



Maasai International Solidarity Alliance

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2025 - JANUARY 2026



KEY UPDATES

MISA Launches Its Own Website: misasolidarity.org

Human Rights: Return to Violent Tactics in Ngorongoro
As We Await Imminent Release of Presidential
Commissions Reports

Conservation: MISA Celebrates International Year for
Rangelands and Pastoralists in Uganda and Kenya

Carbon Credits: Soils for the Future and TNC Continue
to Target Villages Despite MISA's Demand for a
Moratorium

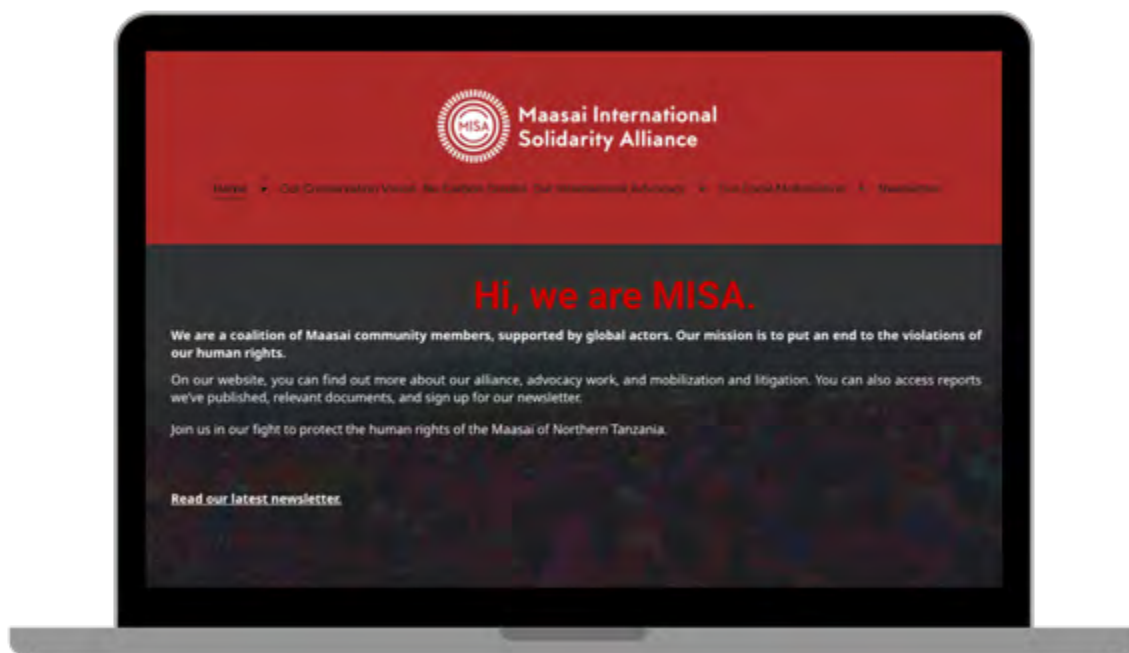


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Foreword



MISA Launches Its own Website: misasolidarity.org

Our website provides background information about the historical roots of the Maasai land conflict in Tanzania. It offers a community-based, grassroots perspective on Maasai resistance to land alienation and dispossession and regular updates about the situation on the ground that are verified and autonomous.

It compiles key research reports and advocacy documents that we use in our efforts to promote a decolonial model of conservation, human rights and a moratorium on carbon credits in our rangelands. You can subscribe to our newsletter and contact us for a media interview or other ways to amplify our voice.

MISA Thanks All Its Supporters and Celebrates Successes in 2025

We thank all our supporters around the world who have made 2025 a year of resistance, mobilisation, solidarity and people's power. Without you, our work would not be as impactful. In 2025, we continued on the ground mobilization throughout Maasailand, we launched our research report on carbon credits in March calling for a moratorium on soil carbon, we developed and launched our website, we continued our three years of consistent international advocacy reaching out to allies and other international actors financing fortress conservation and by extension human rights violations. Our lobby tour to Europe and the US in September enabled us to engage with actors financing dispossession in the name of climate change and conservation. Our message has been simple and clear, their financing is complicity to crimes committed by Tanzanian authorities.



