Maasai International Solidarity Alliance

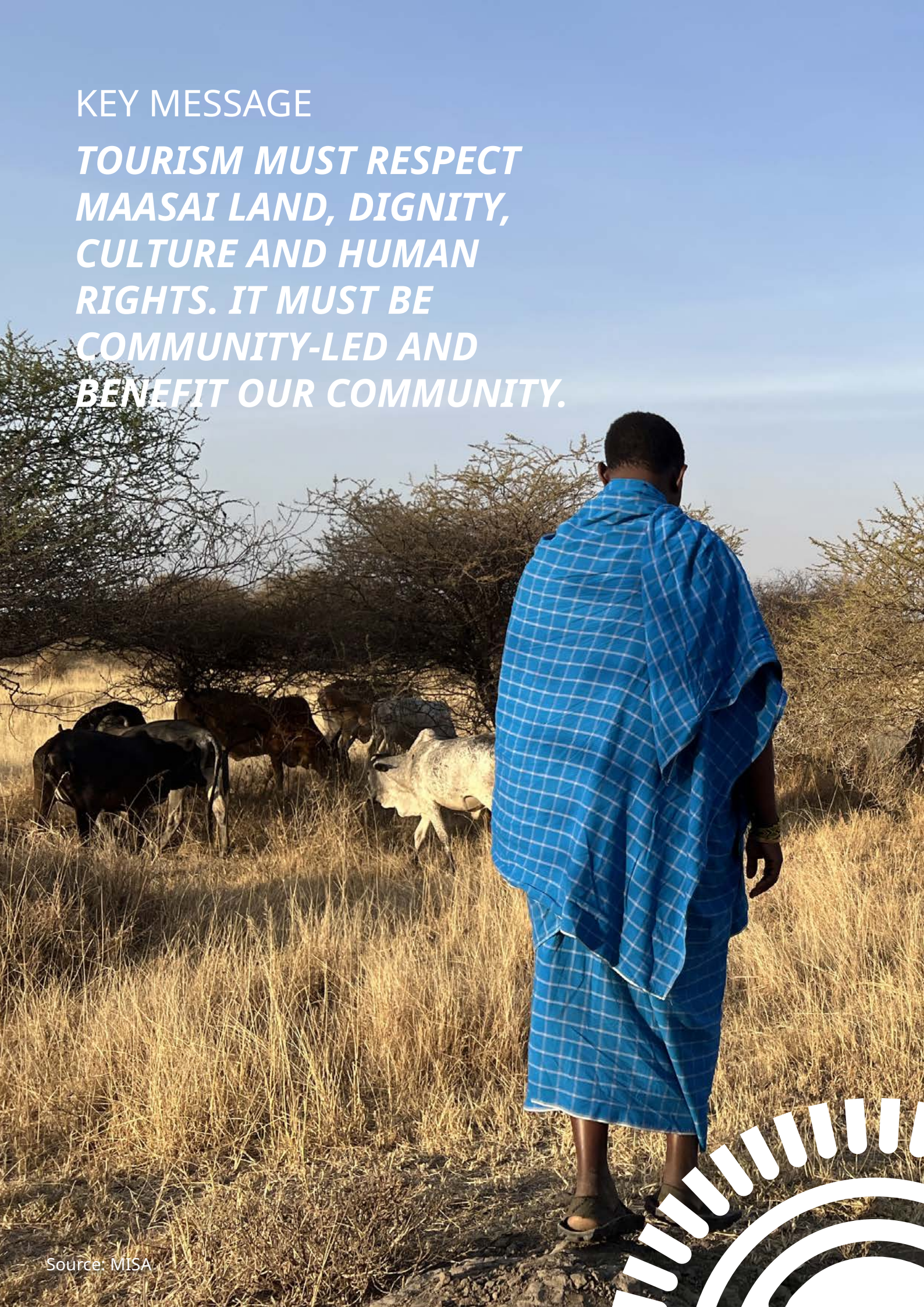
SAFARI TOURISM **WITHOUT EXCLUSION AND DISPOSSESSION**

Our Land, Our Life, Our Future:
A Model for Just and Fair Tourism in Tanzania



KEY MESSAGE

TOURISM MUST RESPECT MAASAI LAND, DIGNITY, CULTURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS. IT MUST BE COMMUNITY-LED AND BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY.



Source: MISA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism in Northern Tanzania is commonly presented as a national success story. Visitor numbers rise, revenues grow, international awards are won and new attractions are promoted. Ngorongoro and Serengeti lead this game of international tourism campaigns and prestige. Yet, these headlines do not show what really happens to lives and livelihoods of the people whose land is turned into tourist destinations.

They fail to expose who controls and grabs the land, who makes the decisions, who benefits and who bears the social, political and environmental costs. For Maasai communities across Ngorongoro, Monduli, Simanjiro and Longido, the central question is not simply whether tourism generates revenue. It is whether tourism promotes and protects the rights and livelihoods of the people whose lands and stewardship underpin the tourism industry. Tourism in Northern Tanzania, be it safari tourism or hunting, exists because we have protected this land for generations and the wildlife that thrives on it. How did tourism become a financing machine for displacement, evictions and misery?

With a desire to explore these questions, in 2026, we travelled across Maasai land and spoke to 652 people from 24 villages across the districts of Ngorongoro, Monduli, Simanjiro and Longido. We gathered the views of women (217), Morans/youths (234), and elders, traditional leaders and village council representatives (201). We asked our community what their experience of tourism has been over the last decades, and how they would like to see tourism evolve. Here is what we found.



Source: MISA

THE 4 BIGGEST PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH TOURISM ARE:

1 Safari tourism contributes to land alienation and restricts access to grazing areas and key strategic resources

- Tourism is putting Maasai land under pressure. Safari tourism leads to land grabs and finances the eviction of our communities.
- Safari tourism relies on fortress conservation, which brings restrictions on grazing areas and limits livestock mobility. Safari tourism is responsible for the loss of access to water, grazing areas, homes, sacred sites and spiritual areas. This threatens not only pastoralism but also food security, culture and livelihoods. The people of Ngorongoro are starving while tourists spend hundreds of USD a night on their land.
- Tourism is destructive to the environment, to wildlife and to pastoralism while the government is spreading false narratives unjustly accusing us of destroying nature. Environmental impacts are linked to poorly planned tourist infrastructure or hunting blocks, and include excessive water use, waste, vehicle traffic and disturbance of wildlife.
- Overtourism is responsible for exacerbating livestock confiscations, harassment of herders, violence and weak accountability.

2 Trophy hunting grabs land and violates human rights: it raises serious moral, ethical and environmental concerns.

- Trophy hunting induces land grabbing, through the establishment of **Game Reserves (GR), Game Controlled Areas (GCA) and Wildlife Management Areas (WMA).**
- It is undertaken without our Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
- It makes wildlife more aggressive towards people, threatening coexistence between pastoralists and wildlife.
- It serves commercial interests over rights, cultural values, livelihood and wildlife protection.

3 Tourism is taking place without our community consent.

- Decisions regarding tourism investments and nature conservation are frequently made without any involvement of our affected communities.
- Information on tourism projects, contracts and revenue is not accessible to the Maasai community or village governments. Investors frequently bypass village structures, which have legal authority over the land.
- Tourism activities take place without our FPIC. Women and youth are left out of decision-making.
- Hotels are frequently built in areas that are most critical for pastoralism and biodiversity to thrive. Community opinions on where to build tourism infrastructure based on traditional knowledge are ignored, leading to negative impacts on biodiversity, wildlife, livestock and livelihoods.
- Maasai culture, knowledge and images are commercialised without adequate community control.

4 Our community is not benefiting from tourism

- Tourism generates 17% of Tanzania's GDP, generates 25% of total foreign exchange earnings[1] and brings substantial revenue to national and international tourist businesses, whilst Indigenous communities receive only a small portion of this or nothing at all as in the case of Ngorongoro. We have safeguarded this land for centuries and preserved our culture, yet the community is not benefiting. At the same time, we are losing land and our traditional livelihoods and are falling into poverty.
- Maasai have very limited access to jobs in the tourism industry and these jobs tend to be very precarious, poorly paid and insecure. Meanwhile, tourism profits and control are concentrated in the hands of investors or state actors.

[1] *Source:* https://www.tanzaniainvest.com/tourism

OUR 4 KEY DEMANDS FOR A DIFFERENT TOURISM MODEL ARE:

1 No Land Grabbing, No Tourism Without Coexistence

- Tourism should not lead to land grabbing. Tourism is possible on community lands. Communal land and village lands must be protected. There should be no forced resettlement and no reclassification of communal land or village land into other protection categories.
- Grazing lands, livestock routes and access to water must be protected.
- Land already taken for nature conservation, tourism or hunting must be returned if this was done without FPIC.
- Tourism in Maasai land must respect, protect and support pastoralism. Pastoralism must be explicitly recognised and supported as a legitimate form of land use worthy of protection and serving as a means of livelihood.

2 No Trophy Hunting

- Tanzanian laws should be changed to totally ban trophy hunting.
- Trophy hunting import bans should be passed internationally.



Livestock poisoned by NCAA in 2017. Source: MISA



Person injured during Loliondo eviction in 2022. Source: MISA

3 No Tourism without Consent

- We should exercise full control over our lands and tourism development. This requires full community participation and involvement, information and genuine processes to obtain FPIC.
- A genuine FPIC process includes the right to say 'no'.
- Communities should be able to decide for themselves whether, where and under what conditions tourism takes place on their land.
- Women, youth, and all community groups must be truthfully and honestly consulted and must consent.

4 No Tourism Without Community Benefits

- We need a different model of tourism: community-led, community-owned and with fair benefit-sharing.
- Tourism should be organised in a fundamentally different way: communities should be leading economically and organisationally, receive a substantial and transparent share of the revenue, and become greater owners or co-operators of tourism offerings.
- Jobs should be local, fairly paid and provide social security.
- The tourism experience should change: from exploitation to real, meaningful encounters.



Source: MISA



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KEY FINDINGS: THE DARK SIDES OF TOURISM



Source: MISA

Introduction

The Northern Tanzania tourism circuit is marketed internationally through images of the Serengeti's great migration, Ngorongoro's crater, open savannahs, undisturbed wildlife and exotic Maasai. Tourists pay thousands of USD for their safari package, while lodges, camps, tour operators and public authorities all earn substantial income by extracting value from the landscapes our communities have inhabited, cared for and used for centuries. In this tourism industry, the value sold to visitors is not only wildlife. It is also the living landscape, made of cultural history, ecological knowledge and the continuing relationship between people, livestock and nature. That relationship is at the heart of the current conflict between Maasai and the Tanzanian government, facilitated and pushed by an extensive web of investors and stakeholders. The existing tourism model promoted by the state operates as a system of exclusion through which our land is reclassified, livestock mobility is distorted, access to key areas is restricted, grazing routes are blocked, water is diverted, and communities are displaced to create space for *"protected"* areas and commercial tourist facilities.

Under this model, Maasai presence is too often treated as a problem to be managed, while the tourism industry's demand for land, infrastructure and visitor growth is treated as an economic priority. While this conflict has escalated since the arrival in power of President Samia Suluhu Hassan in 2021, it is not new. Its origins are linked to the creation of **National Parks (NP)** and establishment of GRs by German and then British colonial powers. The two leading safari tourism destinations, Serengeti and Ngorongoro, are the direct product of that history: Serengeti was established as a GR in 1929 and as a NP in 1951 while the **Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA)** was created after Maasai were forcibly removed from Serengeti in 1959. These lands were not returned to the Maasai after independence in 1961. Instead, safari tourism and trophy hunting evolved from colonial inventions to land control practices used by the independent government to extract money from Maasai land and subjugate its people, with the complicity of conservationists.



Source: MISA

Through his public campaigns, books and documentaries, especially “Serengeti Shall Not Die” (1959), Bernhard Grzimek, a German zoologist and founder of the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), encouraged European audiences to see the Serengeti as a remarkable wildlife destination worth protecting and visiting. This helped stimulate international interest in safari tourism, portraying the Serengeti as a natural paradise for wild animals while making the Maasai pastoralists who had long inhabited, shaped and used the landscape for livestock grazing completely invisible. Grzimek actively promoted tourism as a way for Tanzania to generate income out of fear that without external sources of revenue, the independent government would fail to maintain NPs. He successfully sold the idea to President Julius Nyerere who was aspiring to find ways for Tanzania to control its own development and natural resources. Over the years, safari tourism and trophy hunting have grown into large and opaque industries that benefit both the Tanzanian state and international actors at the expense of Indigenous communities.

This model of tourism must be transformed. Tourism must be organised around the rights and priorities of the communities whose territories sustain it. Maasai communities must decide where tourism is appropriate, which tourism practices are inappropriate, and which are incompatible with community interest. We must be able to negotiate directly with investors and receive a substantial share of revenues. We advocate for a tourism model which places pastoralist land at its core and always puts pastoralism first: as a permanent way of life, with tourism as the guest. We advocate for a tourism model which recognises that the people living on the land have culture, spiritual rights, traditional practices and essential resources for their survival that tourism should never disturb. To respect human rights, this model must align commercial incentives with secure community tenure over the land, pastoralist livelihoods, biodiversity, cultural integrity and transparent benefit-sharing.

The central argument of this report is that tourism must not be allowed to become a financial engine for dispossession. Revenues from visitors should not facilitate or reward land alienation, coercive conservation or restrictions that impoverish the people whose land attracts tourists.

BOX: TANZANIAN TOURISM SECTOR IN NUMBERS

Recent trends indicate uncontrolled growth. Under President Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania's tourism sector has developed rapidly. In 2025, Tanzania recorded 2,294,495 international tourist arrivals, a 7% growth compared to 2024. Tanzania's tourism earnings increased by 13% to USD 4.41 billion in 2025, compared with USD 3.90 billion in 2024. The growth was driven not only by increasing visitor numbers but also by higher expenditure per visitor.[2]

The average expenditure per visitor per night in Tanzania increased by 19% to USD 289, compared with USD 243 in 2024. For visitors travelling through package arrangements, average expenditure rose to USD 479 per person per night from USD 416. Package tours accounted for 58.8% of visitors in Tanzania in 2025, up from 56.3% in 2024. Approximately 75.2% of Tanzania's tourism earnings came from visitors travelling under package arrangements.

