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# **Elections in the United Republic of Tanzania**

## *2015 National General Elections*

Frequently Asked Questions

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## **When is Election Day?**

The United Republic of Tanzania will hold general elections on Sunday, October 25, 2015.

## **Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?**

Voters will select a new President, and cast ballots for 239 members of the Bunge (the unicameral National Assembly) and numerous local offices. This election will be Tanzania's fifth general election following the introduction of a multiparty democratic system in 1992.

Of the Bunge's total 357 seats, 239 (67%) will be elected by direct popular vote in single-member constituencies. The remaining 118 seats are decided as follows: 102 are reserved for women (see below), five are determined by the Zanzibar House of Representatives, 10 are appointed by the President, and one is reserved for the Attorney General.

## **Who can vote in the country?**

Per Chapter I, Part I.5 (1) of Tanzania's Constitution, "Every citizen of the United Republic who has attained the age of eighteen years is entitled to vote in any election held in Tanzania." Some exceptions exist, as specified in Chapter II section 11 (2) of the June 2010 National Elections Act, including being a citizen of another state and being convicted of certain specified criminal offenses, among others.

## **How many registered voters are there?**

Of Tanzania's estimated 24.252 million eligible voters, just over 24 million (99%) are registered to vote.<sup>1</sup>

## **What is the structure of the government?**

As a Republic, Tanzania is a unicameral democracy in which elected representatives vote on legislation. The government is divided into three branches. The executive branch is led by the President, who is both the Head of State and Head of Government. The President is elected every five years with a two-term limit. Tanzania's legislative branch is the National Assembly (Bunge), comprised of 357 members elected at the constituency level; 239 are elected by popular vote, at least 20 percent of seats are reserved for women, five seats are reserved for members of the Zanzibar House of Representatives, one seat is reserved for the Attorney General; and 10 seats are appointed by the President. Members of the Bunge serve five-year terms. The judicial branch is independent from the executive and legislative branches and

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<sup>1</sup> "Over 24m registered as voters." (2015, August 4). *Tanzania News Reports*.  
<http://www.tanzanianewsreports.com/over-24m-registered-as-voters/>.

is comprised of the High Court in mainland Tanzania (organized into labor, commercial, and land courts) and a High Court in Zanzibar. The Court of Appeal is the Republic's highest court.

## **Are there reserved seats in the Bunge for women? What is the gender balance within the candidate list?**

As noted above, Tanzania allocates 102 seats in the Bunge to a women's list. These seats are reserved for women elected by their political parties on the basis of proportional representation among the political parties represented in the Bunge. One of the eight declared 2015 presidential candidates is female.

## **What is the election management body? What are its powers?**

Tanzania's National Electoral Commission (NEC) is an autonomous government institution established in 1993 under Article 74(1) of the country's 1977 Constitution. The NEC has several functions, including supervising and coordinating the registration of voters in presidential and parliamentary elections; supervising and coordinating the conduct of the presidential and parliamentary elections; reviewing and demarcating constituency boundaries; and providing voter education and supervising persons who conduct such education, among others. The Zanzibar Electoral Commission, under the direction of Hon. Jecha Salim Jech, coordinates all electoral activities with Tanzania's National Electoral Commission, which is led by retired Judge Damian Lubuva.

## **What is the electoral system?**

Members are elected by direct popular vote in single-member constituencies using the first-past-the-post system, whereby the winning candidate is the one who receives more votes than any other candidate, even if this is not an absolute majority of valid votes.

If passed through an upcoming referendum (which has been delayed since April 2015), future winning presidential candidates must receive a simple majority (50 percent plus one) of all the votes cast. In the event that no candidate wins a simple majority, a run-off between the top two candidates will be held within 60 days.

## **How many polling places are set up on Election Day?**

More than 40,000 polling stations will be established throughout Tanzania and Zanzibar for the October 2015 elections. This represents a 67 percent increase over the 24,000 that were staffed during the 2010 elections.

## **Is out-of-country voting allowed?**

No, Tanzanian citizens may not vote outside of the country.

## **How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?**

Part IX of Tanzania's 2010 Persons with Disabilities Act provides a progressive, forward-thinking approach to a range of electoral issues. Specifically, Article 51 provides that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate and accessible for persons with a disability and that voter registration locations are accessible. Moreover, it ensures that all polling places have accessibility requirements for voters with disabilities including accommodation of voters who use wheelchairs, and devices for persons with low vision and tactile ballot templates for visually impaired and deaf or blind persons. In addition, it requires training for poll workers on the rights of persons with disabilities and the practical means of assuring their rights, including that voters with disabilities have the same degree of information available when casting their ballot as others.

The Act also encourages and provides reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities to stand for elections, and to hold office and perform all public functions at all levels in the government, and guarantees the free expression of the will of the persons with disabilities as voters, and where necessary at their request, allowing assistance in voting by a person of their own choice.

