

TOPIC: Politics in East Africa

In this guide we will learn about some political challenges and strengths of Kenya and Tanzania, with a focus on the latter. Tanzania presents a unique political case in East Africa because of its socialist foundations and the widespread use of Swahili as a national language. The successful construction of national identity (though this becomes more complicated when considering relations between Zanzibar and Tanzania) has allowed Tanzania to confront political challenges as a unitary whole throughout its history. Unlike Kenyans, who tend to identify themselves tribally rather than nationally, most Tanzanians feel connected to one another on the basis of being Tanzanian. Even though inter-tribal conflict has not been a major concern in Tanzania in recent years, there has always been a religious divide between Christians and Muslims, which also happens to split the country geographically, and politically, between the mostly Islamic coast (including the island of Zanzibar) and the mainly Christian mainland.

In an attempt to discourage religiously charged political fragmentation, the Tanzanian government requires that a Christian be elected Vice-President if the President is a Muslim and vice-versa. Of course, structuring politics in this way has its own internal trappings; however, it is important to recognize the effort of the Tanzanian government to confront the difficult challenge of religion within their state politics. Moreover, in order to allow Zanzibar some self-governance, it remains a semi-autonomous state within Tanzania with its own political infrastructure which cooperates with the larger political framework of the entire nation. It is not necessary that you understand the details of Tanzanian politics at this point, but rather that you see the way in which Tanzania has successfully or unsuccessfully addressed difficult political challenges that are common throughout East Africa. Moreover, it is interesting to look at the importance of Swahili in establishing a binding national identity.

MATERIALS FOR THIS STUDY GUIDE

- LangMedia Swahili collection
 - Economy and Politics in Tanzania – [Political Strengths and Challenges](#)
- Newspaper Resources
 - [Gazeti la Mwananchi Tanzania](#)
 - [Mwanzo - Hizb ut Tahrir Kenya](#)

- [RFI](#)
- Other Online Resources
 - [Citizen TV Kenya - Wakaazi wa kijiji cha Nene, katika kaunti ya Nyandarua walalamikia hali mbovu ya barabara](#)
 - [Citizen TV Kenya - Muungano wa wazazi warai wizara ya elimu kutuma fedha za muhula wa pili](#)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY:

Learning More about Politics

1. Watch the following videos on LangMedia. Watch them a couple times trying to listen and absorb, then read the transcripts to get a better understanding. Record and memorize any new expressions.
 - a. Economy and Politics in Tanzania – [Political Strengths and Challenges](#) - “Strength in Unity” and “Unity Among Tribes”
2. Watch the following video on some current political issues in East Africa. Both of the videos deal with groups of people in civil society trying to influence the government in their favor. In the first a local community protests the poor state of infrastructure, and in the second a women’s group is asking for changes from the government. Note and memorize any new words or expressions.
 - a. [Citizen TV Kenya - Wakaazi wa kijiji cha Nene, katika kaunti ya Nyandarua walalamikia hali mbovu ya barabara](#)
 - b. [Citizen TV Kenya - Muungano wa wazazi warai wizara ya elimu kutuma fedha za muhula wa pili](#)
3. Use all of this information, as well as some of your own research when needed (searching online using some of the Swahili vocabulary about economics that you have learned in this study guide could be helpful), to complete the following assignment:
4. **HAND IN:** A long dialogue (20 sentences) between a Tanzanian and an American wherein they discuss the ways that normal people, either alone or working together, can have an influence on politics.

Reading the News

1. Go to the [Gazeti la Mwananchi Tanzania](#), [Mwanzo - Hizb ut Tahrir Kenya](#), or [RFI](#) and find a short article in Swahili on the subject of the arts, recreation, or popular culture. Read the article, noting down any new words or expressions to study afterwards and enter into your memory system.
2. **HAND IN:** A short summary (10 sentences) of an authentic Swahili news article about politics. Visit [Gazeti la Mwananchi Tanzania](#), [Mwanzo - Hizb ut Tahrir Kenya](#), or [RFI](#) to find one.

CONVERSATION SESSION PREPARATION

- Be prepared to... Perform a long role play between a Tanzanian politician and a Tanzanian citizen wherein they discuss political successes and challenges from each of their perspectives while also trying to come up with possible solutions.

HOMEWORK FOR TUTORIAL

- **HAND IN:** A long dialogue (20 sentences) between a Tanzanian and an American wherein they discuss the ways that normal people, either alone or working together, can have an influence on politics.
- **HAND IN:** A short explication (10 sentences) of an authentic Swahili news article about politics or economics. Visit [Gazeti la Mwananchi Tanzania](#), [Mwanzo - Hizb ut Tahrir Kenya](#), or [RFI](#) to find one.