Long-haul visitors are dominated by the same countries—the United States of America, Italy, France and the United Kingdom.[3] Average duration of trips to Tanzania is 9 to 10 days. Ngorongoro is the leading tourist attraction, followed by Serengeti (second) and Tarangire (fifth), the third and forth leading attractions being in other parts of Tanzania.[4]

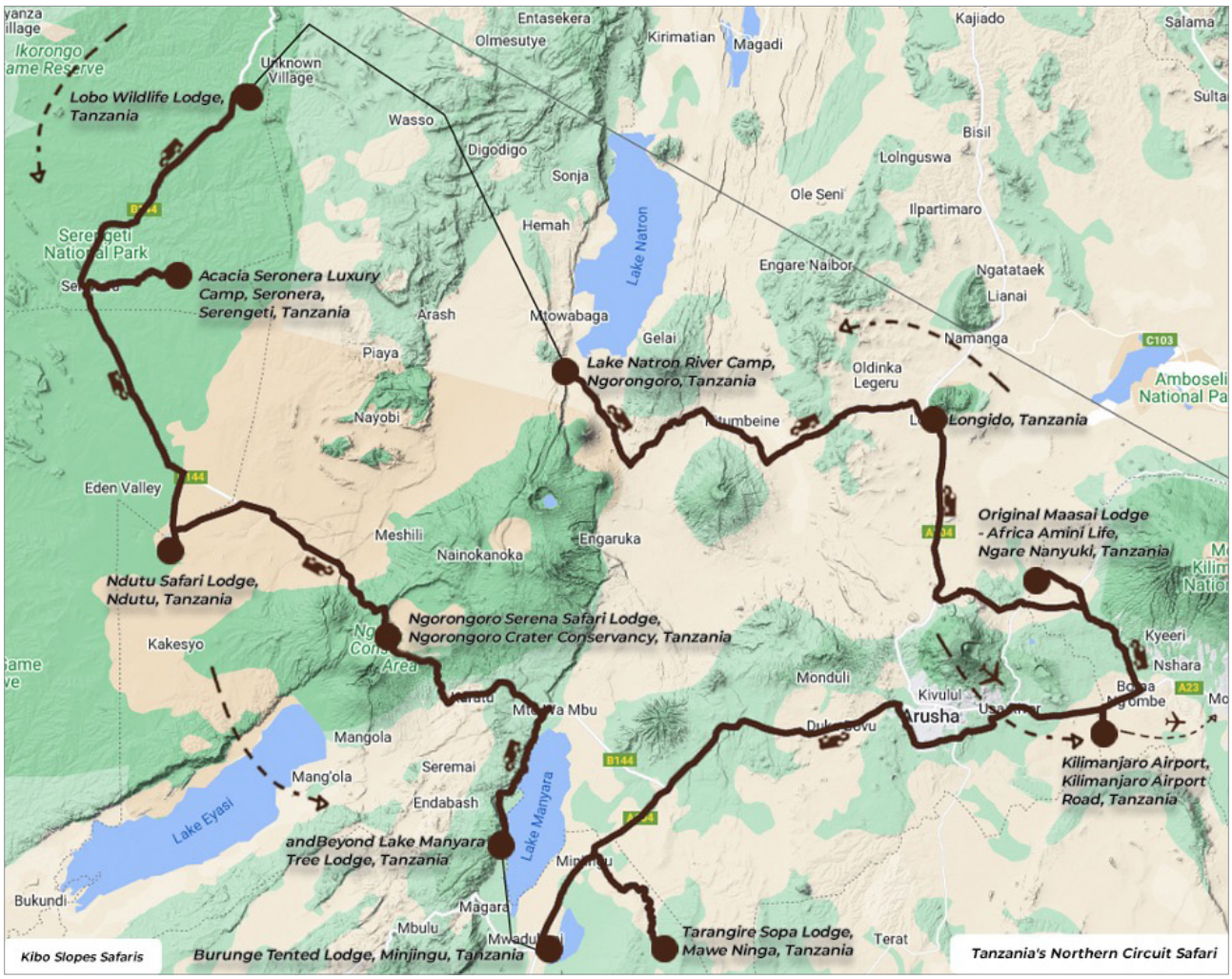
Safari tourism in Northern Tanzania can be described as high-end. It is a form of tourism that offers premium, exclusive or highly personalised experiences, usually at high prices. Maintaining this type of tourism requires an estimated four to seven staff members per room. Fewer than 50% of those employed in the Ngorongoro district's high-end tourism sector are reportedly local residents, and those who are employed locally occupy exclusively low-paid positions. These jobs are also highly vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations, with the occupancy rate estimated at just 25%.[5]

Africa Safari Landscape. Source: Magnific.com

[2] *Source: https://tatotz.org/tanzania-tourism-sector-records-strong-growth-in-2025/*
[3] *Source: THE 2025 INTERNATIONAL VISITORS' EXIT SURVEY REPORT. Available at: https://www.bot.go.tz/Publications/Other/Tanzania%20Tourism%20Sector%20Survey%20Report/en/2026071304012813.pdf*
[4] *Source: Ibid.*
[5] *Slootweg (2017): Tourism and income growth for the Ngorongoro District population in Tanzania.*

WHAT IS THE FAMOUS NORTHERN CIRCUIT?

The Northern Circuit



Source: Kibo slopes safari. Indicative price: USD 6,190 per person for 12 days. (https://kiboslopes.com/tour/tanzanias-northern-circuit-safari/)

While wildlife historically roamed every corner of Tanzania and the globe, the unparalleled prosperity of the Northern Safari Circuit is a direct artefact of Indigenous Maasai land stewardship. Unlike other communities, the Maasai do not hunt or rely on wild animals for subsistence because their traditional economy revolves entirely around cattle. This pastoralist way of life is profoundly compatible with ecology, creating a shared, harmonious landscape that naturally preserved wildlife and laid the groundwork for today's multi-million-dollar tourism industry.

The Northern Circuit is one of Tanzania's most important areas for safari tourism because it connects several famous NPs and wildlife conservation areas, all established on Maasai land without Maasai consent.



Ngorongoro Conservation Area

Is known for its three craters (Ngorongoro, Embakaai, Ormoti), human evolution (Oldupai and Alaitole) and spectacular landscape. Following the evictions from Serengeti, it was created in 1959 as a multi-use area for both Maasai Indigenous pastoralism and wildlife conservation. Over several decades, Maasai cultural sovereignty has been heavily restricted. For tourism purposes, Tanzanian authorities are promoting a largely commodified Maasai way of life, limiting tourist interactions with Maasai to state-sanctioned *"cultural bomas"* for visitor entertainment. The Maasai of Ngorongoro face constant pressure, relocation threats, and restrictions on the means of sustaining their livelihoods and access to water under the guise of ecological preservation, despite being in what is legally their home. With only 8,292 square kilometres, Ngorongoro received 49.6% of all tourists who visited Tanzania in 2024/25.



Tarangire National Park

Famous for large elephant herds, baobab trees and seasonal wildlife concentrations, was established as a GR in 1957 and as a NP in 1970, also resulting in evictions of Maasai from their lands. Historically, this area (Tara ngare in Maa) served as a critical dry-season refuge on which Maasai herders depended for their livestock when water disappeared elsewhere. The 1957 GR designation and subsequent 1970 NP status explicitly criminalised the Maasai presence, using state power to evict communities so the land could be commercialised for foreign safari tourism. Like all other conservation areas and NPs this was never consented to by the community.



Lake Manyara National Park

Was initially established as a GR in 1957 and upgraded to NP status in 1960. Its name is associated with the Maasai terms Armanayara, meaning *"settlements",* and emanyara, referring to the Euphorbia plants traditionally used to construct protective enclosures for livestock.

As was the case with numerous NPs, GRs and GCAs in the region, the establishment of the protected area took place without the involvement of Maasai communities. Today, the Tanzanian government promotes Lake Manyara internationally as a major destination within the Northern Safari Circuit, highlighting its distinctive tree-climbing lions and rich avifauna.



Kilimanjaro

Known in Maa as Oldonyo Oibor *("White Mountain"),* has always been part of local Indigenous spiritual, medical, and pastoral geography. State and international attention have transformed this sacred landmark into a high-revenue tourist playground, often sidelining Indigenous interests and ecological stewardship in favour of commercial trekking agencies.



Mkomazi National Park

Known for its rhinos, birdlife, lake scenery, forests and tree-climbing lions, was established in 1960, initially as a GR, later as a NP. Maasai were initially permitted to live in the GR. However, Mkomazi became a flashpoint for brutal fortress conservation in 1988 when they were forced out of the GR.

Thousands of Maasai pastoralists were forcibly evicted with their livestock. Maasai customary land rights were erased overnight to create an artificial *"wilderness"* for rhinos and wild dogs. Despite partially winning their case in the Court of Appeal in 1999, some of these evicted continue to face state-targeted eviction in Handeni and other areas.[6]



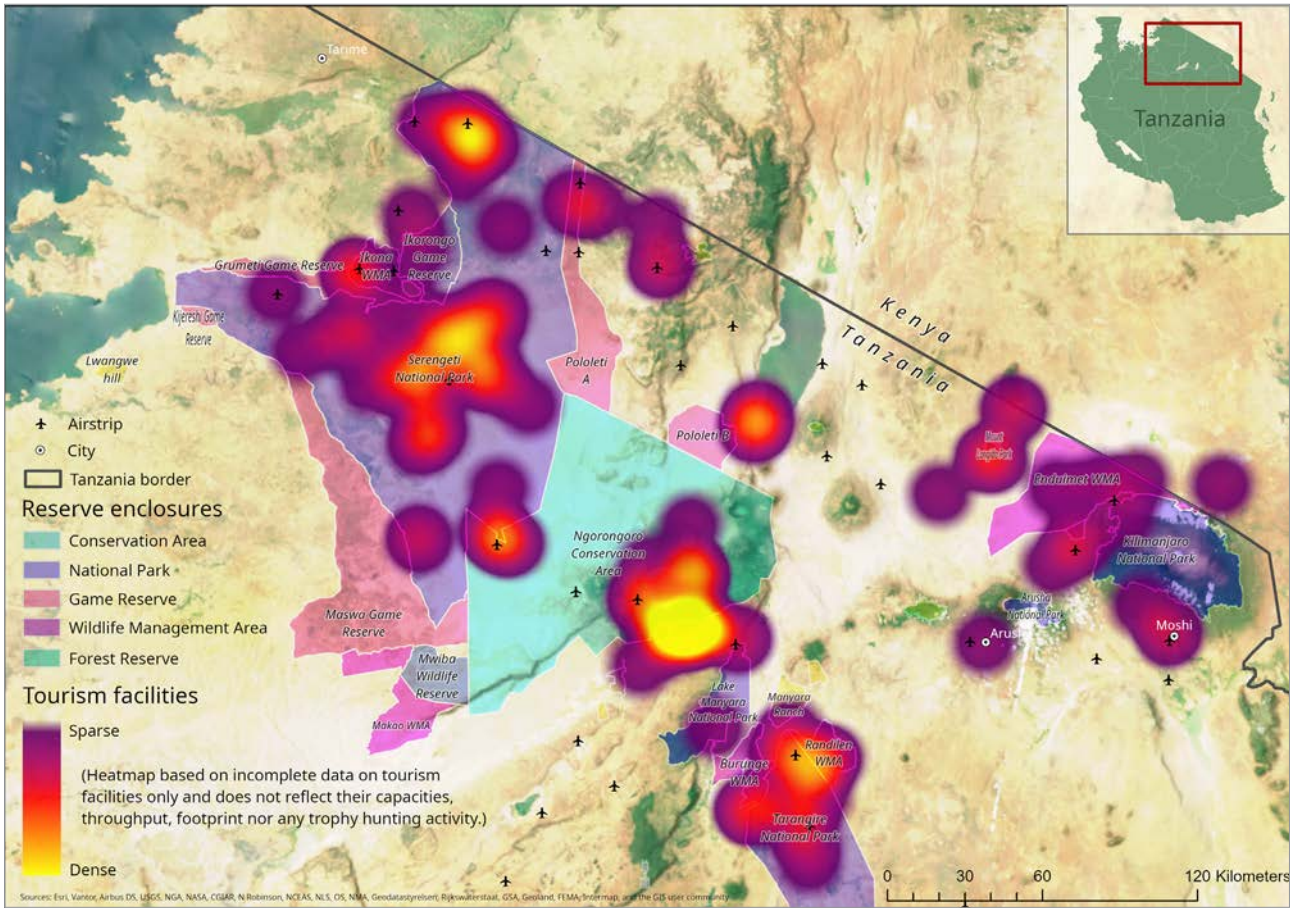
Serengeti National Park

(Siringet in Maa: "the plains that run on forever") was the ancestral home for the Maasai long before it was gazetted as a park. The iconic open grasslands were not *"wild"* or untouched. They have for centuries been shaped and kept healthy by the Maasai, our seasonal cattle grazing and traditional range management.

The creation of the NP resulted in the forced eviction of the Maasai from their most fertile ancestral grazing lands, and severed our deep spiritual and economic ties to the plains. It created a precedent for the future evictions we have witnessed in the last seven decades. For tourism purposes, Serengeti is promoted as famous for the Great Wildebeest Migration, lions, elephants and extensive grasslands. No tourist is informed about the livelihoods separated from the land and the history buried in the tourism infrastructure.

[6] *Lekengere Faru Parutu Kamunyu v. Minister for Tourism, Natural Resources and Environment and Others, Civil Appeal No. 53 of 1998, [1999] TZCA 45 (29 March 1999), https://tanzlii.org/en/akn/tz/judgment/tzca/1999/45/eng@1999-03-29.*

Heatmap showing density of hotel infrastructure and pressure on grazing areas in Northern Tanzania.



BOX: COLONIAL SCEPTICS PROVEN WRONG

Indigenous contribution has been met with systematic exclusion, a pattern rooted in colonial-era neglect and dismissive scepticism. In the 1950s, the Tanganyika government actively starved the Ngorongoro conservation initiative of funding because it falsely assumed Ngorongoro would yield no economic return. Official correspondence with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) revealed a blatant bias, explicitly stating that: *"...the development of the Rufiji, Pangani and Ruvu basins is far more likely to make a substantial contribution to our economy than the development of Ngorongoro."*[7]

Today, history has proven those colonial sceptics completely wrong: Northern Tanzania has become one of the most profitable safari destinations on earth. Yet, while the state and foreign corporate agencies reap massive fortunes from this global playground, the Maasai whose ancient coexistence generated this very wealth remain systematically locked out of the profits, suffering ongoing evictions from the very lands they preserved.

BOX: TANZANIAN PRESIDENT PROMOTES TOURISM AMID HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

At the end of 2024, the President launched two tourism promotion films, including the Tanzania Royal Tour, which features Serengeti and Ngorongoro prominently. The President's continuing efforts to promote tourism mask ongoing human rights abuses in major tourist areas such as Ngorongoro.

Mid-2026, upon presenting the recommendations from the two Presidential Commissions on Ngorongoro, the government released a documentary stating that Ngorongoro is in danger and that the only way to protect it for the benefit of humanity is to force people out.

Meanwhile, business-led platforms have been celebrating Ngorongoro as a leading tourist destination, ignoring public records of human rights violations and maintaining tourists in the dark about what truly happens in their dream destinations.