What We Stand For

HUMAN RIGHTS

We document cases of unlawful evictions, excessive force, surveillance, censorship, abuse of public office, and discriminatory policies. These reports often come directly from community members, activists, and whistleblowers on the ground. We hold power accountable, we monitor and document Tanzania's government action and inaction that violate our rights. We track policies, decisions, and operations that impact our human rights, land, public resources, civil liberties, and livelihoods.

NO TO CARBON CREDITS

We call for an immediate five-year moratorium on all soil carbon projects in Maasai rangelands. We are concerned that soil carbon projects are another form of land grabbing disguised as climate solutions. These projects are generating corruption and conflicts over natural resources.

NO TO COLONIAL CONSERVATION

We call for a decolonial conservation vision, one that is grounded in Indigenous Peoples' rights, social justice and co-existence with nature. Our objective is to promote an alternative to the colonial, fortress, violent and capitalistic conservation model that is imposed on our Maasai community, leading to the alienation of our land.

Our conservation vision highlights the coexistence between the Maasai people, our livestock and wildlife as an alternative to the separation of humans from nature.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

We demand that overseas funding recognize and promote the positive impact of pastoralism on nature and the economy. A human rights - based approach to economic partnerships, free, prior and informed consent, as well as decolonization are prerequisites for long-term sustainable livelihoods of Maasai and other local communities in Tanzania. We engage in international advocacy to hold accountable actors who are historically or currently responsible for human rights abuses.

LOCAL MOBILISATION

In the face of mounting threats to the Maasai ancestral lands, livelihoods, and identity, we have risen not with weapons, but with unity, courage, and conviction. MISA is a community-led movement rooted in resistance and determined to defend Maasai ancestral lands from unjust encroachment. Women are at the forefront of our efforts to defend our rights and demand justice.



HUMAN RIGHTS





Photo: The new NCAA Board of Directors. (Source: <https://urtupdates.co.tz/category/ncaa-board-of-directors/>).

Return to Violent Tactics in Ngorongoro

On 29 January, communities in Ngorongoro reported that NCA rangers had recently conducted operations to seize livestock in several areas within Ngorongoro, including Ormoti Crater, Empakaai, and Endim e Loolturot. As the public awaits the imminent release of the reports of the two Presidential Commissions on Ngorongoro, these confiscations raise serious concerns about government plans and intentions, particularly the possibility of bypassing the Commissions or implementing decisions that have not yet been made public. In a related development, Ngorongoro rangers have begun erecting roadblocks that restrict the movement of vehicles owned by community members. The government has also imposed entry restrictions at Loduare Gate, and on 29 January 2026, four vehicles were turned back to Karatu without any clear or reasonable explanation. Meanwhile, Tanzania's Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism Dr. Kijaji has officially inaugurated the new Board of Directors for the Ngorongoro Conservation

Area Authority (NCAA) at a ceremony held at Ngorongoro House. The Board is comprised of 11 members, none of whom represent the Maasai community of Ngorongoro. Instead, the Board includes Telele, a retired Member of Parliament, former District Commissioner, former NCAA employee, and former intelligence and Presidential security officer, who relocated to Msomera under the government relocation scheme. The Maasai have repeatedly demanded inclusion of Maasai representatives in the governance of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, as is their right as Indigenous Peoples under international law. Decisions made by the Ngorongoro Conservation Authority have a direct and disproportionate adverse impact on the Maasai of Ngorongoro, which necessitates their direct representation. Although Telele is Maasai by ethnicity, he is from Tanga and is widely perceived as representing government interests rather than those of the Ngorongoro Maasai, and as benefiting from appointments viewed by the community as a betrayal of their interests.



READ:

[New Ngorongoro Board of Directors Appointed](#)



Photo: Signs of beatings and torture on the back of one of the victims of the assaults. (Source: MISA).

Properties Destroyed, Villagers Severely Assaulted in Loliondo

On 20 January 2026, the Ngorongoro District Executive Director issued a two-day notice ordering a section of villagers in various villages in Loliondo to vacate their farms and homes. These directives were issued on the pretext that the area had been designated as a forest reserve. The affected area is different from the land annexed in 2022 and illegally designated as the Pololeti Game Reserve. The notice was not publicly disseminated to all villagers, denying the community the opportunity to respond appropriately.

Following the expiration of the two-day notice, beginning on 24 January, the Tanzania People's Defence Forces (TPDF), the Police, and wildlife rangers carried out a brutal operation. This operation included the destruction of crops, the burning of Maasai bomas, and the severe assault of individuals found in the area.

