



TANZANIA

**THE REVENANT'S
UNFORTUNATE
ADVENTURE**

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The central business district in downtown Dar es Salaam.

Former African democratic model faces five dark years

For a few weeks towards the end of 2020, people in Tanzania hoped that things would change. The presidential campaign was underway. On one side was the incumbent President John Magufuli, who had been in office since 2015, and whom Tanzanians had come to fear. On the other was Tundu Lissu, a longtime lawyer and political opposition figure who had returned to Tanzania from Belgium a few months earlier specifically in order to run for president.

Lissu was not in Belgium by choice: he had been hospitalized for 15 months after a commando of gunmen attacked him on the steps of the parliament building in 2017, after his umpteenth speech against President Magufuli. The gunmen used Kalashnikovs and left him near death.

It was Tundu Lissu – who some have nicknamed The Revenant because of his miraculous recovery – who represented the hope of Tanzanians to get rid of Magufuli. This is a president who, in the last five years in power, has heavily impoverished the country with new taxes that have penalized the less well-off, and investments in infrastructure projects that are as lavish as they are pointless, has silenced the opposition (many of whose members have disappeared in mysterious circumstances), has clamped down on the press and, last but not least, has managed the Covid-19 emergency by simply denying the virus's existence.

And yet the elections – which international observers judged to be anything but free and fair – left Magufuli in power. A few days after the result, Lissu, who feared for his life, fled to Belgium again.

Until the beginning of March, 2021, Tanzania was anxiously preparing to face the next five years. However, everything changed on March 17, when it was announced that Magufuli, the president of a country whose population had never used masks and that, since data on the infection rate had never been released, officially appeared to be almost virus-free, had died of Covid.



Mihambwe, Mtwarra province, supporters of political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency) attend a candidate's rally. Despite the Covid pandemic, nobody in the crowd wears a face mask, with the single exception of this man.



Mtwara, a kid drags a palm branch in the small town near the Mozambique border.



Zanzibar Island, presidential candidates on electoral propoganda posters in Stone Town.



Dar es Salaam, opposition presidential candidate Tundu Lissu greets the crowd after the Sunday function in the Azania Lutheran Church. Lissu, an MP with opposition party Chadema who has always openly criticized president John Magufuli, was shot 16 times in an attempt to his life in 2017. After 15 months in hospital, he went back in Tanzania in July, 2020, to challenge Magufuli to the presidential election.



Mtwara province. MP Zitto Kabwe, a Parliamentary candidate and founder of political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency), addresses the crowd at a rally. Kabwe, a prominent member of the opposition, has been jailed six times during his career.



Dar es Salaam. Doctor Omary Chillo, president of Tanzania Health Summit, at his office in Muhimbili Health University, where he is the director of the department of physiology. During the Covid-19 emergency, the government has been criticized for denying the existence of the virus and not disclosing actual figures of infections and victims, which were officially declared to be a few hundred. Chillo says it may be an indication that Tanzania “has actually achieved herd immunity before any other country in the world”.



Zanzibar Island, secondary school students in a Stone Town market.



Mtwara province. MP Zitto Kabwe, a Parliamentary candidate and founder of political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency), addresses the crowd at a rally. Kabwe, a prominent member of the opposition, has been jailed six times during his career.



Mtwara province, supporters of political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency) attend a candidate's rally.



Dar es Salaam, opposition presidential candidate Tundu Lissu has breakfast at home while wife Alicia sits in the kitchen. Lissu, an MP with opposition party Chadema who has always openly criticized president John Magufuli, was shot 16 times in an attempt to his life in 2017. After 15 months in hospital, he went back in Tanzania in July, 2020, to challenge Magufuli to the presidential election.



Dar es Salaam, people on the beach of Oyster Bay. In the background, the hi-class neighborhood Masaki.



Dar es Salaam. Maria Sarungi Tsehai is a journalist, activist and one of the country's most prominent opposition figures. In July 2020, Tanzania's broadcasting regulatory authority has suspended her internet-based TV channel for 11 months for allegedly publicizing information the government deemed misleading.



Dar es Salaam, electoral propaganda depicting president John Magufuli on a spare wheel cover. In power since 2015, Magufuli, a fervent Christian, has been widely criticized for many of his political actions, which he described as "inspired by God". Among these, declaring homosexuality illegal and prohibiting pregnant girls from attending classes in public schools.



Mtwara province, a woman walks along the main road crossing through a village.



Zanzibar Island. Maalim Seif, political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency) candidate for Zanzibar president, at home. After the elections, Mr. Seif won the seat of vice president, but he died on February 17, 2021 after contracting Covid.



Mihambwe, Mtwara province. MP Zitto Kabwe, a Parliamentary candidate and founder of political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency), speaks to the crowd at a rally. Kabwe, a prominent member of the opposition, has been jailed six times during his career.



Zanzibar Island, passengers on the ferry to Dar es Salaam.



Keko slum is one of Dar es Salaam's poorest areas: an estimated total of over 5,000 persons are forced to live here, in precarious conditions.



Zanzibar Island, at the house of Maalim Seif, political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency) candidate for Zanzibar president, a poster depicts him as a protector of the semi-independent island's borders. After the elections, Mr. Seif won the seat of vice president, but he died on February 17, 2021 after contracting Covid.



Mihambwe, Mtwara province. MP Zitto Kabwe, a Parliamentary candidate and founder of political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency), interacts with the crowd at a rally. Kabwe, a prominent member of the opposition, has been jailed six times during his career.



Keko slum is one of Dar es Salaam's poorest areas: an estimated total of over 5,000 persons are forced to live here, in precarious conditions.



Mtwara province. Policemen escort the convoy of MP Zitto Kabwe, a Parliamentary candidate and founder of political party ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency), during a rally. Kabwe, a prominent member of the opposition, has been jailed six times during his career.



Zanzibar Island, muslim prayer in one of Stone Town's several mosques.

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