On 17 October 2026, the **NCAA** received the Excellence in Sustainable Tourism and Conservation Management Award at the Africa Business Forum & Awards 2026, held in Accra, Ghana. The latest accolade adds to Ngorongoro's international recognition, following its designation as Africa's Leading Tourist Attraction at the World Travel Awards in 2023 and 2025. Meanwhile, Tanzania's Serengeti NP was crowned Africa's Best NP at the 2025 World Travel Awards, reaffirming its status as one of the continent's most iconic and awe-inspiring wildlife destinations.

TANAPA once again scooped the prestigious European Quality Choice Diamond award in 2025, for its highest level of tourism service provisions, elevating Tanzania's stature as a premier tourist destination.



Ngorongoro Park. Source: Magnific.com

[7] *Tanganyika Government to F. D. Webber, Colonial Office, London, letter dated 15 November 1958, ref. no. LGO.101/027, para. 14, p. 4.*



"Conflicts over access to water points are increasing between hotels and the community."



Top photo: Tanganyika Wilderness Camps, Masek Tented Lodge. Source: https://share.google/aGGkaysGLsMZ9AspZ
Bottom Photo: Source: MISA

TROPHY HUNTING IN TANZANIA

Prior to formal colonial rule in the 1880s, European colonial agents, primarily missionaries and traders, increasingly penetrated the East African hinterland, facilitating European expansion into the African continent. In Maasailand, traders established a lucrative ivory trade connecting European and Indian merchants. Between the 1860s and 1915, European hunting brought regional wildlife populations close to decimation.

Under German colonial rule (1885–1918), ivory exports helped finance the conquest of mainland Tanzania. The colonial state introduced hunting licences in the 1890s and established its first GR in 1905 in what is now the Selous.[8] Ironically, the reserve was named after Frederick Courteney Selous, a hunter who killed more than 1,000 large game animals during his expeditions. This reflects a deep contradiction in conservation narratives that continue to celebrate figures whose activities contributed to the near-extermination of local wildlife.

Today, many figures are celebrated in mainstream conservation narratives, while their legacies continue to shape wildlife management in Africa. Explorers Joseph Thomson and James Augustus Grant, for example, are commemorated in the names of Thomson's and Grant's gazelles, despite the large numbers of animals killed during their expeditions. In a similar contradiction, the OBC (Otterlo Business Corporation) is portrayed as a *"conservation champion"* despite hunting and transporting animals from Loliondo.

The 1900 London Conference, attended by German officials, called for reserves that would make hunting the preserve of wealthy, *white*, non-resident hunters able to afford expensive licences. By 1914, fifteen reserves covered approximately 3.7% of the colony's territory. After taking control of Tanganyika in 1918, Britain maintained this exclusionary system.[9]

Professional hunters arrived in the Serengeti in 1913. The 1940 Game Ordinance restricted settlement and land use in the Serengeti but initially exempted the Maasai already living there.

This changed as conservation organisations, including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), advocated stricter restrictions on human activity. In 1957, a British committee proposed separating the Serengeti, without human habitation, from a multiple-use area around Ngorongoro. After independence in 1961, controlled hunting became government policy.[10]

Today, hunting areas cover 260,677 square kilometres, or 27.65% of mainland Tanzania. They comprise 110 hunting blocks: 58 in GRs, 22 in GCAs and 30 in open areas. Hunting is prohibited in NPs and the NCA.[11]

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[8] *Source: "The Selous Game Reserve".* https://sportsafield.com/2016/the-selous-game-reserve/
[9] *Source: Introduction to The Nature of German Imperialism (PDF).* https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/gissiblna-ture_intro.pdf
[10] *Source: Elizabeth Fraser, Oakland Institute.* https://oaklandinstitute.org/node/5521
[11] *Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, "Elephant Hunting in Tanzania", 2024 (PDF).* https://www.tawiri.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ELEPHANT-HUNTING-IN-TANZANIA-A-TRANSBOUNDARY-ECOSYSTEM-PERSPECTIVE_2024-2.pdf

The Minister responsible for natural resources and tourism allocates blocks to licensed hunting companies. Under Tanzania's 2019 Wildlife Conservation (Tourist Hunting) Regulations, Category I and II blocks are allocated for ten years, while Category III blocks are allocated for fifteen years. Companies holding Category I blocks must pay an annual block fee of USD 60,000 to the government. The **Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA)** regulates hunting activities.

Tourists book through licensed hunting companies, which apply for permits on their behalf at designated TAWA offices. Three safari packages are available: Regular (10 days), Major (14 days) and Premium (21 days).

An inter-company permit allows hunters to access another company's block for an additional fee. Government charges include block, permit, conservation, observer, inter-company and professional hunter licence fees. Total costs vary according to the level of luxury, distance from major towns and mode of transport. Commonly hunted species include buffalo, elephant, lion, leopard, kudu, impala, wildebeest and zebra. Specialised bird-shooting packages target species such as francolin, guinea fowl and doves. **TAWA** presents trophy hunting as part of Tanzania's wildlife conservation strategy.[12]

Key hunting destinations in Maasailand include Loliondo/Pololeti, bordering Serengeti National Park and associated with OBC, the areas around Lake Natron and Enduimet, Lake Manyara, the forests of Mount Losimingor near Arusha, and areas surrounding Tarangire NP.

Trophy hunting generated USD 63.8 million between 2018/19 and 2022/23, accounting for 70% of TAWA's revenue.[13] However, these substantial revenues do not benefit the communities living on the land where hunting takes place. Current trophy-hunting price lists range from USD 200 for a baboon to USD 30,000–50,000 for an elephant. Packages can cost between USD 25,000 and USD 105,000 per hunter.[14]



Hunting in Africa. Souce: Magnific.com

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[12] *Source: Hunting Tourism.* https://www.tawa.go.tz/hunting-tourism
[13] *Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, "Elephant Hunting in Tanzania", 2024 (PDF).* https://www.tawiri.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ELEPHANT-HUNTING-IN-TANZANIA-A-TRANSBOUNDARY-ECOSYSTEM-PERSPECTIVE_2024-2.pdf
[14] *Tanzania Hunting Safari: Premium & Legal Tanzania Hunting Safaris - Tanzania hunting safari*

HOW IS SAFARI TOURISM IMPACTING PEOPLES' LIVES?

1

TOURISM LEADS TO LAND LOSS

The tourism industry is pushing us out of our lands. Safari tourism relies on and encourages fortress conservation, which separates us from nature, brings restrictions on grazing areas and limits livestock mobility. Tourism exerts tremendous pressure on our community lands and is directly responsible for the ongoing attempts at evicting and displacing us from our lands.

The current Tanzanian regime is associated with a wave of over-investment: every hill is being surveyed, for example in NCA. Essential areas for pasture and wildlife corridors are being constructed or being considered for investment. The central government is allocating lands to investors directly, bypassing the due process which requires engagement with village authorities. In many villages, communal land is being sold to investors through dubious deals.

Across all districts visited, land grabbing is associated with livestock confiscations, violent attacks, harassment, racial discrimination and the criminalisation of women, herders and land rights defenders. These forms of violence lead to physical and psychological harm, stress and mental health challenges.

Safari tourism and trophy hunting are driving the conversion of village lands to other land categories like GRs, GCAs, WMAs, or wildlife corridors, taking land away from community control. Too often, the areas placed under NPs or GRs are expanding through corridors or the redrawing of boundaries, leading to the grabbing of community lands.

BOX: NEW TOURISM PRODUCTS IN NGORONGORO

On 19 July 2024, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), Nkoba Mabula, directed the NCAA to develop new products to attract more tourists. The stated objective is to reach 5 million tourists by developing and launching new attractions including bicycle tourism in Oldupai, canoeing in Embakaai, night game drives and zipline tourism. The MNRT also intends to develop an online booking platform for safari to capture more revenues from the tourism sector. Aside from increasing the number of tourists, the objective is to capture a bigger share of tourism income. Currently, many tourists make travel arrangements via global tour companies and stay in hotels owned by global investors. It is estimated that only 20-45% of that money stays in African countries, according to the Africa Policy Research Institute. How the online platform will address this issue is still unclear.

The government is claiming that many village lands within Maasai territories are GCAs, which is incorrect. This includes: Loliondo, Lake Natron, Longido, Mto wa Mbu, Simanjiro, Ruvu Remit, Ruvu Masai, and Kitwai among others. Put together, the amount of land claimed by the government as GCAs amounts to more than 70% of the total land occupied by the Maasai community in Tanzania. This narrative is used by the government to push for the conversion of village lands into strict conservation or hunting areas, for example in Lake Natron, Longido and Mto wa Mbu.

In WMAs, zoning and restrictions are introduced without community input and without FPIC, and investments are made without community consent, leading to grazing restrictions especially targeting areas that are strategic for pasture and water during the dry season. For example: Lormunyenye river in Randilen WMA is no longer accessible to the community.

While villages contribute substantial amounts of land to the WMA, the land is no longer theirs after the WMA is established: decisions over land use are made by the WMA management and district authorities, with limited or no community engagement and oversight. While it is argued that WMAs are a form of land protection, there is a real risk that the land be upgraded to other conservation statuses by the government. Moreover, if a village wishes to pull out of a WMA, it will not get back the portion of land it contributed to the establishment of WMA. In effect, land put into a WMA is lost for ever.

The expansion of NPs, GRs and wildlife corridors is targeting village lands and limiting the viability of land-based livelihoods. It is restricting our access to water and to the sacred areas and ritual sites we rely on for our ceremonies. Tourism is taking place on lands that have been taken from us without our consent, for trophy hunting and militarised fortress conservation, starting with Serengeti NP. In each village, people are able to identify specific lands lost to tourism and hunting.



Source: MNRT annual budget speech.

BOX: THE NGORONGORO TOURISM BOOM IN NUMBERS

The revenue and visitor figures in Ngorongoro show a strong recovery and expansion of tourism after the COVID-19 downturn. Rising revenues from tourism in Ngorongoro do not, by themselves, demonstrate that local communities benefit, that land use is consensual, or that tourism remains within ecological limits. The increase in revenues must be assessed alongside rights, income distribution and environmental pressures.

NCAA revenues reached TZS 269.9 billion in 2024/2025, exceeding a target of TZS 230 billion. The official data shows that there were 1,061,620 visitors in 2024/2025 for Ngorongoro alone as compared to 2,141,895 tourists in the country. This makes Ngorongoro visitors 49.6% of the total number of visitors to the country in 2024/25. Despite this massive and positive tourism image, between 2021/2022 and 2025/2026, the Tanzanian government has not made any of the revenues from tourism available to the communities whose land is being grabbed for tourism expansion.

Fiscal year	Visitors reported	Revenue reported (in Tanzania Shilling)
2018/2019	725,535	TZS 143.9 billion
2019/2020	Approx. 475,000	TZS 85.0 billion
2020/2021	191,614	TZS 31 billion
2021/2022	425,386	TZS 171 billion
2022/2023	752,215	TZS 176 billion
2023/2024	908,627	TZS 200 billion
2024/2025	1,061,620	TZS 269.9 billion
2025/2026	830,295 from July 2025–February 2026	TZS 251.89 billion reported by April 2026; target TZS 350 billion

Source: MNRT annual budget speech.



Africa Safari landscape. Source: Magnific.com

2

TOURISM UNDERMINES PASTORALISM

Land grabbing, driven by the expansion of hunting areas and fortress conservation for tourism, leads to the loss of grazing areas, which are key to our survival, livelihoods and culture. The shrinking and fragmentation of our grazing areas leads to food insecurity, poverty and suffering. It is exacerbated by climate change, more directly experienced through droughts and the rise of invasive species.

Our communal rights over the land are being infringed upon without our consent. Livestock mobility is undermined by hunting blocks, NPs, hotel infrastructure and no-go zones and restrictions. Roads and fences disrupt livestock grazing patterns and livestock corridors. Attacks on livestock mobility are fostered by negative stereotypes and misconceptions about pastoralism, suggesting pastoralists and their livestock are too many and responsible for land degradation. Our traditional knowledge is systematically ignored in tourism related decisions, leading to poor landscape management. For example, hotels are built where there is a nice view or water regardless of livestock and wildlife routes.

Access to water for livestock is threatened by tourism development, especially the consumption of water by hotels, lodges and camps. In some villages, like Ngoile or Olbalbal in Ngorongoro, residents have to wait for hours at the village tap when a water truck is busy supplying lodges and campsites - including the swimming pools - so that tourists can be provided for.

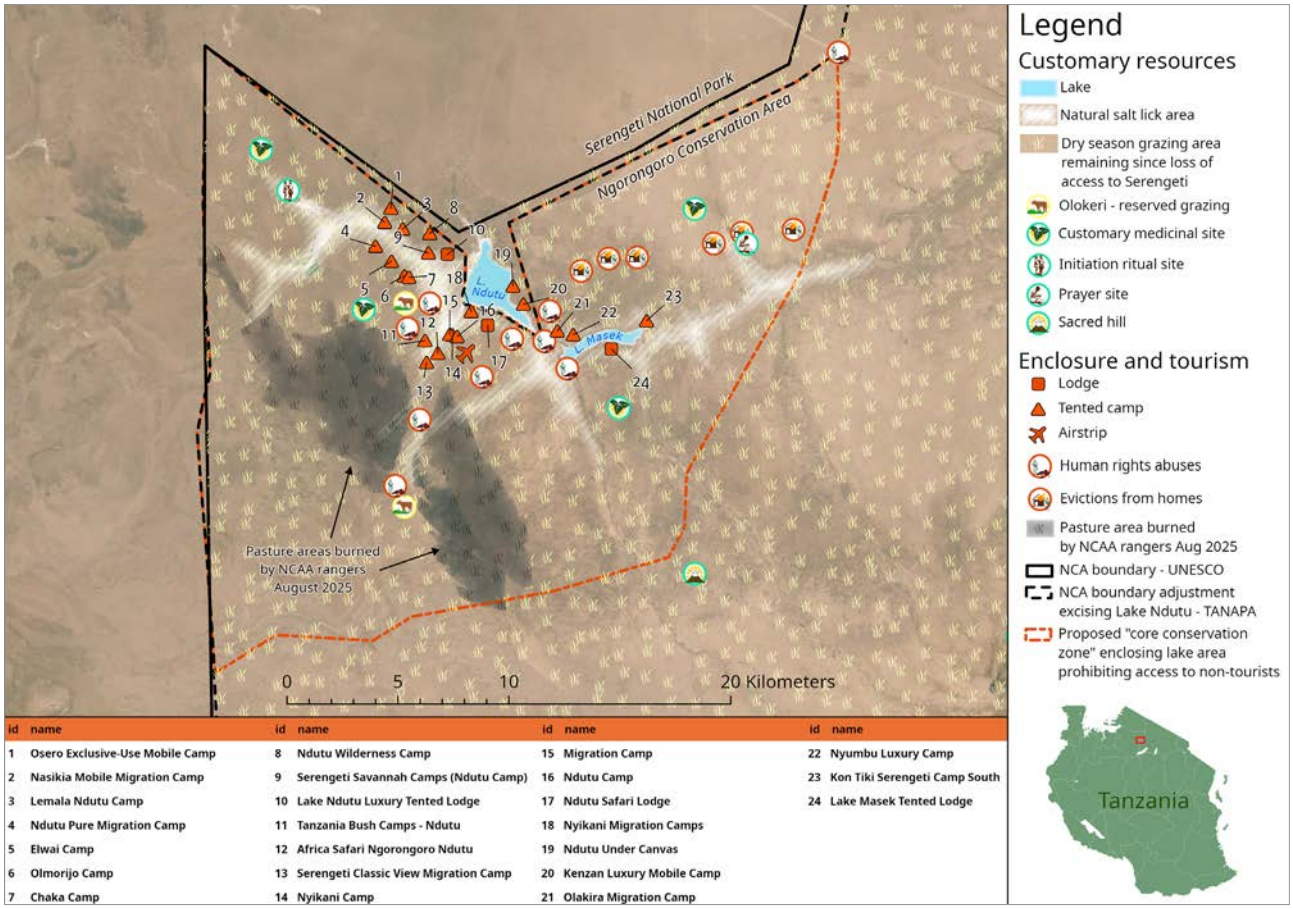
Safari tourism and trophy hunting are directly associated with human rights violations such as harassment and violence towards herders and livestock confiscations. Livestock confiscation is used against our people as a tool to intimidate and impoverish us, for example in Loliondo. In many areas, livestock is captured and guided or driven within protected areas so it can be confiscated by rangers as part of a corrupt money-making scheme, as people explained for example in Kimotorok, Simanjiro. Once captured, the cattle are auctioned off and exported from the area, unless the owners manage to get it back by paying a ransom to the authorities.