Although some victims bear visible bodily marks consistent with police beatings, some medical reports describe their injuries only as "*general body pain*." There is a well-documented pattern in which Tanzanian police and medical practitioners produce misleading medical reports in cases involving violence by state agents.



Photo: Demolished house in Nasipooriong Village, December 2025 (Credit: MISA).

Rangers Demolish Houses in Ngorongoro, People Still Inside

On 19 December 2025, rangers from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) raided and demolished a Maasai home in Nasipooriong Village, Endulen, Ngorongoro Division, without prior notice. The incident reflects the continued use of a land dispute between the Maasai and the state to justify extra legal actions aimed at pressuring Maasai communities to relocate from their ancestral land.

The NCA Act mandates the Authority to conserve natural resources, promote tourism, and safeguard the interests of Maasai pastoralists. These three objectives were intended to coexist, forming the basis for Ngorongoro's designation as a Multiple Land Use Area.

The demolition of homes, destruction of livelihoods, and prolonged restriction of social services directly contradict these statutory purposes and cannot be justified under the law.

The establishment of the NCA was premised on explicit assurances by the colonial governor that Maasai interests would take precedence over conservation in cases of conflict. Current practices – demolitions without notice, deliberate deprivation of services, and the creation of coercive living conditions – represent a profound betrayal of that foundation. Although public outrage following widely circulated videos prompted the Commissioner of Conservation, Mr. Badru, [to apologize and warn rangers against unlawful conduct](#), the incident underscores a broader pattern of impunity that renders legal guarantees of residence, livelihood, and pastoralism increasingly hollow for the Maasai of Ngorongoro.



Photo: Livestock coralled into a holding pen. (Credit: MISA).

Livestock Confiscated in Loliondo and KIA

Seizure of livestock in the impugned Pololeti Game reserve has been a game of the day during dry seasons in the Loliondo and Sale divisions in Ngorongoro district. The Ngorongoro Conservation Authority has illegally turned itself into a revenue collection authority outside its scope of work provided by established law. In the last three weeks of December alone, pastoralists in search of pasture and water in the Pololeti area have been fined over sixty million Tanzanian Shillings.

It is well known by the government of Tanzania that all the eight villages surrounding the impugned Pololeti area have no remaining grazing land for their livestock after the 2022 eviction.

In KIA, over 2456 goats and sheep were seized while grazing in the alienated area. Maasai morans subsequently raided the holding boma and drove away their livestock. As a result, the police arrested and tortured Charles Mkubwa Siria for being associated with the raid. He was later released on police bail with conditions to report to the police station on a weekly basis.



Photo: Fr. Ned. (Source: spiritans.org).



IN LOVING MEMORY: *Father Ned Marchessault, C.S.Sp. (1938 – 2026)*

MISA and the Maasai community honor the extraordinary life of Father Ned Marchessault. From the moment he first set foot on Tanzanian soil in 1966, Father Ned became a bridge between worlds—a devoted shepherd to the Spiritan community and a “father” to many. He was a man deeply rooted in both the earth and the Spirit. For 56 years, he demonstrated with clarity that God is for everyone, and that no one should be required to abandon their cultural heritage in order to embrace Christianity. Fluent in the Maasai language, he celebrated Mass and lived his life as a testament to the harmony between faith and tradition.

His personal [diary](#) documents the extraordinary role he played in uplifting the Maasai people. His impact is felt across every facet of life from Endulen to Loliondo, Kiteto to Simaniiro. From supporting medical programs for the Maasai to providing moral support for community land rights against dispossession, to his revolutionary work in education, Father Ned lived the Gospel through direct actions.

He leaves behind a legacy that includes opening the doors of education to countless Maasai. Father Ned’s education programs have had a broader and more lasting impact than those of any other private or public institution. Today, the Ngorongoro region is home to many of the best-educated Maasai, a living testament to his unwavering belief in their potential.



Photo: Fr. Ned. (Source: spiritans.org).

The Maasai remember Ned as a man of grace, grit, and profound friendship. He taught us that the greatest gift a person can give is their **presence**. Ned was simply an epitome of humanity. Ned was born on April 23, 1938. He professed as a Spiritan in 1959 and was ordained as a priest on June 3, 1964. He arrived in Tanzania on March 7, 1966 and spent the next 56 years with the Maasai people. Fr. [Ned passed away](#) peacefully at the age of 87 on January 26, 2026, at Peter's Township Acute Care in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania.

