

Media Statement

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For Immediate Release

Ngorongoro Maasai Community Takes Action to Demand Respect for Their Rights

Arusha

Today, members of the Maasai community took to the Ngorongoro-Serengeti highway to peacefully demonstrate and demand the respect of their fundamental rights that has been ruthlessly undermined by Tanzania government for the last four years. The community, which has long suffered from social service blockade, physical maltreatment by the government, land rights violations, denial of registration as voters and requirement to move with pass cards in their own land felt compelled to take this action after numerous attempts to engage with authorities have gone unanswered.

The highway blockade, which began at 6am is a response to the community's growing frustration with the lack of progress on issues that directly impact their quality of life. Maasai have repeatedly called for fair treatment, access to basic services, protection of their land, but these calls have been met with indifference.

"We are not blocking this highway out of choice we are doing it out of necessity," said one participant this morning along the highway. *"For too long, our voices have been ignored, and our rights have been trampled,"* said another demonstrator. **This is our last resort to draw attention to our plight and demand the respect and dignity we deserve.** Another demonstrator was heard saying.

The community is urging the authorities to engage in meaningful dialogue to address their concerns. They are also calling on the broader public to understand the context of Maasai and to support their fight for justice.

For the last four years, Tanzania government has stopped all social services as health and education in Ngorongoro as a trigger to Maasai displacement. MAASAI remains committed to peaceful protest and hopes that today's action will lead to the government rethinking its repressive tactics. For the last two days, Tanzania Government has deployed thousands of police and paramilitary to suppress peaceful demonstration.

Maasai community