The Morans are the direct victims of harassment, arrest, and the seizure of their livestock while attempting to access or protect the resources they are responsible for managing and protecting.

Because available grazing land is becoming scarcer—and livestock can no longer roam freely—while wildlife is simultaneously moving closer to the villages, diseases can spread more easily from wildlife to livestock, leading to further livestock losses. At the same time, diseases are spreading more quickly among livestock because they are living together in increasingly confined spaces.

In the Oldupai/Ndutu area, the NCAA has been undertaking extralegal action against the Maasai community to restrict access to the area, which is a crucial destination for grazing in the current dry season and is essential to the survival of almost half of the residents of Ngorongoro. The area has been under immense pressure for tourism development and herders have been subjected to severe forms of harassment. In September 2026, the District Commissioner (DC) announced that access to Oldupai would be prohibited with immediate effect, although he has no authority to prohibit access under the NCA law. The Ndutu area was later reported to have been burned as a means of blocking pastoralists from accessing potential areas, which has become a repeated pattern in recent years.

Map of Oldupai - Human rights violations linked to expansion of tourism and infringement on dry season grazing areas.



id	name	id	name	id	name	id	name
1	Osero Exclusive-Use Mobile Camp	8	Ndutu Wilderness Camp	15	Migration Camp	22	Nyumbu Luxury Camp
2	Nasikia Mobile Migration Camp	9	Serengeti Savannah Camps (Ndutu Camp)	16	Ndutu Camp	23	Kon Tiki Serengeti Camp South
3	Lemala Ndutu Camp	10	Lake Ndutu Luxury Tented Lodge	17	Ndutu Safari Lodge	24	Lake Masek Tented Lodge
4	Ndutu Pure Migration Camp	11	Tanzania Bush Camps - Ndutu	18	Nyikani Migration Camps		
5	Elwai Camp	12	Africa Safari Ngorongoro Ndutu	19	Ndutu Under Canvas		
6	Olmorijo Camp	13	Serengeti Classic View Migration Camp	20	Kenzan Luxury Mobile Camp		
7	Chaka Camp	14	Nyikani Camp	21	Olakira Migration Camp		

Map of Oldupai (lake Masek and lake Ndutu)

3

TROPHY HUNTING LEADS TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Trophy hunting is threatening our life on the land. It contributes to land alienation through the expansion or consolidation of hunting areas, GRs, GCAs and WMAs. Trophy hunting leads to land grabbing through the continuous appetite of the hunting industry for expansion and connection between NPs, wildlife corridors and GRs. The participants of the research identified examples of a wider network of conservation and hunting areas around Maasai territories, including Mkungunero GR, Makame and Randilen WMAs, Pololeti GR in Loliondo, Maswa GR, Makao WMA, Ikorongo/Grumeti, Ikona WMA and open areas around Ngorongoro and Serengeti, Enduimet WMA near Kilimanjaro NP, and areas around Manyara Ranch and Makuyuni.

Participants also raised ethical and ecological concerns about killing wildlife for trophies, the use of firearms, possible changes in animal behaviour and increased conflict when wildlife moves into village lands and human settlements. The community's position is clear: trophy hunting is incompatible with Maasai cultural values and contributes to land alienation and unequal control over wildlife.

While they are promoted as community-led conservation areas, WMAs come with severe restrictions on pastoralism because they require putting land aside for trophy hunting, conservation and safari tourism.

Trophy hunting is done in our territories without our FPIC. It is directly associated with human rights violations: it brings livestock confiscations and violence against our herders, including attacks and physical and verbal abuses, random arrests and reckless shootings. It benefits the elite while contributing to our poverty.

Hunting increases human-wildlife conflicts and renders targeted animals more aggressive, which we witness when they seek refuge on our village lands. Hunting thrives on corruption and uncontrolled firearms use.

BOX: POLOLETI GR AND THE BLOODY BUSINESS OF HUNTING IN LOLIONDO

In 1992, the government gave OBC, owned by members of the royal family of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), 400,000 hectares in Loliondo for trophy hunting without consulting the local communities. Evictions followed in 2009, 2015 and 2017, when 185 homes were destroyed and about 20,000 people were left homeless.[15] In 2022, the government marked off 1,500 square kilometres as a GR without consulting the communities, and it plans to relocate about 82,000 residents of the Ngorongoro area by 2027.[16] About 10,000 people were violently chased away between June 2022 and September 2024 in so-called voluntary relocations.[17]

The establishment of Pololeti GR has been widely associated with efforts to secure an exclusive hunting area for OBC, a luxury hunting company reported to organize hunting activities for members of the UAE's royal families. During protests against the establishment of the reserve and associated restrictions on land access, Tanzanian security forces reportedly used live ammunition and physical violence, while homes were burned or destroyed in operations to remove residents from the area. Communities living adjacent to the reserve continue to face intimidation. Pololeti rangers are reported to enter neighbouring villages at night, where they rob homes and rape women.

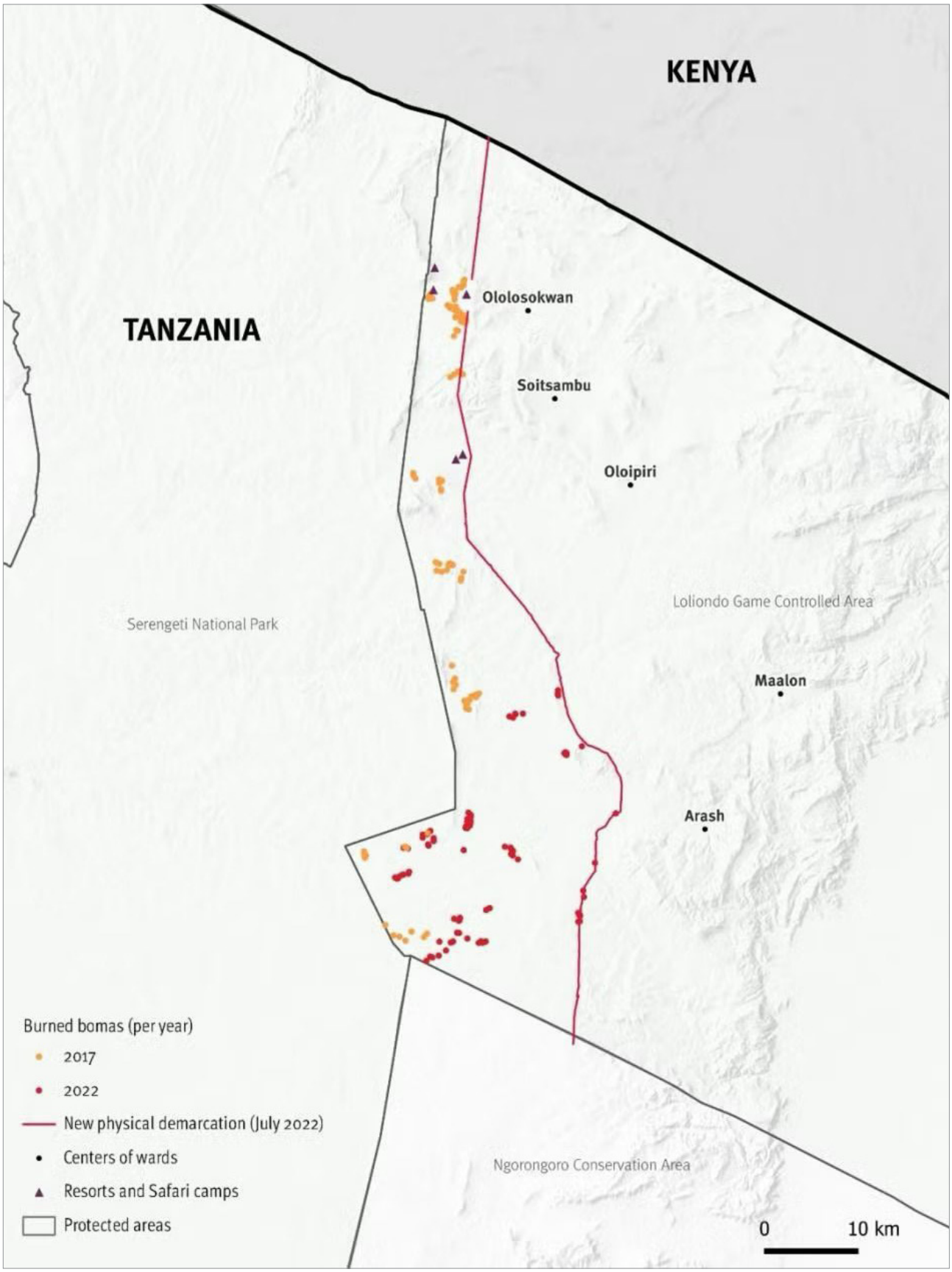
At the same time, the Tanzanian government promotes Pololeti as an important water catchment area for the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem. This conservation framing serves to obscure the human rights violations and the legal illegitimacy of the land grab, while masking corporate profit interests and the forced displacement of Maasai communities. The reserve's potential inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage framework has also raised concerns among Maasai advocates, who fear that international recognition could lend legitimacy to existing restrictions on land access and displacement.

The people of Loliondo have faced significant empoverishment as a result of losing strategic dry season grazing areas.



[15] *Source: "Beyond just conservation", 2023. https://minorityrights.org/beyond-just-conservation-a-history-of-maasai-dispossession/*
[16] *Source: "Tanzania Should Halt Plan to Relocate Maasai Pastoralists", 2023.* https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/02/22/tanzania-should-halt-plan-relocate-maasai-pastoralists
[17] *Source: "Maasai in Tanzania", updated December 2025.* https://minorityrights.org/communities/maasai/

Map of human rights violations linked to the establishment of Pololeti GR in Loliondo.



Source: https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/27/tanzania-maasai-forcibly-displaced-game-reserve





"Trophy hunting induces land grabbing. Hunting packages cost between USD 25,000 and USD 105,000 per hunter."

BOX: LIVESTOCK CONFISCATION AS A TOOL TO SILENCE AND IMPOVERISH PEOPLE

The expansion of the Pololeti GR in 2022 followed a highly contested process marked by state violence against our communities and has been associated with numerous human rights violations. The consequences of the reserve's establishment extend beyond the initial displacement and restrictions on land access. In 2021, the government began imposing illegal fines for livestock entering the reserve, amounting to TZS 25,000 or more per goat or sheep and TZS 100,000 per cow. In 2022, one community reportedly lost more than 2,000 livestock in a single day. In 2025, fines totalling TZS 10 million were imposed, irrespective of the number of animals involved. In the same year, individuals found within the area were fined TZS 500,000. Herders found in grazing areas are reportedly required to pay separate fines for their presence and for their livestock, effectively subjecting them to double penalties.

A 2026 report by the Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations (PINGOs) Forum, based on field assessments and documentation in Ololosokwan and Kirtalo, further illustrates the scale and consequences of livestock confiscation and detention. Between March and August 2026, pastoralists in the two villages reportedly paid a combined TZS 376.7 million in livestock-related fines, following previously documented payments exceeding TZS 614 million in 2025. Repeated detention and the costs of securing the release of livestock have severely depleted household assets.

One documented pastoralist, who had previously owned approximately 200 cattle and more than 270 sheep and goats, reported paying TZS 8.75 million to secure the release of 270 animals. His herd subsequently declined dramatically, leaving his family struggling to cover basic needs, healthcare and school expenses. The report also documents livestock deaths and losses during enforcement operations. According to community records, at least 100 animals reportedly died, were killed, were taken by predators or went missing while being driven to detention enclosures or held in detention facilities in 2026. These incidents included the reported killing of two cows by wildlife rangers in Kirtalo in August 2026. Community members also reported that livestock had been detained outside officially designated reserve boundaries, with disputes over the locations where animals were apprehended. Such practices, combined with excessive fines and repeated detention, deepen economic insecurity and undermine pastoralists' ability to recover from drought and other shocks.[18]

Africa Safari landscape. Source: Magnific.com

[18] *Source: PINGOS Forum (2026): Pastoralism and Livelihood Security Four Years After Mass Evictions and Land Grabs. A Case Study of Ololosokwan and Kirtalo.*

4

TOURISM UNDERMINES CO-EXISTENCE AND BIODIVERSITY

Our co-existence with wildlife is threatened in different ways. Hotel construction and tourism infrastructure fragment the landscape, impacting livestock mobility, wildlife habitats and migration paths, and introduces a serious strain on water resources. Maasai knowledge of wildlife and the environment is ignored when making decisions on where to build hotels and camps, leading to environmental destruction. Wildlife reproduction and migration are impeded by ill-designed infrastructure.

Access to essential water bodies is blocked by tourism development. Conflicts over access to water points are increasing between hotels and the community.

Conservation NGOs and their colonial project of separating us from nature are complicit in the expansion of the conservation-tourism-hunting industry. The exponential growth of the tourism industry goes hand in hand with the increasing number of protected areas. Yet, the tourism boom is neither controlled nor regulated and it is likely that overtourism will soon kill the resource on which it depends. Indeed, tourism is killing itself through the ongoing overexpansion of roads and tourism infrastructure. Tourism is, in many ways, destructive to the environment, to wildlife and to pastoralism. However, the negative impacts of tourism are rendered invisible while the government is spreading false narratives unjustly accusing us Indigenous pastoralists of destroying nature through overpopulation and overgrazing.