Rest in peace, Fr. Ned. You have finished your long walk, but you remain forever in the memory and the heart of the Maasai people.



READ:

[Diary of Ned's Mission:](#) My 56 year Africa Journey.

[Fr Ned Marchessault Enters Eternal Life.](#)



WATCH: [Remembering Ceremony.](#)



**NO TO CARBON
CREDITS**



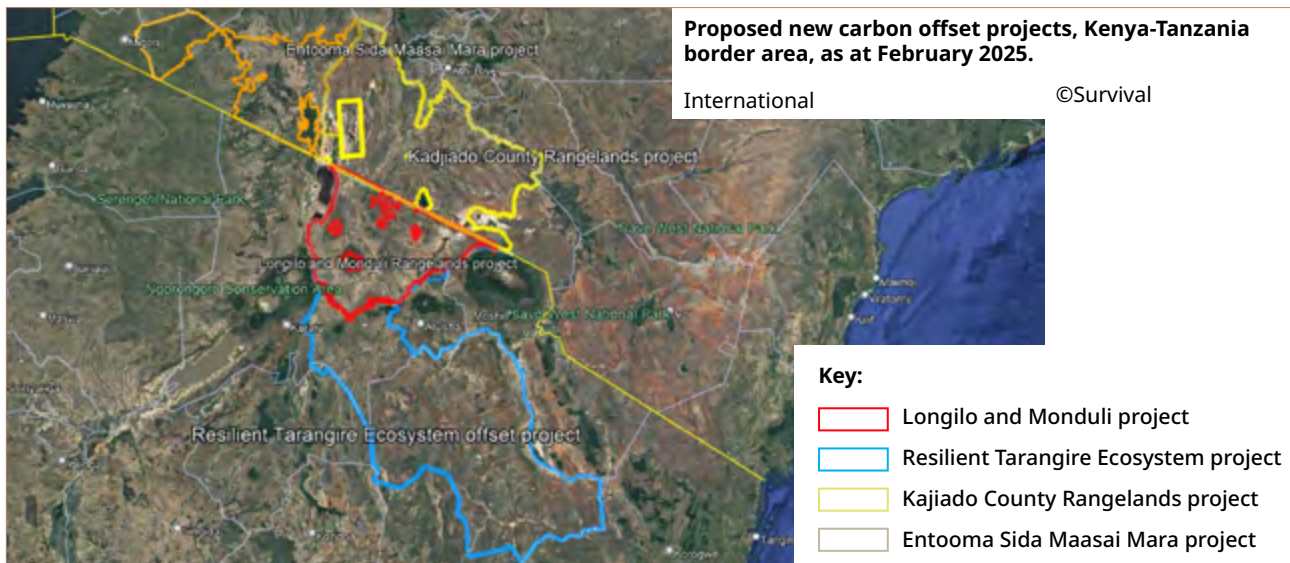


Photo: The map shows the areas Soils for the Future and TNC have been targeting for their soil carbon credit projects. (Credit: MISA).

Soils for the Future and TNC Continue to Target Villages Despite MISA's Demand for a Moratorium

While MISA has demanded a moratorium on all carbon credits projects in Northern Tanzanian rangelands, carbon proponents continue to push communities to sign, pressuring them to agree to unfair deals without free, prior and informed consent. Communities report that district leaders, including the District Executive Director and District Commissioners are encouraging communities to support carbon projects, occasionally citing instructions from higher authorities and national plans. High-level government officials (from the President and Vice President's offices) have however admitted that the carbon business is not clear to communities and have insisted that clear communication is provided to obtain community consent in the project cycle process. MISA's call for a moratorium is grounded in an in-depth investigation in the soil carbon credit business in Maasai land that was conducted in January 2025.

The research report critically examines two major soil carbon projects: the Longilo and Monduli Rangelands Carbon Project (LMRCP) by Soils for the Future Tanzania Ltd (SftFTZ) funded by Volkswagen ClimatePartners and the Resilient Tarangire Ecosystem Project (RTEP) by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) - targeting Longilo, Monduli, and Simanjiro districts.

In recent months, communities have reported that in addition to SftFTZ and TNC, another company named Enjipai is soliciting them to sign agreements. Though its registration particulars are not certain, Enjipai - anticipated to be a locally based proponent - appears to be intended to function as a Special Purpose Vehicle once TNC completes its facilitation role. In Simanjiro, the district has paused the signing process for 30 days to allow TNC to respond to community concerns, in what is an encouraging sign that peoples' voices are being heard.



