145.92 Continue strengthening the enforcement of laws prohibiting violence against women and girls (Malaysia); 145.98 Continue to strengthen measures in combating violence against women and girls and fully implement the national action plan to end violence against women and children (South Africa); 147.116 Continue national efforts to address domestic violence (Egypt); 147.119 Step up efforts on the legislative front to combat and punish all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, including domestic violence, and take further measures to eliminate female genital mutilation (Republic of Korea). Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the United Republic of Tanzania, 21 December 2021, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13; and its Addendum, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13/Add.1.

<sup>15</sup> UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13, para 17.

25. We welcome the acceptance by the United Republic of Tanzania of several UPR recommendations aiming to protect the rights of **persons with albinism**.<sup>16</sup> Progress is noted in this regard: crimes against persons with albinism have reduced, and specialized medical support is provided through free services at Ocean Road Hospital. However, persistent social stigma still leads some parents to hide children with albinism and children with disabilities. This isolation deprives them of education and healthcare, and makes them highly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation for income.

27. **Indigenous communities**, such as the Maasai, Hadzabe, and Barbaig, remain socially excluded and politically underrepresented. Their nomadic lifestyles often prevent them from accessing basic health and education services. For instance, the initial denial of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly infringed upon the right to health and life for these groups, as the lack of transparent reporting and public health interventions left them particularly uninformed and vulnerable.

28. *We recommend the government of the United Republic of Tanzania to:*

- a) Implement special poverty alleviation measures and targeted health subsidies specifically for families of persons with albinism;*
- b) Develop mobile health and education units tailored to the nomadic lifestyles of the Maasai, Hadzabe, and Barbaig communities;*
- c) Create formal mechanisms for the meaningful political participation of minority indigenous groups in local and national governance.*

## **VII. RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

29. During the 2021 UPR, Uruguay recommended the United Republic of Tanzania to “Strengthen HIV-prevention programmes aimed at young people and make efforts to expand their coverage, ensuring that health services and information on the subject are accessible throughout the country”.<sup>17</sup> The State under review supported this recommendation. Unemployment remains the primary challenge for those aged 18-30 in Tanzania. The resulting economic instability frequently leads to severe mental health issues, including depression and increased rates of drug and substance abuse among both young men and women.

30. As a contributing factor, high taxation rates on young entrepreneurs stifle the growth of registered start-ups, limiting the ability of youth to achieve economic independence and effectively

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<sup>16</sup> Recommendations n.146.11 Implement the national action plan for persons with albinism, which has been pending since 2020 (Mauritania); 145.32 Continue and strengthen its efforts to fight discrimination and violence and to eliminate human rights abuses against persons with albinism (Portugal); 145.33 Continue efforts to address all types of attacks against persons with albinism (Rwanda); 145.34 Strengthen community policing and the role of security committees in each village with a view to promoting the safety of persons with albinism (Timor-Leste); 145.39 Take steps to implement the initiatives taken against female genital mutilation and towards the protection of people with albinism (India); 145.42 Redouble efforts to guarantee people with albinism full enjoyment of their rights and, in particular, the right to life (Congo); 145.43 Strengthen efforts in order to protect persons with albinism from violence (Czechia). Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the United Republic of Tanzania, 21 December 2021, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13; and its Addendum, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/13/Add.1.

<sup>17</sup> Recommendation 147.110. *Ibidem*.

enter the labor market. Many young people experience difficult adult lives as they struggle to meet their own needs and support their dependents. The lack of stable income or employment opportunities prevents them from owning property and achieving financial stability. This economic hardship often leads to depression and other mental health issues caused by stress, while some turn to drug and substance abuse, further affecting their well-being. Both young men and women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, are especially vulnerable to these challenges due to limited economic opportunities and social support.

Youth often experience poor working conditions, lack of fair wages, and psychological or physical abuse in informal employment sectors. Also, most victims of economic and sexual exploitation in Tanzania are young adults aged between 18 and 30, with the majority being women from low-income families who migrate in search of employment and better opportunities. Online exploitation and trafficking for sexual purposes are also reported particularly among young women. The main perpetrators are often employers and men with financial influence who take advantage of vulnerable individuals.

31. *We recommend the government of the United Republic of Tanzania to:*

- a) Address youth unemployment including by introducing tax incentives for registered youth-led start-ups to encourage economic growth and formalize the youth economy;*
- b) Align vocational training curricula with current labor market demands to reduce the skills mismatch and enhance the employability of graduates;*
- c) Develop a youth centered integrated policy framework that identifies and effectively addresses interconnected human rights gaps affecting young people, including with regard to their right to health, right to work and protection from exploitation.*