Source: MISA

BOX: UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES, CONSERVATION AND TOURISM

Ngorongoro was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1979, Serengeti in 1981 and Kilimanjaro in 1987. All three sites are part of the Northern Tanzania circuit. The Ngorongoro Lengai UNESCO Global Geopark was established in 2018. Like World Heritage Sites, Geoparks are intended to connect conservation, local economic development, education and sustainable tourism. They contribute to tourism promotion and development and to disseminating a positive image about Tanzania as a travel destination. However, while all sites are marketed as prime tourist destinations and successful examples of conservation and local community involvement, the reality is quite different. Our communities never consented to the creation of these areas and are not involved in decisions about them.[19]

While many tourism businesses showcase so-called green practices, the overconcentration of tourism vehicles has negative biodiversity impacts, generates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and spreads invasive species of grass. Only a few tourism businesses have sustainable water management, energy and waste management practices.

Villagers are repeatedly accused of killing wildlife and criminalised as a result. Accusations of poaching are used to threaten and criminalise our community. People expressed that they do not receive adequate compensation for losses (crops, livestock, people) caused by wildlife, but face heavy fines if wildlife is killed in self-defence. The policy in place of *"wiping tears"* (for compensation in case of wildlife attacks) is experienced as unfair and not implemented.

[19] *See* https://www.misasolidarity.org/unesco *for more information.*



"Hotel construction and tourism infrastructure fragment the landscape, impacting livestock mobility, wildlife habitats and migration paths"

Top photo: Neptune Serengeti Luxury Tented Camp. Source: https://share.google/YYAau3C57FvErZxt9
Bottom Photo: Source: MISA

5

TOURISM TAKES PLACE WITHOUT OUR CONSENT (FPIC)

Our right to **FPIC** is undermined in different ways. Maasai have never consented to surrendering the lands from which tourism revenues are being extracted every year. Serengeti and all the other lands now used for tourism and hunting were taken from us without our **FPIC.** Serengeti NP is the main tourism hub driving all surrounding tourism developments, including **NCA.** It was taken from us.

BOX: WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC)?

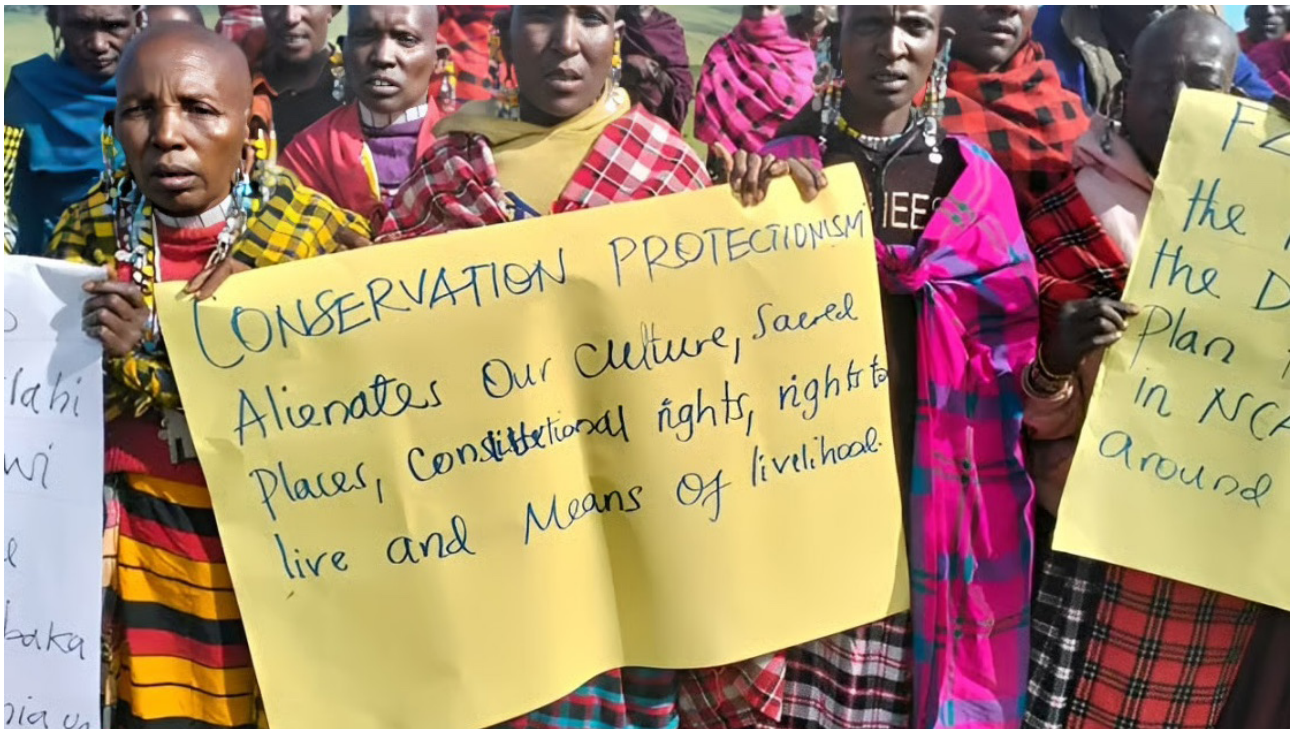
Indigenous Peoples have the right to FPIC, which is enshrined in international law. It means that affected Indigenous communities must be able to participate in decisions before a project is approved or implemented, on the basis of accessible and accurate information, free from intimidation. Consent must be sought early enough to influence the decision, and the community must be able to say no. A meeting or a signature alone does not establish meaningful consent if communities have not received information, cannot consult independently, or face threats, arrests, eviction or livestock seizure. Community procedures should be culturally appropriate, inclusive and properly documented. Village General Assembly records may be important evidence, but they should not substitute for a process that genuinely informs and involves all affected groups. Consent should remain meaningful during implementation, with monitoring and the possibility of seeking remedies or withdrawing consent where legally available if serious breaches occur.

The government has a duty to protect human rights and ensure lawful, fair processes. Tourism companies and investors also have responsibilities to identify, prevent and remedy human rights impacts associated with their operations and business relationships. A project cannot be considered sustainable simply because it has a permit or has been marketed as a conservation-friendly model.

Today, tourism developments and decisions are made without us. Maasai communities lack even basic information about ongoing tourism or hunting activities on their land. Too often, we don't know the owners and managers of tourism businesses on our lands. The people we spoke to have no access to reliable information about who owns and operates a specific business extracting profit from their lands, how much revenues are being generated, who benefits and where to go in case of complaints.

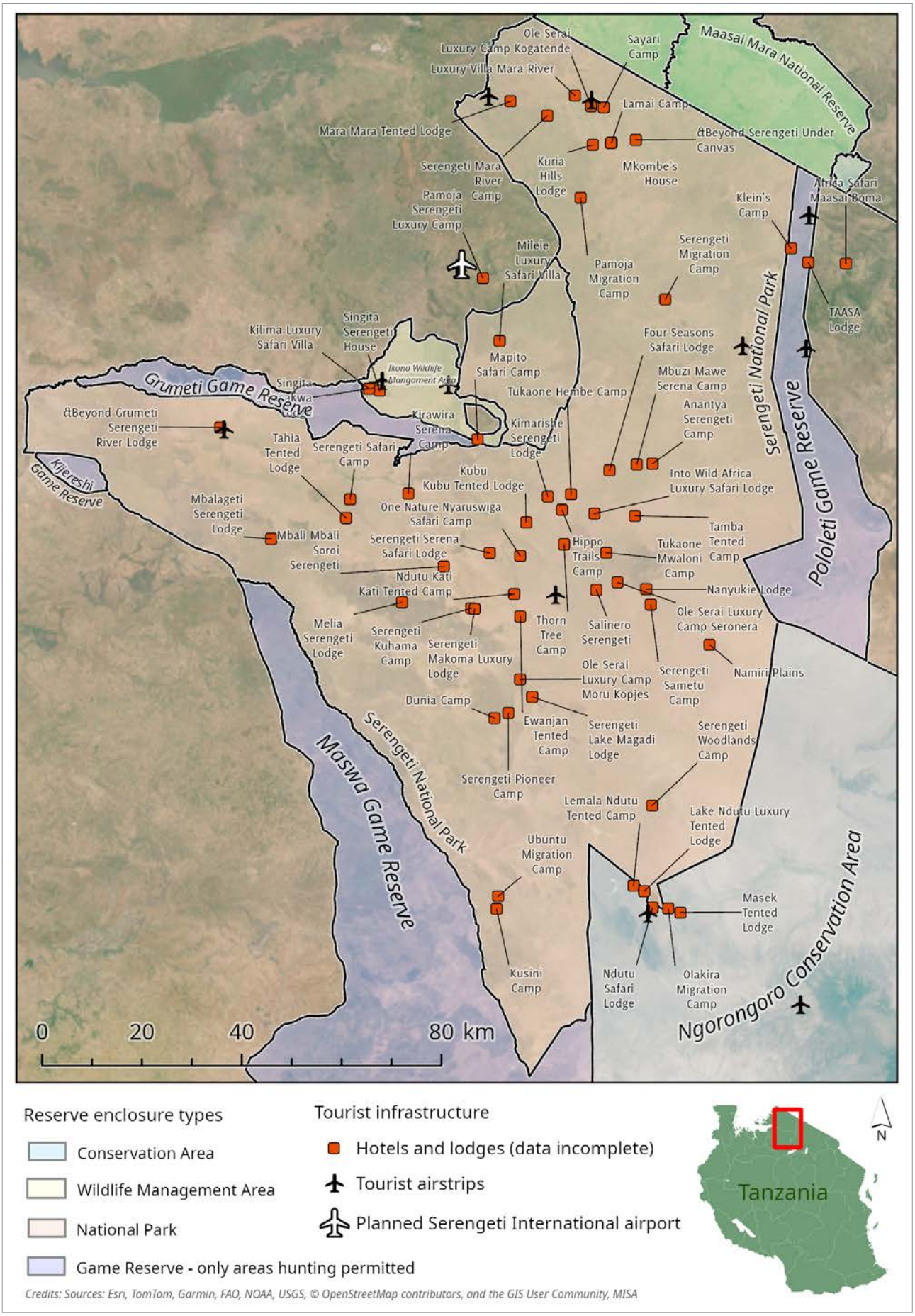
While some investors used to negotiate with the villages in the past, the new wave of investments is facilitated and captured by the central government, completely bypassing village authorities (especially the Village General Assembly) and customary/community institutions. Currently, both investors and the state fail to respect our right to **FPIC.** Tourism businesses rely on government law enforcement to access land for tourism development while the corruption of village and district officials enables violations of **FPIC.**

Tanzania does not recognise us as Indigenous Peoples under Tanzanian domestic law. However, due to our recognition under international law, we are entitled to the right to **FPIC** which includes the right to say no.



Maasai activists organized protests against the theft of their lands in the name of conservation on World Heritage Day (April 18). Credit: MISA.

Serengeti NP showing hotel density and airstrips including planned international airport.



The park - where hunting is not allowed - is surrounded by areas where hunting is organized (mostly Game Reserves).





"The shrinking and fragmentation of our grazing areas leads to food insecurity and poverty".

Top photo: Serena hotel NCA. Source: https://ie.hotels.com/ho238490/ngorongoro-serena-safari-lodge-ngorongoro-conservation-area-tanzania/?pwaThumbnailDialog=thumbnail-gallery&pwaDialogNested=media-gallery

6

TOURISM DOES NOT RESPECT MAASAI CULTURE

The uncontrolled development of tourism and hunting is threatening our culture in various ways. Maasai culture is frequently used to market Northern Tanzania as a tourist destination, but visitors may see a narrow performance of dress, song or dance while the wider social, spiritual and ecological meanings of Maasai life are ignored, manipulated and undermined by both the state and the tourism industry.

Tourism activities do not provide meaningful and respectful encounters between Maasai and tourists. This is a missed opportunity. Rather, interactions between Maasai and tourists tend to be transactional, superficial and dehumanising.

Maasai culture is used as a tourism attraction. Yet, tourists only have access to a small, biased and performative part of our culture. Our culture is richer, more complex and more alive than what is performed for tourists.

Maasai do not feel respected by tourism activities. Our right to consent before photos of us are taken is often disrespected. Too many pictures are being misused including for non-private or commercial uses.

Representations and images of Maasai are used by the tourism industry for marketing purposes without our consent. We have countless examples of women who have suddenly found their portraits used in tourism promotion materials, at the airport or in brochures.

Tourism limits and undermines our right to access and use essential sacred sites. This threatens our rituals, rites of passage, access to prayer areas including the Mountain of God (Oldonyo Lengai), which was forcibly included in the UNESCO Geopark. By extension, access to medicinal herbs, walking sticks, clubs and salt licks is limited.

Maasai knowledge is ignored and excluded and only a few guides are Maasai, which leads to a misrepresentation of Maasai culture. Most rangers and guides are hired from non-Maasai backgrounds, resulting in a lack of knowledge about our landscape and wrong information shared with visitors.

BOX: MAASAI MUST ASK PERMISSION TO HOLD RITE-OF-PASSAGE CEREMONIES AT NGORONGORO CRATER

On 22 June 2024, over 4,000 young Maasai boys aged 9 to 17 gathered in Ngorongoro Crater to celebrate their initiation ceremony known as Enkipaata. It is the first of three Maasai rites of passage that every Maasai man must go through. According to tradition, the boys were blessed by elders in circles in round natural water pools in the crater. They sang solidarity songs throughout the night, perpetuating the bond that has existed between the Maasai community and Ngorongoro Crater from time immemorial. Ngorongoro Crater is a major custodian of Maasai culture. All known Maasai age groups find their ritual bases within the Ngorongoro caldera. As a rule, no Enkipaata can be undertaken in a place other than in a natural round water reserve and Ngorongoro Crater has for centuries been the base of Maasai cultural and spiritual elements.

The Tanzanian Government tried to use the occasion to further its anti-Maasai campaign, claiming Maasai are saying goodbye to Ngorongoro. Some statements on social media also claimed that the people gathering in the ceremony had agreed to relocate to Msomera, which is false. In reality, this event– more than any other– showed Ngorongoro is a backbone of Maasai culture and spirituality.



In June 2024, thousands of Maasai gathered in the Ngorongoro crater to celebrate the rite of passage Enkipaata. Source: https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/featured-report/tourism-over-cultural-heritage

7

TOURISM DOES NOT BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY

We are excluded from the benefits of tourism in different ways. Safari tourism and trophy hunting generate substantial revenues, yet our community does not benefit from them. Tourism makes us poor by grabbing the land we depend on, limiting our access to essential grazing areas and thriving livelihoods, forcing our youth to migrate out. Only a fraction of tourism revenues reaches the community while investors and private businesses become rich from exploiting the resources found on our lands. In Tanzania, the tourism sector is largely characterised by foreign ownership, with most tour operators owned by foreign entrepreneurs. Arusha has the highest number (401) of tour operator enterprises. Estimates suggest that up to 60% of the profits generated by the tourism industry are repatriated abroad.[20]

While luxurious tourism facilities cater to the needs of the privileged of this world, we continue to face a shortage of adequate and culturally appropriate social services in the sectors of education and health as well as serious challenges when it comes to food security. Our rights to food, health and education are sacrificed for tourism development. Infrastructure investments in tourist destinations benefit tourists only and bypass community needs (including essential infrastructure such as electricity, roads, internet).

