

Tanzania Summary

President Magufuli has died. After his 19-day absence, vice president Samia Suluhu Hassan (2015-present) has assumed control but has yet to be sworn in. A 14-day period of mourning was announced and will disrupt business decisions. Opposition party members have made calls for the vice president to be sworn in immediately.

President John Magufuli has died

Vice president Hassan announced on 17 March that president **John Magufuli** (2015-March 2021) had died.¹ In a statement delivered live on television, Hassan confirmed that Magufuli, aged 61, had passed away following complications from a heart condition.² The president was last seen in public on 27 February 2021.³ His absence was met by rumours that he may have contracted **Covid-19**, a disease Magufuli was infamous for denying.⁴ Tanzania stopped reporting cases of coronavirus in May 2020 and has adopted a ‘business as usual’ approach in lieu of preventative measures.⁵ The unique approach to management of the pandemic disease has caused significant border friction with neighbouring states, including Zambia and Kenya.⁶

Zitto Kabwe, a member of opposition party **Chadema**, has made calls through the international media for vice president Hassan to be sworn into office immediately, claiming that the Tanzanian constitution does not allow for a vacuum of power in the office.⁷ Analysis by international media sources speculate that Hassan may take over as president until the 2025 elections.⁸ **Article 40** of the constitution determines that when a president dies in office, the vice president shall be sworn in and become president for the unexpired period of the term of five years and propose a new candidate for vice-president following consultation with the political party to which they belong.⁹

What's next...

Tanzania is currently in a 14-day period of mourning following the death of president John Magufuli.¹⁰ The funeral is likely to be marked by a national holiday.¹¹ Vice president Samia Hassan now holds executive power according to the constitution, but she has yet to be sworn into the office of the president.

The ruling **Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)** party has been governed by the strong-man leadership of Magufuli since his rise to power in 2015. The deceased president purged the party ahead of the last presidential elections in October 2020. Earlier in the year, the CCM central committee expelled former finance minister **Bernard Membe** and issued a warning to **Abdulahman Kinana** (popularly regarded as Magufuli’s kingmaker in 2015) for alleged factional dissent against the president.¹² Factionalism remains within the CCM party and ARC sources anticipate that the **Tanzanian Intelligence and Security Service (TISS)** will have

¹ Reuters, 17 Mar 2021

² Reuters, 17 Mar 2021

³ BBC, 17 Mar 2021

⁴ Al Jazeera, 12 Mar 2021

⁵ The International Growth Centre, 12 Jul 2021

⁶ The Africa Report, 27 Feb 2021

⁷ Reuters, 17 Mar 2021

⁸ Reuters, 17 Mar 2021

⁹ Constitution of Tanzania

¹⁰ Reuters, 17 Mar 2021

¹¹ Analyst, Dar es Salaam

¹² Bloomberg, 11 Jul 2020

strong influence over presidential succession.¹³ Members of the CCM's 'old guard' are also likely to hold strong influence in the anticipated party shuffle. Magufuli's presidential campaign centred on an anti-corruption drive against corrupt practices amongst the CCM old guard; any return to previous leadership practices increases the risk of corruption. As internal battles begin within CCM, decision making at parliamentary level is likely to be delayed. Inefficacy within CCM will be amplified by their dominance in the National Assembly.¹⁴

Once CCM has established internal order, the National Assembly is likely to return to efficacy in time to focus on the 2021/2022 budget and consultations due in June 2021.¹⁵ The secretive management of Magufuli's ill-health and circumstances of his death are indicative of an opaque party structure which will obscure and minimise reporting of factional struggles. It is too soon to tell what cabinet changes may be made after the 14-day period of mourning.

The death of Magufuli may signal the end of a sustained period of uncertainty for international investors. Prior to his death Magufuli had indicated the intention to improve the investment climate. In November 2020, the **Tanzanian Investment Centre (TIC)** was transferred to the office of the president from the prime minister's office.¹⁶ ARC sources anticipate protracted delays to the investment drive during the CCM power transfer.¹⁷

New leadership provides the opportunity for Tanzania to pivot toward liberal economic policy, repair relations with the international community, and reverse the policy of Covid-19 denial. Vice president Samia Suluhu Hassan is Tanzania's first female president and the second in **East Africa**, after **Ethiopia's** president **Sahle-Work Zewde**. She was born in 1960 in **Zanzibar**. She holds a postgraduate diploma in economics from the **United Kingdom (UK)**-based **University of Manchester** and an MSc in Community Economic Development from the **Open University of Tanzania** and **United States (US)**-based **Southern New Hampshire University**.¹⁸

¹³ Analyst, Dar es Salaam

¹⁴ The Electoral Commission has not yet released results from the National Assembly election in 2020

¹⁵ Analyst, Dar es Salaam

¹⁶ The East African, 15 Nov 2020

¹⁷ Analyst, Dar es Salaam

¹⁸ Member of Parliament CV, 16 Sep 2019