The National Electoral Commission announced in September 2015 that, for the first time in Tanzania's history, visually impaired voters will receive tactile ballots on Election Day.<sup>2</sup>

## **Which political parties have candidates in the election?**

Although there are more than 20 registered political parties in Tanzania, the two main presidential candidates are from *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (Party of the Revolution [CCM]) and a recently-formed coalition known as Ukawa.<sup>3</sup> John Magufuli will represent CCM in the presidential race and Edward Lowassa of the Chadema party will represent Ukawa.

The CCM dominates both the Bunge with 263 seats (73%) and the Zanzibar House of Representatives with 48 seats (59%). Although growing in popularity, Chadema only has 48 seats in the Bunge (13%). A third party, *Chama cha Wananchi* (Civic United Front), has 35 seats in the Bunge and 33 seats in the Zanzibar House of Representatives.

It is noteworthy that since its founding in 1977, CCM has dominated Tanzanian politics largely because it was a single-party state for many years. Even though a multi-party system was introduced in 1992, CCM has continued to control the Office of the President and the Bunge since 1995 (i.e., the past four elections).

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<sup>2</sup> "Visually impaired voters issued special ballots." (2015, September 10) *Tanzania News Reports*.  
<http://www.tanzanianewsreports.com/visually-impaired-voters-issued-special-ballots/>

<sup>3</sup> Ukawa is a four-party alliance consisting of Chadema (*Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo* or the Association for Democracy and Development), the Civic United Front, NCCR–Mageuzi and the National League for Democracy.

## **Who Can Run for President?**

Article 39(1) of Tanzania's Constitution stipulates the following qualifications for a person to be elected as President:

- Citizen by birth in accordance with the citizenship law;
- Has attained the age of forty years;
- Is a member of, and a candidate nominated by, a political party;
- Is qualified to be a member of the House of Representatives; and
- Has not been convicted by any court for any offense relating to tax evasion.

The following additional qualifications may be added for future elections if passed through an anticipated referendum (which has been delayed since April 2015):

- Both of the candidate's parents ought to be citizens by birth;
- The candidate must be of sound mind and either holds a bachelor's degree or have skills and experience in leadership acquired at the national level; and
- May also be a private candidate (unaffiliated).

## **Where and how is voting, counting and tabulation held?**

Tanzania's 26 political regions are divided into 238 electoral constituencies; registered voters will cast their ballots within the constituency in which they both reside and are registered. The National Elections Act of 2010 provides clear guidance on voting, vote counting and tabulation procedures. In accordance with section 71, vote counting is to begin as soon as possible after the closing of the poll. Once the counting process begins, it continues until all votes are counted and registered. For increased transparency in the October 2015 elections, Returning Officers will post for public inspection (and announce) local results for the National Assembly and civic results, while the National Electoral Commission headquarters will announce presidential results.

## **Who will observe during Election Day?**

Two domestic consortia will lead the election monitoring efforts: the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO) and the Tanzania Civil Society Consortium on Election Observation (TACCEO).

With support from the Danish Government and other donors, TEMCO and TACCEO have joined to create the Coalition on Election Monitoring and Observation in Tanzania (CEMOT), which will endeavor to enhance citizen engagement in electoral observation and monitoring. There will also be a newly established Election Situation Center, which will improve electoral monitoring, citizen engagement and transparency of the October 2015 elections.

International observation will include teams from the European Union (short- and long-term observers), the African Union Commission and the Southern Africa Development Community–Parliamentary Forum, among others.

### **When will official results be announced?**

Tanzania’s National Elections Act does not specify a deadline for announcing official results.

### **How will election disputes be adjudicated?**

Per section 71 (2-4) of the National Elections Act, candidates or political parties’ polling agents must state whether or not they accept the Returning Officer’s tabulations at each stage of the vote counting process. To the extent possible, complaints are to be resolved at the time they are made, with the Returning Officer documenting the complaint and resolution. Per section 115 (1-5), complaints or petitions that the Returning Officer cannot resolve must be heard and adjudicated within a period not to exceed 12 months. Tanzania has a trained 40 appellate judges from the Court of Appeals in preparation for the October 2015 elections.

### **How will Election Day security be ensured?**

Tanzania’s military personnel are prohibited from participating in the provision of security during elections and are consequently required to stay in barracks on Election Day. As such, Election Day security will be provided primarily by the police; however, the presence of political parties, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations, the media and election observer groups will provide informal security. Tanzanian political parties have informal security functions and a mutually agreed upon Code of Conduct that guides the behavior of their supporters and candidates.

## Resources

- [2010 National Elections Act](#)
- [2010 Persons with Disabilities Act](#)
- [“Democratic Practices in Tanzania,”](#) CETA Journal (Volume 9, July 2011), Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
- [“Observing Without Fear,”](#) O.P. Olengurumwa (March 16, 2015)
- [Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee \(TEMCO\)](#)
- [Tanzania National Electoral Commission](#)
- [Zanzibar Electoral Commission](#)