Interference from the government prevents communities from making deals with investors directly. Revenues are captured by the central government and don't reach the village (and often don't reach the district either). In many instances, tourism revenues are centralised and brought down to the villages through TAWA which does not distribute benefits equally to the respective communities in the project areas.

Tourism only contributes very few low paid jobs to our local communities. Overall, tourism and hunting activities are managed and controlled by non-Maasai without our involvement. When Maasai access tourism related employment, jobs are usually casual labour jobs, not management jobs, and do not come with social protection. Employment opportunities are generally insecure and often degrading while the development of tourism activities on our rangelands threatens traditional livelihoods like pastoralism and introduces poverty.

Maasai women are overwhelmingly absent from the tourism sector. The prohibition of Maasai employment in Ngorongoro is discriminatory and contributes to poverty.

Tourism extracts revenues from our lands without our control and without our consent.

[20] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666957922000106

Many tourism businesses have local Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects ranging from dispensaries, water points, schools, and local transport to education grants. In some places, these projects are appreciated by the community, especially if relations between the hotel owner and the community are good. In a context where state services in the health and education sectors are still completely lacking 65 years after independence, any provision of services tends to be welcomed. However, most CSR projects are unreliable, underfunded, and not aligned with community needs. Many communities explained how projects are developed without community involvement, to control community resistance. They are seen as a form of greenwashing. There are no mechanisms for community evaluation and consultation on how to improve these projects and ensure they address local needs. Many respondents highlighted that money allocated to CSR projects should rather go to the village account.

Tourism does not generate circular economy opportunities. For example, only a few tourism businesses procure meat and milk locally, failing to create market opportunities for local communities.

BOX: THE MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM AND ITS KEY CONTRIBUTORS

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) is over-financed compared to other ministries that directly touch the lives of the people such as the Ministry of Livestock, the Ministry of Land or the Ministry of Health. This creates a power imbalance between various ministries and in their ability to implement laws and policies or influence decisions. Funding continues to flow despite the terrible human rights violation records of the Ministry of Natural Resources over the years.

Our analysis of MNRT's budget for 2023/24 reveals that a good portion of its budgetary aid comes from foreign countries including Canada, China, UAE, South Korea, United States of America, Morocco, Namibia, Norway, Belgium, France, Finland, Germany, Switzerland and the European Union. Yet, the largest share comes from international conservation, tourism and banking institutions that include African Development Bank (AfDB), FZS, Global Environmental Facility (GEF), African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), Enabel (Belgian Development Agency), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), International Council of Museums (ICOM), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and IUCN. Other actors also include Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German Development Bank, KfW), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), USAID, HoneyGuide Foundation, PAMS Foundation, Trade Aid, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, WildAid, World Travel Market (WTM), and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

8

THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IS NOT HELD ACCOUNTABLE

Our ability to monitor, co-manage, control and benefit from tourism activities is undermined in different ways. Our pastoralist communities are largely excluded from the negotiation of investment contracts and kept in the dark. Tourism activities operate in opaque ways so businesses cannot be held accountable. There is no mechanism ensuring tourism benefits reach the villages.

Contracts, revenue streams and deals with investors are not transparent and largely unknown to the community. Complaint and remediation mechanisms are unclear or non-existent and fair and clear dispute resolution mechanisms are lacking including access to independent lawyers.

In the case of WMAs, the Authorized Association (AA) is seen as a black box where incomes and expenses are not transparent creating a situation of failed accountability. Increasingly, WMAs are controlled by the district or higher levels of government. Conflicts are reported between villages because revenues are shared equally regardless of how much land each village contributed to the establishment of the WMA.

Most businesses don't have a human rights, Indigenous Peoples or climate policy. Some investors are trying to develop good relations with the community and when they do, it can make a real difference. Yet, these instances are rare and vulnerable to change in management.

Most tourists are not aware of ongoing human rights violations in their travel destination. As a result, they cannot make informed travelling choices based on reliable information, if they wish to do so. Tourists spend considerable amounts of money to go on a safari, and some might make different decisions if they knew this money does not benefit our community at all, but, on the contrary, infringes our rights.



BOX: THE HUMAN RIGHTS TRACK RECORD OF STATE INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN TOURISM

Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) is responsible for managing and protecting Tanzania's NPs. Its mandate includes wildlife and habitat conservation, park management and tourism. However, TANAPA has been linked to serious human rights allegations involving its rangers. In a 2025 communication to the Tanzanian government, UN Special Procedures experts raised allegations of forced evictions, cattle seizures, excessive use of force, sexual violence, torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances in and around Ruaha National Park, in connection with park expansion and the REGROW project.

The **Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA)** is responsible for managing wildlife and regulating hunting activities in designated areas outside NPs, including GRs and GCAs. It oversees hunting permits and licences and wildlife law enforcement. There are reported allegations of human rights violations involving rangers from TAWA and other conservation authorities, including beatings, killings, harassment, forced evictions and unlawful livestock confiscations in communities near protected areas.

The **Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT)** is the government ministry responsible for policy and oversight in Tanzania's natural resources, wildlife and tourism sectors. It oversees institutions such as **TANAPA** and **TAWA** and plays a role in conservation and tourism development projects.

The **Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA)** is responsible for managing the **NCA.** Its mandate includes wildlife and natural resource conservation, tourism development and, officially, the promotion of the welfare of Indigenous Maasai communities living in the area. However, the **NCAA** has faced serious allegations of human rights violations involving Maasai communities, including restrictions on access to grazing land, water sources and cultural sites, restrictions on movement, livestock confiscations and abuses by rangers. To achieve its tourism and conservation objectives, the **NCAA** imposes extensive restrictions on the activities and livelihoods of residents within the **NCA**. These include prohibitions on crop cultivation and the harvesting of live trees, restrictions on livestock grazing in certain areas, particularly craters and forests, and limitations on the collection of forest products. Residents also face restrictions on housing construction, vehicle ownership and use, access to electricity, the materials they may bring into the area, and their freedom of movement.

Africa Safari landscape. Source: Magnific.com

Direct interactions with tourists are restricted to designated cultural bomas, while access to villages by tourists is generally prohibited, except for specifically permitted visits. No settlements or livelihood activities are permitted within craters, including the Ngorongoro Crater, which forms a central attraction for game drives and hotels located along its rim.[21] A March 2026 report by the Controller and Auditor General further indicates that the **NCAA** counted only a Chairman in 2024/25 but no board members,[22] highlighting significant governance deficits.

The **Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO)** is a private-sector membership organisation representing licensed tour operators in Tanzania. Established in 1983, it advocates for its members' interests, engages in tourism policy discussions and promotes the competitiveness of Tanzania's tourism industry. **TATO** has faced criticism for defending government conservation authorities against allegations of human rights violations. More specifically, **TATO** was directly involved in discussions with the **NCAA** in April 2021 that led to identifying and promoting Msomera as the best relocation site for the Maasai of Ngorongoro. The lobby group **TATO** recommended it because it was further away than alternative options initially considered, like Gilai in Longido.[23] Earlier research has shown that some tour operators perceive the presence of Maasai communities and their livestock as potentially detrimental to their business interests, arguing that tourists prefer a more "pristine" wilderness landscape.[24]

[21] Albers et al. (2022) : Status and Perspectives of Maasai Women in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania.
[22] Source: https://www.nao.go.tz/uploads/Annual_General_Report_for_Audit_of_Public_Authorities_FY_2024-25.pdf
[23] https://thechanzo.com/2025/08/18/state-enabled-dispossession-masked-as-conservation-emergency-the-hidden-war-against-the-maasai-in-ngoron-goro/?shem=aimgspe,
[24] Katherine A. Snyder & Emmanuel B. Sulle (2011): Tourism in Maasai communities: a chance to improve livelihoods?, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, DOI:10.1080/09669582.2011.579617

9

CULTURAL BOMAS ARE SITES OF EXPLOITATION

Visiting a Maasai cultural boma is an unmissable part of the safari. All tourists travelling to Northern Tanzania are taken to a cultural boma, where they experience Maasai dancing and singing, shown how to traditionally make fire and encouraged to buy Maasai beadwork.

Cultural bomas were established in the early 2000s as a support mechanism for the poorest and those needing support in the community, especially youth (Morans) and women who have lost their husbands and have no livestock or other means to support their families. The ways of working, objectives and governance of cultural bomas, however, have evolved a lot over the last two decades.

Today, cultural bomas operate in ways that have departed from their original social and cultural goals. In the last decade, we have seen the establishment of new privately-owned cultural bomas (like those created by Ngorongoro individuals in Makuyuni and Esilalei), and the creation of some cultural bomas managed and owned by investors directly (like the one owned by Thomson Safari). Here is an overview of some of the challenges we found in cultural bomas.

Cultural bomas tend to be sites of exploitation and artificial performance of culture. While they provide shelter and limited opportunities for some women and youth, they are plagued by exploitation and corruption by tour operators, owners and boma leaders and face various forms of elite capture, in part because bomas tend to compete with each other, leading to unfair business practices. A lot of the money that circulates in cultural bomas tends to be captured by guides and operators.

While cultural bomas were created to support the disenfranchised, the selection process has become opaque and politicised and no longer serves its initial social goals. Many people complained about employment discrimination and the lack of rotation of people working in cultural bomas, leading to community conflicts.

Cultural bomas have also become sites of commercialisation of Maasai culture where the figure of the *"authentic"*, *"real"* and "traditional" Maasai is being showcased for tourists. Employed Maasai must follow strict policies restricting them from wearing any kind of objects and gear associated with modernity such as a mobile phone, a watch, shoes or non-Maasai style of dress. Women are kept in a low position and often prevented from talking to tourists.

10

WOMEN ARE EXCLUDED FROM TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

We experience social inequalities between men and women in our community. Women face the direct consequences of attacks and restrictions on community rights to access resources. They are directly impacted by limited access to firewood, house building materials, medicine and other resources. Indeed, women are responsible for collecting firewood from the forest, constructing houses using forest materials, performing prayers, and accessing sacred sites in different locations. Any restrictions on accessing and using forest resources, rivers, and water sources have far-reaching consequences for women.

We see the systematic exclusion of women from tourism activities and opportunities, including jobs. Women face gender-based violence and harassment. Their access to property is limited.

We are also concerned by the exclusion of women from decision-making processes which undermines FPIC.



Source: MISA

"Safari tourism leads to land grabs and finances the eviction of our communities."





Top photo: Neptune Serengeti Luxury Tented Camp. Source: https://share.google/YYAau3C57FvErZxt9
Bottom Photo: Source: MISA

OUR MAASAI MODEL FOR FAIR AND JUST TOURISM

How can we transform the safari tourism industry?



Source: MISA



Source: MISA

We are the Maasai of Tanzania. We want the tourism industry to change.

BOX: WHO ARE WE?

We, the Maasai of Tanzania, mainly occupy the regions of Arusha and Manyara in the North of the country, while also living in Kilimanjaro, Iringa, Morogoro, Tanga, and Pwani. We engage primarily in pastoralism, and in some areas practise agro-pastoralism. We have our own traditional systems, supervised by elders and traditional leaders. Our division of labour is systematically organised, with each group having its own roles within the age-set system. Maasai culture, spiritual beliefs, and livelihood are closely tied to land, livestock, wildlife, and nature in general. Without any of these elements, our culture, spiritual beliefs, and livelihood would be undermined. For us, land is the foundation of everything. Without land, there is no culture, no livestock, and no sacred grounds. Livestock, for the Maasai, does not only mean economic stability but is also highly connected to cultural beliefs. It is a source of friendship, naming, reconciliation, blessings, and food. We do not eat game meat, and all animals are associated with Maasai clans for protection. We have encountered systematic displacement, from the colonial period to the contemporary government, with the situation escalating from 2021 to the present. The Serengeti, Tarangire, Mkomazi, and Pololeti have been taken from us, while much of our land is now under threat of eviction. More than 80% of the land that was once described by colonial explorers and missionaries as Maasai Country in Tanzania is now listed by the Tanzanian government as strategic conservation areas worthy of *"protection"*. We have protected and lived in harmony with the land for centuries and are now being targeted for it.

Tourism should respect our culture, pastoralism, spirituality, environment and human rights and should not instigate or finance land dispossession. We have nothing against tourists in principle, provided that tourism respects our way of life. The massive promotion of tourism by the Tanzanian Government leads to land loss and threatens our access to spiritual areas, cultural areas, grazing areas, water, medicinal plants, firewood and mobility. Essential natural resources like water are being diverted by the government away from our communities to satisfy the needs of the tourism industry at the expense of our people[25]. While tourism generates high revenues, our communities do not benefit. Our communities are not meaningfully involved in decision-making and our right to FPIC is not respected.

Tourism in Tanzania cannot be considered in isolation; it is closely linked to and responsible for financing the expansion of fortress conservation. While we Maasai have conserved our land for centuries, we are being evicted to make space for hotels, hunting trips and safari tours. Tourism relies on restrictions, no-go zones and the separation of our Indigenous communities from the nature we have stewarded for centuries.

> Another tourism is possible: one that is community-led, community-owned, and which allows our people, our livestock and nature to thrive. For this to happen, alternative investments, better practices, radical transformation and an equitable distribution of revenues from tourism are required.

The following model is the outcome of a participatory process organised by the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) and endorsed by all its members. In 2026, we travelled across Maasai land and spoke to 652 people from 24 villages across the districts of Ngorongoro, Monduli, Simanjiro and Longido. We gathered the views of women (217), Morans/youths (234), and elders, traditional leaders and village council representatives (201). We asked our community what their experience of tourism has been over the last decades, and how they would like to see tourism evolve.

It is our deep wish that this model can help reshape the tourism industry in Tanzania. We invite tourists to use it to make informed decisions and tourism businesses to improve their policies and practices. We call on the Tanzanian government, the international community and public funders of biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism to ensure their programmes, policies and funding respect our rights. We will strive to disseminate this model and use it as a tool for dialogue, alliance building with other pastoralist and Indigenous communities, and transformative change.

[25] *MISA Conservation Vision, 2024*

OUR MAASAI MODEL FOR FAIR AND JUST TOURISM

How can we transform the safari tourism industry?

1 Land is life

We want tourism to respect and support our life on the land. We reject all forms of displacement, even if so-called voluntary. Tourism should not lead to land grabbing. Tourism should not lead to the expansion of fortress conservation.