READ: [MISA's Report on Soil Carbon Credits.](#)



WATCH: [MISA Presents Key Findings at Carbon Market Watch Event in Brussels.](#)

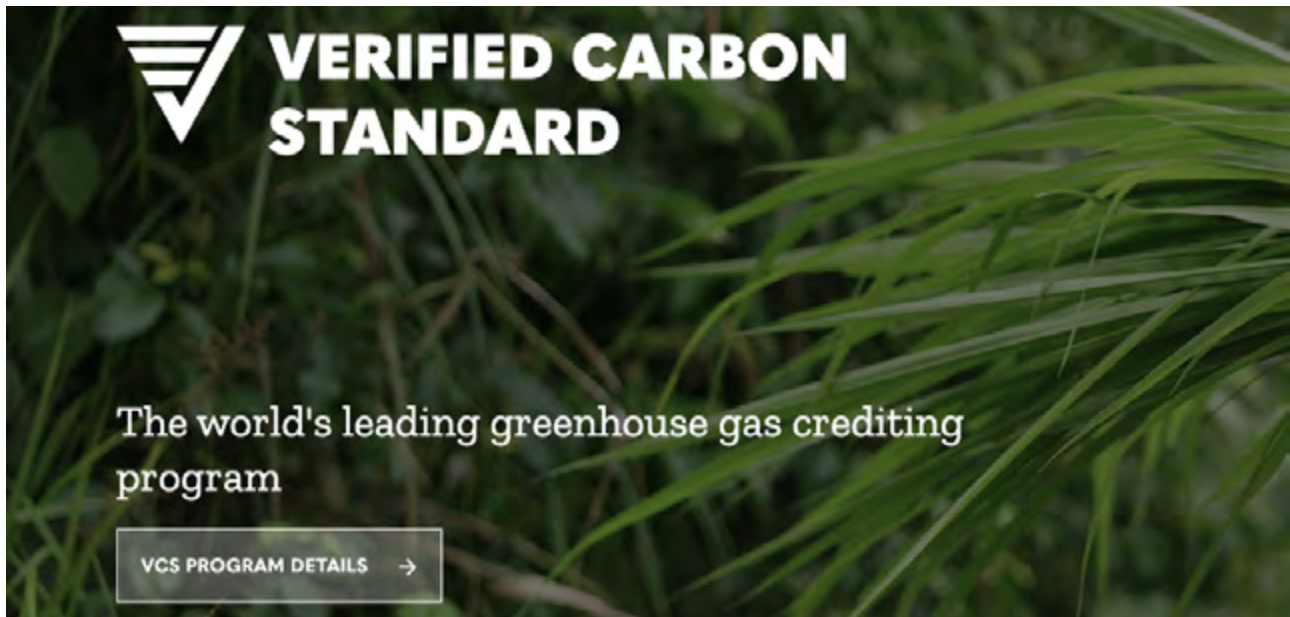


Photo: Verra's VCS logo. (Source: <https://verra.org/programs/verified-carbon-standard/>).

Verra Launches Version 5 of Verified Carbon Standard Programme

In December 2025, [Verra released Version 5 of its Verified Carbon Standard \(VCS\)](#) in an attempt to respond to the multiplication of reports denouncing a lack of integrity in carbon markets. Actors like UNDP, Namati and the Grassroots Justice Network participated in consultations aimed at improving carbon standards. According to Verra, the new standards include market-leading community safeguards, stronger rights and transparency, new options for durability, more frequent updates and shorter cycles and digital systems as well as new sectors. Is this a good step forward to help communities negotiate better deals? Or are these well-intended efforts helping legitimize a problematic business? At MISA, we maintain our demand for a moratorium on all soil carbon credits in Maasai Land for 5 reasons. First, lack of carbon awareness and the tactics used by companies to push villages to sign carbon deals are not compatible with FPIC.

Second, soil carbon methodologies used in rangelands are not compatible with traditional livestock keeping and will negatively impact mobility and communal land sharing. Third, contracts are not transparent and not independent from interference by the state. Fourth, soil carbon methodologies are based on unproven science: actual improvements in carbon storage in the soil are not guaranteed. Finally, there are [critical flaws in the offsetting industry that mean any compensation project allows polluters to continue polluting without addressing the climate crisis](#).