2 Tourism Must Support and Respect Pastoralism

We reject all forms of dispossession of communal land used for grazing. We reject all forms of loss of mobility and the disruption of livestock routes. There must not be beating of herders, violence, and livestock confiscation.

3 No Trophy Hunting

We call for the abolition of hunting. We demand that the Tanzanian government completely ban trophy hunting like Kenya did. We encourage countries to pass trophy hunting import ban laws.

4 Tourism Must Respect Our Co-existence with Wildlife

No tourism infrastructure, hotels or camps on wildlife corridors. No negative biodiversity impacts of hotel construction and other infrastructure. Priority should be given to the local community with guaranteed daily water rights for households and herds ahead of tourism use.

5 No Tourism Without Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

We have the right to FPIC before any project is developed on our lands.



6 Cultural Integrity: No Appropriation of Our Culture and Knowledge

Our Maasai culture is a living knowledge and not a product to be appropriated.

7 Tourism Must Benefit Our Community

We need a different model of tourism: community-led, community-owned and with fair benefit-sharing.

8 The Tourism Industry Should Be Transparent, Accountable and Fair

Revenues generated on our lands must be managed in transparent ways to foster accountability.

9 No Exploitation in Cultural Bomas

Cultural bomas were initially designed to support women in need. If women are not in the driving seat, there is a risk that this objective is sacrificed for other goals.

10 The Roles of Women and Youth

Our culture recognises different groups in the community and allocates different roles and responsibilities to each. Women and youth are important groups in the Maasai community.

We are the Maasai of Tanzania.
We want the tourism industry to change.

MISA Maasai International Solidarity Alliance

1

LAND IS LIFE

We need to stay on the land because it is a source of food, water, pasture, livelihood, salt licks and building materials for our houses. Land is where we find our sacred mountains, medicinal areas (Irpuli), trees (Oreteti, Irmisigiyio, Oloilalei) and sacred grasses, and where we hold our ceremonies and rites of passage. Land is everything.

Land supports healthy livestock and healthy people and land supports our economy. Land is where we have our home, where our parents and ancestors were born and where we will be buried, and it is where we find wildlife and livestock living together. Land, people and livestock cannot be separated. We have traditional knowledge and skills to manage our land.

We want tourism to respect and support our life on the land:

- We reject all forms of displacement, even if so-called voluntary. No relocation can ever be voluntary in a coercive and authoritarian context. While our land may look empty or unoccupied to outsiders, every area has its purpose. This includes ronjos or temporary settlements that are essential to our mobility and culture.
- Tourism should not lead to land grabbing. It is possible on community lands. Communal lands and village lands must be protected and respected. Our villages should be given the power to control the village land use without interference by other authorities. Villages should have a right to engage and negotiate with investors who want to invest in their lands.
- Tourism should not lead to the expansion of fortress conservation through the creation of new protected areas, GCAs, GRs or WMAs. There should be no forced resettlement and no reclassification of communal land or village land into other protection categories.
- We reject all forms of loss of access to water for human consumption and for livestock.
- All sacred places and ritual sites (used by different community groups on different occasions) must be protected and respected as part of settlement and landscape use. We reject the interference of UNESCO/Geopark in the management of our sacred sites like Oldonyo Lengai.
- Land taken for conservation, safari tourism and trophy hunting without FPIC must be handed back to the community.
- We need a new constitution which will ensure the devolution of land from the President to the people, allowing for the establishment of a legal framework that enables communities to truly be in control.
- Our community must decide if and where new hotels or tourism infrastructure are to be built, ensuring that our strategic resources are not undermined; there should be no imposition of new constructions from above.

2

TOURISM MUST SUPPORT AND RESPECT PASTORALISM

Like land, livestock is essential to our way of life and survival. We want livestock to continue to be the foundation of our culture and identity. Our livestock is a source of leadership and respect. It sustains our economy through food, provides us medicine and enables us to cover school fees, clothing and other costs. Livestock embodies our culture through practices like reconciliation and rites of passage and holds spiritual significance from birth to death.

We want tourism to respect, promote and support pastoralism:

- We reject all forms of dispossession of communal land used for grazing and the harvest of medicine and firewood.
- We demand unconditional access to Ngorongoro Crater, Ormoti, Mairang'wai, Alaitole, Oldupai, Mukulat and Endoinyo Oormorwak as granted by the law. We also demand that our right to graze within already established WMAs be fully respected and protected, especially in dry season. This right should be enshrined and ensured when the WMA general management plan and land use planning/zoning is developed and reviewed. We demand the right to graze in already established GRs until they can finally be abolished.
- We reject all forms of loss of mobility and the disruption of livestock routes. There should be no restrictions on livestock movements. Tourism must support and not undermine wildlife, human and livestock co-existence. We say NO to "no-go" zones. We reject all forms of loss of access to water for livestock. Use of and access to water for livestock should be prioritised over water consumption by tourism facilities including pools and showers.
- We reject all forms of disturbances to livestock and herders (noise, traffic, chasing). There must not be beating of herders, violence, and livestock confiscation. Harassment, insults and gate controls targeting herders, women and youth must cease. Rangers must be held accountable for any violence or harassment inflicted.
- Roads and tourism activities and infrastructure should not disrupt grazing patterns or block livestock corridors.
- Grazing and resting areas should be managed according to Maasai rotational grazing knowledge, with the tourism industry reframed as a guest rather than rule-setter. Tourism activities must respect seasonal rejuvenation.
- Communal land must be recognised, respected and protected. Tourism in Maasai land must respect, protect and support pastoralism. Pastoralism must be explicitly recognised and supported as a legitimate form of land use worthy of protection and as a base for livelihood. We need a new constitution which recognises pastoralism as a livelihood and land use system that is efficient, legitimate and deserves protection.

3

NO TROPHY HUNTING

We believe trophy hunting is inhumane, immoral, barbaric and against Maasai culture. Trophy hunting is not compatible with pastoralism and biodiversity conservation and leads to land alienation and displacement of the pastoralist communities. Our communities do not understand nor support the idea that wildlife is killed unnecessarily. Trophy hunting segregates and creates a racist distinction between the rich (trophy hunters) and the poor (poachers). It leads to the depletion of wildlife. Why should animals die for human leisure?

Some pro-hunting organisations and lobbies say we need hunting money to finance conservation but we can conserve the environment for free and have done so for centuries.

We call for the abolition of hunting.

- We demand that the Tanzanian government completely ban trophy hunting like Kenya did.
- We encourage countries to pass trophy hunting import ban laws.





Source: https://africanhuntinggazette.com/the-kilombero-valley-africas-best-kept-secret/

4

TOURISM MUST RESPECT OUR CO-EXISTENCE WITH WILDLIFE

We have always coexisted, we coexist and we want to continue to coexist with wildlife. We have cultural, traditional, spiritual, and medicinal attachments to wildlife. Our Maasai peaceful behaviour and knowledge benefit wildlife, which feel secure and protected. Different Maasai clans have a cultural and moral obligation to protect different wildlife species.

We want to continue to co-exist with wildlife and live in harmony with nature:

- No tourism infrastructure, hotels or camps on wildlife corridors. No negative biodiversity impacts of hotel construction and other infrastructure.
- Priority should be given to the local community with guaranteed daily water rights for households and herds ahead of tourism use, with dry-season monitoring. Hotels should ensure sustainable water use and management (both drinking and other uses) and put in place water conservation methods.
- Priority should be given to the local community over firewood to avoid conflicts between women residents and hotels. Hotels should ensure proper firewood use and management as well as other energy uses and conservation methods (fuel, diesel, solar, ...). Alternative sources of energy (solar, biogas) should be prioritised and made available to the community.
- Tourism businesses must have proper waste management and sewage treatment policies and practices in place. There should be no dumping of solid waste or wastewater near bomas, water points or salt licks to protect human and livestock health. Information on waste disposal and sewage treatment should be made available and community committees should be involved in environmental checks.
- The total number of vehicles should be controlled including at specific points and moments to avoid road kills and disturbances to wildlife and people. Time and area limits for safari vehicles in residential and grazing areas should be put in place, with enforceable speed restrictions. Effective measures should be put in place for the control and active removal of invasive species (spread by vehicles).
- Tourism businesses should publish a climate strategy on how to reduce CO2 emissions linked to international and domestic flights and local transport. We reject soil carbon credit projects on our lands, and any form of carbon offset project. Instead, tourism operators need to find ways to reduce their huge amounts of CO2 emissions.

5

NO TOURISM WITHOUT FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC)

We have the right to FPIC before any project is developed on our lands. FPIC is to be ensured at all stages, from project identification to formulation, implementation and closure. FPIC should be obtained before we enter into a contract with any investor.

For our right to FPIC to be ensured:

- The FPIC process must be community-based or community-controlled. There should be no interference or intimidation by the government.
- Access to information about tourism and its impacts should be guaranteed for all community members. Various dissemination channels should be used including village assemblies, radio, social media and plays to ensure that non-literate community members are informed. Neutral, transparent and independent information should be provided allowing our communities to assess the advantages and pitfalls of the proposed contracts. This includes proper training, communication and independent and credible legal advice to all community members with emphasis on women and youth.
- Before an investor signs a contract or begins construction, the community should receive the draft agreement in Maa and Swahili, have adequate time to consider it, access independent legal advice and understand the proposed land use, water requirements, employment commitments, revenue terms, environmental impacts, complaint procedures and termination provisions.



Source: MISA

- A truly effective and meaningful participatory process is key to FPIC. Separate spaces should be provided to consult and involve everyone, including elders, Laigwanak (traditional leaders), Morans, women, youth and various elite groups (lawyers, human rights defenders, Civil Society Organizations) before a joint community decision is taken. The Maasai community operates within the age-set system, a social structure that assigns responsibilities and roles to different groups within Maasai society without granting autonomous authority to any one group over another. Within this system, no group supersedes another and all groups need to be consulted and consent. None of them has the final say and no single group should be treated as automatically authorised to consent for everyone. If one of the groups does not consent, the project or investment cannot go forward. The FPIC process requires the organisation of separate meetings for all different community groups. For FPIC to be effective and meaningful, it must be understood and agreed upon by all of these groups.
- Consent includes the right to say 'no'. FPIC requires a free and non-coercive environment. This means no arbitrary arrests, no evictions, no abuse, no harassment, no seizure of livestock. The right to withdraw consent in case of contract breaches or abuses is also essential. We reject any form of violence on our lands by **TAWA** and **TANAPA.**
- FPIC requires a whole community approach. There should be no capture by the elite or a fraction of the community.
- The FPIC process should be properly documented and monitored at all stages. It is important to keep written records of whose consent was given but Village General Assembly records are insufficient as proof of FPIC.
- Accessible complaint mechanisms at village level (including anonymous options) and regular community reviews of tourism impacts should be made available.
- We commit to developing a full and culturally appropriate Maasai FPIC protocol.



In June 2024, thousands of Maasai gathered in the Ngorongoro crater to celebrate the rite of passage Enkipaata. Source: https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/featured-report/tourism-over-cultural-heritage

6

CULTURAL INTEGRITY: NO APPROPRIATION OF OUR CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE

Our culture holds us together and shapes our relationship with livestock, land and each other. Our Maasai culture is a living knowledge and not a product to be appropriated.

We want:

- Respectful and meaningful tourism-local interactions.
- Tourists should be able to join everyday experiences (such as walking with herders or milking) rather than consuming staged shows, if this is the type of tourism activities the community wants to develop.
- We reject the marketing of our culture for tourism. Rites of passage, healing rituals and deep spiritual practices should be off limits for tourists.
- We must consent, individually and collectively, before our photos and videos are taken. Separate consent procedures should be in place for elders, women, Morans and children prior to filming or photography, with an easy option to refuse. Guidelines for photo consent should be developed, and guides should encourage tourists to always ask if they can take pictures.
- We must control how we are represented and used in tourism promotion materials. Maasai community should review and approve all promotional materials (websites, brochures, social media) before publication.
- We reject all forms of cultural appropriation. We reject the business practice of using non-Maasai dressed as Maasai to attract tourists.
- Tourism should never separate us from our spiritual and sacred sites. Sacred mountains, springs, trees and sites remain under the authority of the community, with tourism access only if we agree and with clear rules.
- Local and traditional knowledge should be used in tourism decisions and activities. Maasai guides, drivers, elders, women and Morans should be recognised and paid as experts when their knowledge informs and supports tourism or conservation activities.

7

TOURISM MUST BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY

While we want pastoralism to remain our main livelihood and source of identity, we want to access a range of job and economic opportunities linked to tourism to diversify our livelihoods.

We want tourism to benefit our communities and be shaped by our needs and priorities:

- We need a different model of tourism: community-led, community-owned and with fair benefit-sharing. Tourism should be organised in a fundamentally different way: communities should be leading economically and organisationally, receive a substantial and transparent share of the revenues, and become greater owners or co-operators of tourism offerings. The benefits of tourism should be controlled and managed by our community, in a transparent way.
- A substantial share of total profits should go to the community, and profits should be equitably and communally distributed and spent. All hotels should have formal contracts obliging them to pay an agreed amount to the village.
- Village land should be adequately planned so that tourism activities are properly allocated to certain areas and payments linked to land use are clearly defined. Benefits should be diversified and include: a substantial share of entrance fees, renting of the land, concession per bed to the village and sale of shanga (beads). Current fees must be reviewed because they are extremely low.



Source: MISA

- Benefits should be equitably distributed within the community. The Lake Natron Model (see below) is a good example of community managed incomes, which could be replicated elsewhere according to the respective context. In Ngorongoro division, the Ngorongoro Pastoral Council (NPC) represents an interesting example of a mechanism designed to redistribute tourism revenues to the community. While the **NPC** has faced significant challenges linked to mismanagement and co-optation and has been completely dismantled under Samia Suluhu Hassan's regime, it is nevertheless remembered by many as an effective mechanism which turned a (too small) fraction of tourism incomes into bursaries for students.
- Our community must access and benefit from tourism related employment opportunities. A target of 60-75% of jobs should be local and Maasai, without gender discrimination. Jobs should be maintained during seasonal variations. Jobs should reflect a diversity of skills and include both entry-level and high-level jobs, with opportunities to grow. For this to be possible, there is a need for skills training and development including once employed. Jobs should be decent (contract, insurance, leave, decent wage, National Social Security Fund) including for women. There should be minimum quotas for Maasai women and men in management, guide, driver and ranger positions, not only entry-level roles.
- A significant proportion of tourism revenues should be invested back into the local community economy. We encourage Maasai investment and community ownership of tourism facilities and want to see more of it. Where possible, the co-ownership model between investors and community/village is to be facilitated. There should be no hidden or side deals that divert revenues to external companies, brokers or politicians.
- Tourism should directly contribute to the creation of useful infrastructure. Tourism-related roads, power and telecommunications should provide shared access points for local users. Tourism should directly contribute to the State's implementation of people's right to health, food and education.
- Local sourcing of meat and milk at fair prices should be prioritised, creating local economic opportunities and avoiding imports that undercut local markets.