READ:

[Carbon: the new frontier in the scramble for land in Kenya](#) (SOMO report).

[Tanzania Maasai fear VW 'greenwashing' carbon credit scheme](#) (DW).

[Offsets discredited](#) (SOMO report)



WATCH:

[Carbon Colony: Inside the War for Maasai Land.](#)

[Short video on carbon credits in Maasai Land \(Italian national TV\).](#)



**NO TO COLONIAL
CONSERVATION**





Photo: Logo of the IYRP2026.

Launch of International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026

The United Nations General Assembly at its 76th session declared 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). FAO is the lead agency for celebrating the Year in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders.

The #IYRP2026 provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of rangelands and pastoralists, advocating for increased responsible investment and adapted policies for the pastoral sector.

It calls for policies that secure pastoralists' access to land and natural resources, support mobility, and promote customary and inclusive governance, while encouraging adequate investments in rangeland management, ecosystem restoration, animal health services, and equitable value chains.



READ:

[IYRP calendar of events and achievements.](#)

[Official IYRP website \(managed by the FAO\).](#)

[Why we need pro-pastoralist policies](#) (policy brief co-signed by MISA).

[United Nations declares 2026 international year of rangelands and pastoralists](#) (Scientific article published by Cambridge University Press about the origins and goals of the IYRP).



Photo: Youth Gathering of Pastoralists in Moroto, Uganda. (Source: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/rangelands-community-initiative-rci-uganda_the-iyrp-youth-working-group-just-concluded-activity-7398102041128087552-oc0c/).

MISA participates in IYRP Youth Encounter in Uganda

On 20-21 November 2025, MISA representatives, comprising thirteen youth members from the key areas in which MISA operates – namely Simanjiro, Ngorongoro, Kiteto, Monduli, and Longido – participated in the East Africa Pastoralist Youth Gathering in Moroto, Uganda. This meeting brought together pastoralists from across East Africa in what served as a preparatory, awareness-raising, and advocacy forum

ahead of the celebration of the International Year of Rangeland and Pastoralism. There was also a declaration termed as “Kobebe Declaration” which highlighted: ...rais[ing] awareness of the vital role pastoralists play in food security, climate resilience, and biodiversity, while promoting sustainable rangeland management, securing land rights, and highlighting the importance of pastoral mobility. The outcomes of the meeting were formally articulated in a declaration affirming that no pastoral lands or territories should be lost in the name of conservation or investment.



Photo: 25-29 January - Delegates at the Pastoralists' Gathering in Nairobi including the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Dr. Albert K. Barume. (Credit: IMPACT Kenya).

MISA participates in IYRP African Indigenous Pastoralists' Gathering in Kenya

From 25-29 January, MISA delegates joined some 100 delegates at the Pastoralists' Gathering organised in Nairobi with a view to build a common African pastoralist agenda in the context of the IYRP. The meeting, co-organized by IMPACT Kenya, demands climate justice, land rights and stronger recognition of pastoralists as key custodians of the land.

The Gathering pursues the inclusion of Indigenous pastoralists in policy-making and brings pastoralists from all parts of Africa together so they can speak with one voice. The long term objective is the elaboration and implementation of national policies that support pastoralism.



READ: [East Africa Youth Gathering Concept Note.](#)



WATCH: [Africa Pastoralists Conference](#) (Citizen TV Kenya).



Photo: Presidents of Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa launched the Africa Keystone Protected Area Partnership at an ICCF Group reception on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2025 (Source: <https://internationalconservation.org/blog/africa-keystone-protected-area-partnership-launch>).

FZS Enters Into Partnership with Contested Africa Parks

The Africa Keystone Protected Area Partnership of the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) is presented as a large African-led alliance to secure 162 ecologically important protected areas by 2035, as they host many endangered species, store carbon and provide millions with water and income. It is backed by African governments and conservation organizations such as FZS, African Parks and the Wildlife Conservation Society, as well as several African presidents. Plans include strengthening management, building capacity, securing long-term funding and advocacy. From a critical perspective, the text praises local communities but hardly explains how their participation in line with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) will actually be ensured. Especially around areas such as Serengeti or Nyerere/Selous, where Maasai and others have a history of displacement, access restrictions and

violence, the focus on “*ecological integrity*” and “*financial sustainability*” without clear commitments on land rights, the right to say no and grievance mechanisms is troubling. It remains open whether further resettlements, grazing bans or criminalisation of traditional practices are ruled out in the name of stricter protection.