BOX: THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE LAKE NATRON MODEL

The Lake Natron Model demonstrates how community-led tourism, wildlife conservation and pastoralism can coexist and support each other within a community-managed landscape. In Ngorongoro District, the four villages of Engaresero, Pinyinyi, Jema and Oldoinyosambu are legally registered, and their Village Land Use Plans provide a framework for managing settlements, grazing areas, water sources, tourism investments and other land uses. In Engaresero, the grazing area has been registered, and a title and village registration certificate have been issued. Traditional rangeland management in the Lake Natron area is also recognised under Government Notice No. 597 of 7 October 2022. These arrangements provide a basis for community land governance that incorporates traditional pastoral knowledge and supports the sustainable management of natural resources.

A central component of this model is the Engaresero Eramatare Community Development Initiative (E.E.C.D.I.), a community-based organisation (CBO) established by the village council and community around 2012 to manage tourism and direct part of its revenue towards local employment and community development. Its General Assembly is the main decision-making body and includes members from the village's four sub-villages. Membership is open to village residents aged 18 and above who pay an annual membership fee of TZS 2,000. An 11-member secretariat represents the four sub-villages.

The CBO coordinates local guides and collects tourism fees on behalf of the village. Hotels and tour operators are expected to use local guides when visiting sites such as Lake Natron and the nearby waterfall. Visitors who pay the Lake Natron entrance fee must hire a local guide; tour operators that do not wish to use a guide must sign a form at the entrance but are still required to cover the guide's cost. A share of the fees goes to the guides, while the remainder contributes to the CBO's activities. The CBO uses available funds to support local employment and community projects, including initiatives in health, water and education, as well as scholarships. The CBO and associated Village Community Banks (VICOBA) also provide opportunities for saving, borrowing and starting small businesses. These arrangements help retain part of tourism revenue within the community. Income from guiding can help families cover food, healthcare and education costs, including university expenses in some cases. The model thus seeks to connect tourism and public revenue with local employment, community development and conservation, while maintaining pastoralism as a central land use.

Africa Safari landscape. Source: Magnific.com

An important feature of the Lake Natron Model is the coexistence of tourism activities with designated grazing areas and wildlife habitats. Community-managed rangelands and traditional grazing arrangements guide livestock movements according to seasonal conditions and pasture availability. In principle, these arrangements help balance the needs of livestock, wildlife and local livelihoods while supporting the conservation of Lake Natron's ecosystem.

Although the model is a good example for community-based tourism in Northern Tanzania, it faces challenges. It creates jobs and generates income, but community members report that tourism companies often benefit more than local residents, while their contributions to village development remain limited. Some hotels employ few local people beyond guides, partly because residents lack the skills required for other positions; consequently, available jobs may be casual rather than secure. More fundamentally, tourism-related benefits cannot compensate for the wider pressures on community land and pastoral livelihoods. Residents report losing access to grazing areas and livestock routes, including land taken for an airstrip built by **TAWA** and hunting concessions. Such restrictions threaten pastoralism, associated cultural practices and young people's ability to remain in the village. Community members have also reported problems with investors, including late or insufficient levy payments, unclear or broken contracts, and poor communication when agreements end.

Overall, the Lake Natron Model illustrates the potential of community-led tourism and land governance to support local employment, community services, conservation and pastoral livelihoods. Realising the full potential depends on fairer and more transparent arrangements with tourism companies, stronger local skills and participation, reliable contractual and revenue-sharing mechanisms, and effective protection of community land rights and access to grazing areas. With these safeguards, tourism income can ensure the long-term sustainability of Maasai pastoralism and cultural heritage.



Africa Safari landscape. Source: Magnific.com

8

THE TOURISM INDUSTRY SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT, ACCOUNTABLE AND FAIR

Revenues generated on our lands must be managed in transparent ways to foster accountability. Transparency requires the disclosure and provision to the public of timely accurate information. Accountability is key to enable us to monitor, manage and control activities that are happening on our lands. Without transparency and accountability, there can be no FPIC and no real benefit-sharing.

We want the possibility to freely enter fair contracts. This requires:

- Contracts, investments and revenue streams must be transparent. Contracts should be clear and written and available in Maa and Swahili languages. Before signature, a full FPIC process must be completed on the draft contract. Villages must receive copies and have time for questions and room for negotiation. Full disclosure of all payment flows (fees, bed concessions, shanga or beadwork sales) must take place in village assemblies. Contracts must contain clear commitments related to employment, CSR projects, payment, land use and general management plan. Contracts must be regularly subjected to review. Clear and solid compensation and remediation mechanisms should be in place if contracts are not respected including payments.
- We call for setting up an independent community mechanism to ensure benefits reach the many, and to mediate conflicts linked to tourism (e.g. NPC or CBO). Existing traditional mechanisms for redistribution of revenues within the community can be useful in that regard following the principle of Maasai dignity (Imbarakinot orkwaak).
- Fair and clear dispute resolution mechanisms should be in place. The community should have access to independent lawyers. Multi-tier grievance pathways should be available and accessible to allow complaints to be raised from the village level to independent ombuds function and national human rights institutions.

- Tourism businesses must be mindful they operate on Indigenous land and as a result, their activities carry specific human rights responsibilities. They should develop Indigenous Peoples policies. Such policies should be made available and their implementation regularly monitored.
- Tourism businesses must be mindful of how their activities contribute to the climate crisis including through international and local flights. We reject the offsetting of carbon emissions through soil carbon credits on our territories.
- Independent and regular monitoring mechanisms of company policies and commitments when it comes to human rights and climate should be in place to ensure accountability and access to remedies. Independent, accessible and culturally appropriate monitoring, feedback, grievance, appeal and redress mechanisms should be mutually agreed by the community including through its village assemblies and should operate independently of political actors.
- We encourage tourists to travel consciously. They must be aware of the land and human rights challenges that our communities are facing. We advocate for mandatory guest briefings before travel, on issues such as land conflicts, FPIC, human rights and culturally appropriate behaviour such as dress and consent for photos.



Africa Safari landscape. Source: Magnific.com

BOX: TOURISM IN OLOLOSOKWAN VILLAGE: A SUCCESS STORY OF MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, FAIR BENEFIT-SHARING, AND TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

In 1999, Ololosokwan village entered into a 15-year tourism investment agreement with &Beyond/Conscorp Tanzania Limited, covering approximately 25,000 acres of village land. Negotiated through the Village Council and approved by the General Village Assembly, the agreement allowed livestock grazing during the dry season, enabling tourism and pastoralism to coexist. The village also benefited from independent legal advice, contract reviews every three years and a joint committee to oversee implementation and accountability.

The initial contractual period ran from 1999 to 2014, after which the partnership was renewed for a further 15-year period, from 2015 to 2030. However, in June 2022, it ceased to operate following the designation of the area as Pololeti GR. This development highlights the vulnerability of community benefit-sharing arrangements when land-use designations change.

During the partnership, approximately 75% of the investor's employees were recruited locally, creating jobs and income opportunities. Seasonal tented-camp operators, including Nomad Tanzania and Asilia Africa, also operated under community-oriented arrangements, with each camping area limited to ten acres.

Tourism revenues contributed significantly to local development. The village supported school fees for more than 1,000 students in need, contributed to the construction of a healthcare centre, assisted vulnerable patients with medical costs and financed other community projects. Additionally, 20 community patrol personnel were employed to monitor the area, linking local employment with conservation and natural-resource management.

Ololosokwan's experience offers important lessons for Tanzania's community-based tourism sector. It demonstrates that tourism can generate shared benefits when communities have meaningful decision-making power, fair contractual arrangements, continued access to traditional livelihoods and transparent mechanisms for managing revenue. Crucially, this tourism arrangement did not require the community to abandon its pastoral way of life. The land remained available for livestock grazing during the dry season, demonstrating that wildlife-based tourism and pastoral livelihoods could coexist through deliberate planning and mutual respect. Rather than viewing local land use as an obstacle to investment, the agreement recognised it as an essential part of the village economy and identity. However, the termination of the renewed agreement also underscores the need for legal certainty and safeguards for community interests when conservation or hunting policies change.

Africa Safari landscape. Source: Magnific.com

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NO EXPLOITATION IN CULTURAL BOMAS

Cultural bomas can provide economic opportunities and access to a good life, through networking, a safe shelter, community friendships and a sense of belonging.

We hope to see reforms to how cultural bomas operate:

- Cultural bomas should be owned collectively by the community, not by individuals or outside investors. The boma governance system should be transparent, with clear rules and oversight. The leaders of the boma must be accountable to the wider community and should not capture benefits for themselves. Decisions about the boma (management, rules, income use, prices) should be made through consultation and dialogue and agreed by all.
- Cultural bomas were initially designed to support women in need. If women are not in the driving seat, there is a risk that this objective is sacrificed for other goals. The management of cultural bomas should be reformed to be women-led, while the role and representation of Morans, who also reside and perform in cultural bomas, should also be included.
- The cultural boma must reflect real Maasai culture (dress, rituals, daily life), not a staged or distorted version. This includes enabling tourists to meet "modern" Maasai wearing watches, carrying smartphones, being educated and speaking English. The cultural boma can be a good place to inform tourists about the real challenges facing Maasai in terms of land alienation, discrimination, and access to education.
- The cultural boma should be like any other Maasai boma; it is a place where livestock is to be found. This can be an opportunity for tourists to engage in pastoralist related activities. Tourism should foster true interactions and experiences not extractivism and voyeurism.
- Benefits (income, opportunities) should be fairly shared among community members, avoiding exploitation and class divisions. The cultural boma must provide access to a stable livelihood and shelter, including employment and income from jewellery sales. Additional benefits offered to residents could include scholarships; healthcare support; food access; development (water, nursery).
- The cultural boma should create jobs, especially for unemployed youth and women. Opportunities in cultural boma should be open to all community members and not restricted to a small group. In addition, a transparent and effective rotational system can ensure that roles and opportunities are accessible to a diversity of community members. Cultural bomas should strengthen community unity rather than divide people.
- There should be transparent, agreed upon entrance fees for visitors, so communities are not underpaid or exploited. Competition between bomas should be addressed to ensure fair prices are respected.
- Community control over the boma should be maintained because it helps safeguard village land from external grabbing and inappropriate uses. This is because communal management comes with a collective obligation to respect and protect the land.

10

THE ROLES OF WOMEN AND YOUTH

Our culture recognises different groups in the community and allocates different roles and responsibilities to each. Women are an important group in the Maasai community. They play essential roles in the use of forest resources, sacred sites, prayers, rivers, and other water sources. We are encouraged to see a number of women taking up leadership positions, speaking up in community meetings and participating in decision making. We value women's substantial contributions to the economic and social wellbeing of the family and community. Women are at the forefront of our community land struggle. Women have their own ways of organising their own meetings.

According to Maasai custom, Morans are responsible for the protection of water sources, pasture lands, and territorial security. They are also in charge of looking for adequate pasture. They are therefore at the forefront of community efforts to protect their lands. If Morans are usually referred to as youth, they do not follow the internationally accepted definition of youth defined for example in the African Youth Charter as people under 35 years old. Morans follow the age-set system and once retired, Morans will join the Elders group.

To ensure women and youth have equal opportunities and are not marginalised in tourism activities and tourism-related decisions:

- Women's right to water points, salt licks, medicinal herbs, construction materials and firewood should be actively protected and respected.
- Women's associations should be fostered to help women control and self-manage their businesses.
- Skills training and development (including foreign languages) should be provided to women, including once employed. There should be minimum quotas for Maasai women in management, guide, driver and ranger positions, not only entry-level roles.
- There should be explicit protection against gender-based exploitation, with community monitoring and sanctions against perpetrators.
- Gender parity and effective participation of women and youth in the village council and all relevant decision-making bodies should be fostered as a key component of the FPIC process.
- Gender-based violence and harassment which undermines women's participation needs to stop.
- Platforms where women can speak up, share challenges and develop self-confidence should be developed.

BOX: A PROMISING INITIATIVE: NARAMATISHO WOMEN'S CENTRE

The Naramatisho Women's Centre was established in 2025 following a decision by several women's groups to join forces and strengthen their collective capacities. Located near Makuyuni in Northern Tanzania, along the road to Ngorongoro and Serengeti NPs, the Centre was founded to create a space where Maasai women can develop sustainable livelihoods, strengthen their skills and preserve their cultural heritage. Its establishment reflects the women's ambition to shape tourism and development according to their own priorities and on their own terms. The name "Naramatisho" in Maa describes a strong and resilient woman who protects, provides for and uplifts her community. This understanding is reflected in the Centre's guiding values, which include women's leadership, community ownership, cultural pride, dignity, learning, environmental stewardship and economic independence.

The Centre occupies a 25-acre site comprising six traditional Maasai-style guest houses, a campsite, a restaurant and training centre and a Shanga House for selling handmade beadwork and souvenirs. The site also includes an expanding organic garden where vegetables and herbs are cultivated for use in the restaurant. More than 180 women contribute to the Centre's activities on a rotating basis, with approximately ten women working on site each week. Their responsibilities include welcoming guests, preparing meals, leading cultural activities, maintaining the gardens, and producing and selling handmade beadwork. Through these activities, the women gain practical experience in hospitality and tourism while developing opportunities for employment, leadership and greater economic independence. The women are not merely beneficiaries of the initiative; they actively contribute to the Centre's development.

Visitors can stay in Maasai-inspired guest houses, eat meals prepared on site, purchase locally produced beadwork and participate in cultural activities led by Maasai women. All income generated through visitor activities contributes to employment opportunities, training programmes, the maintenance and development of the gardens, and the Centre's day-to-day operations. In this way, tourism revenues support both the Centre's economic activities and its wider community-oriented objectives. Beyond tourism, the Naramatisho Women's Centre serves as a gathering place for the wider community. Its facilities host meetings of traditional leaders, women's groups, youth programmes and community training activities. The Centre therefore combines economic activities with opportunities for knowledge exchange, collective organisation and community development.

Africa Safari landscape. Source: Magnific.com

GLOSSARY

AA	Authorized Association
AfDB	African Development Bank
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
AWHF	African World Heritage Fund
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DC	District Commissioner
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FZS	Frankfurt Zoological Society
GCA	Game Controlled Area
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GR	Game Reserve
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
MISA	Maasai International Solidarity Alliance
MNRT	Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
NCA	Ngorongoro Conservation Area
NCAA	Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NP	National Park
NPC	Ngorongoro Pastoral Council
OBC	Otterlo Business Corporation
PINGOs Forum	Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations Forum
REGROW	Resilience Natural Resources For Tourism Growth
TANAPA	Tanzania National Parks Authority
TATO	Tanzania Association of Tour Operators
TAWA	Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority
TZS	Tanzanian Shilling
UAE	United Arab Emirates
VICOBA	Village Community Bank
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
WTM	World Travel Market
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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