The list of priority areas includes long-contested regions where conservation, tourism and local livelihoods collide. The omission of issues like fair distribution of tourism revenues, compensation for lost access and real decision-making power for Maasai, pastoralists and smallholders suggests a communication goal: legitimising a large protected area programme while avoiding the sensitive topics of displacement, militarised conservation and historical human rights abuses. A truly “*socially just*” and “*African-led*” initiative would need concrete, verifiable commitments on FPIC, land rights and independent oversight – which the text does not provide.



READ: [New Africa-Led Partnership to Safeguard Keystone Protected Areas.](#)



Photo: In May 2023, Maasai held a protest against the Frankfurt Zoological Society and its support of colonial conservation methods that displace Maasai from their rightful land. (Credit: MISA).

MISA rejects statement of Frankfurt Zoological Society

MISA rejects the press release issued by Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) on 20 September 2025 as it presents distorted and incorrect information. MISA also condemns the appointment of a lead lobbyist for trophy hunting as new head of the FZS Tanzania.

Over the past three years, MISA has tried to engage with FZS to change their problematic approach to conservation in the greater Serengeti ecosystem in northern Tanzania. The latest exchange took place in September 2025 at FZS headquarter in Frankfurt, Germany. This document establishes the truth on FZS's role and calls on FZS to stop its conservation work in Maasai land.



READ: [MISA Rebuttal Statement](#) (MISA website).



Photo: An aerial drone photo taken on April 26, 2025 shows the construction site of a museum at the Ngorongoro Lengai UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Global Geopark in Arusha region, Tanzania. (Xinhua/Li Yahui). (Source: <https://english.news.cn/20251213/a24a09ca76504c06ad85583c72d021b9/c.html>).

UNESCO Geopark Museum Draws 10 visitors a Day!

The Chinese-Tanzanian Ngorongoro-Lengai Geological Heritage Museum (Urithi Geo-Museum) in the Ngorongoro Lengai UNESCO Global Geopark region aims to boost tourism and educational work and is presented as an important milestone for Tanzania's tourism positioning. The text quotes almost exclusively positive voices from tourists, the tourism association and museum management, completely ignoring local conflicts or possible tensions surrounding land use and mass tourism.

The low number of visitors since the opening (575 people since 16 October) also stands in stark contrast to the very high investment costs of 32 billion Tanzanian shillings (around 13 million US dollars), raising questions about economic efficiency and the actual benefits for the local population. Furthermore, it remains unclear to what extent local communities are involved in the planning, design and ongoing operation, or whether the museum serves more as a prestigious showcase project for Chinese foreign policy and international tourism.



READ: <https://english.news.cn/20251213a24a09ca76504c06ad85583c72d021b9/c.html>



Photo: Grzimek and his son (Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roaLn5LbCz8>).

New ARTE Documentary About Serengeti and Bernhard Grzimek

Bernhard Grzimek shaped the understanding of nature conservation in Germany for decades and began establishing National Parks in Africa in the 1950s together with the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS).

He became world famous with his book and film *"Serengeti Shall Not Die."* The ARTE documentary ["Bernhard Grzimek and the Serengeti"](#) depicts his life and highlights how strong his influence remains today.

It also sheds light on the problematic aspects of his legacy. Grzimek's ideal of nature without humans was deeply rooted in colonial and imperial thinking and ignored the fact that the Maasai have been part of the Serengeti ecosystem for centuries and have helped to shape it in a sustainable way.

The film shows that the burden of nature conservation is mostly borne by the local population, while mass tourism is hardly ever critically questioned. To this day, the resettlement of the Maasai is justified with arguments such as overpopulation or overgrazing, even though their traditional nomadic way of life has been proven to coexist with wildlife. These connections are addressed, but not pursued consistently. Maasai representatives do have their say, but animals, archive material and *"experts"* remain in the foreground – the same perspectives that have dominated the global nature conservation discourse for decades. The result is a documentary that raises important questions about colonial continuities in nature conservation, but shies away from fully questioning its own patterns of thought. This is precisely where we see how deeply these perspectives are still entrenched.



WATCH: [Bernhard Grzimek and the Serengeti - Watch the full documentary | ARTE in English](#)