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LEGAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

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INTRODUCTION

- Understanding the law is not only the duty of lawyers and judges, but also a fundamental tool for every citizen, especially young people, to navigate life with confidence, awareness, and dignity.
- In a society governed by the rule of law, rights and responsibilities are not abstract ideals; they are the foundation upon which individuals, families, and communities build secure and meaningful lives.
- This legal education module has been prepared at the request of Unite the World with Africa Foundation, as part of its mission to empower Tanzanian youth with the knowledge they need to reach their full potential.

- It is specifically designed to equip young scholars and members of Unite's mentorship program with a clear understanding of their **basic legal rights, basic human rights,** and the **legal responsibilities of citizenship** under both **Tanzanian law** and **international instruments ratified by Tanzania**.



BASIC LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN TANZANIA







Basic Legal Rights of Tanzania citizens

Tanzanian citizens are guaranteed fundamental rights under the **Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977, as amended)**. These rights apply to every person in Tanzania (citizens and non-citizens alike, unless specified) and include, among others:

- **Right to Equality and Non-Discrimination:** All people are born free and equal, and everyone is entitled to equal protection under the law without discrimination. No authority or law is allowed to discriminate against anyone on the basis of characteristics like race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, gender, or religion. Everyone has the right to recognition and respect for their human dignity.

- **Right to Life and Personal Liberty:** Every person has the right to life, meaning the law and society must protect an individual's life. Likewise, everyone has the **right to personal freedom**, one's freedom cannot be taken away except according to procedures allowed by law (for example, upon conviction of a crime). It is unconstitutional to arbitrarily detain or imprison someone without legal justification.

- **Right to Privacy and Security:** Every person is entitled to privacy of their person, family, home, and correspondence. The law protects individuals against unlawful searches or intrusions in their private life. Similarly, one's personal security is a basic right, no one should be subjected to physical harm, **torture,** or cruel and degrading treatment.

- **Freedom of Expression and Information:** Individuals have the freedom to hold opinions and to express their ideas openly. This includes the right to **seek, receive, and impart information.** Citizens are free to discuss their views, whether in speech, writing, or other media, within the bounds of law (e.g. respecting others' rights and public order).

- **Freedom of Religion and Belief:** Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the freedom to change their religion or not to follow any religion. The Constitution guarantees that the state will not establish an official religion and that people can worship and practice their faiths peacefully.



- **Freedom of Association and Assembly:** People have the right to assemble peacefully and to form or join organizations, clubs, unions, political parties, or other associations of their choice. This means Tanzanians can gather for meetings or demonstrations, and unite for common interests, as long as they remain peaceful and respect the law. (Notably, the law forbids organizations that promote discrimination or violence.) Citizens also have the freedom to associate politically; they can form and join political parties and participate in political activities in accordance with the law.

- **Participation in Governance:** Every citizen aged 18 or above has the right to take part in the government of the country, either directly or through elected representatives. This includes the right to vote in elections and the right to run for public office (subject to the qualifications set by law). It ensures that the government is accountable to the people and that citizens can influence how they are governed.

- **Right to Work and Fair Labor Practices:** All persons have the right to engage in lawful work and to pursue a livelihood of their choosing. Workers are entitled to fair remuneration, equal pay for equal work without discrimination, and safe, just working conditions. Forced labor is prohibited except for specific exceptions like certain civic duties or emergency services (e.g. community service required by law is not considered forced labor).

- **Right to Own Property:** Every person has the right to own property individually or in association with others. Property cannot be taken away **without legal authority and fair compensation**. In other words, if the government needs to acquire someone's property for a public purpose, it must follow the law and pay fair compensation. The Constitution thus protects people from arbitrary seizure of their land or belongings.







In addition to the above, the Constitution provides for other rights such as the right to freedom of movement (the right to move freely within Tanzania and to leave or return to the country), the right to a fair trial and to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, and protection of one's family life and home. These basic legal rights form the **Bill of Rights** in Tanzania (Articles 12–29 of the Constitution) and are enforceable by courts. If anyone's fundamental rights are violated, they can seek redress in the High Court of Tanzania.



Legal Rights of Children in Tanzania

Below is a comprehensive synthesis of the additional rights that the Law of the Child Act (Cap.13 R.E. 2023) confers on children beyond those basic rights already discussed (life, name, nationality, family care, basic needs, protection from abuse and discrimination, etc.). Each right is drawn directly from the Act and supported by the relevant sections and lines

Employment and Vocational Rights

a) Right to light work only – Children may undertake only “light work” that is not harmful to their health or development and does not interfere with schooling or training. The Act fixes the minimum age for any form of employment or engagement at **14 years.**

b) Protection from exploitative labour – Children may not be employed in work that deprives them of their health or development, exceeds six hours a day, is unsuitable for their age, or pays insufficient remuneration. Employers must protect child workers from discrimination and any acts that could negatively affect them.

c) Ban on night work, forced labour and hazardous employment – It is unlawful to require a child to work at night (between 20:00 and 06:00); to impose forced labour, including bonded labour; or to engage a child in **hazardous work** such as mining, heavy load porterage, chemical production, operation of dangerous machinery, or work in bars and entertainment venues.



d) Right to remuneration –A working child has the right to be paid the full value of the work performed; employers who pay less commit an offence.

e) Protection from sexual exploitation – Children must not be engaged in any work that exposes them to sexual activities or used in prostitution or pornography.



f) Right to vocational skills and regulated apprenticeship – Children have a right to acquire vocational skills through apprenticeship. The minimum age for apprenticeship is **14 years or completion of primary school.** Craftsmen training apprentices must provide proper instruction, a safe and healthy environment, moral guidance and an allowance (at least half of the sectoral minimum daily wage). Apprenticeship agreements must be in writing, free of harmful initiation rituals and contain provisions in the best interests of the child.

Rights in Family Separation, Foster Care and Adoption

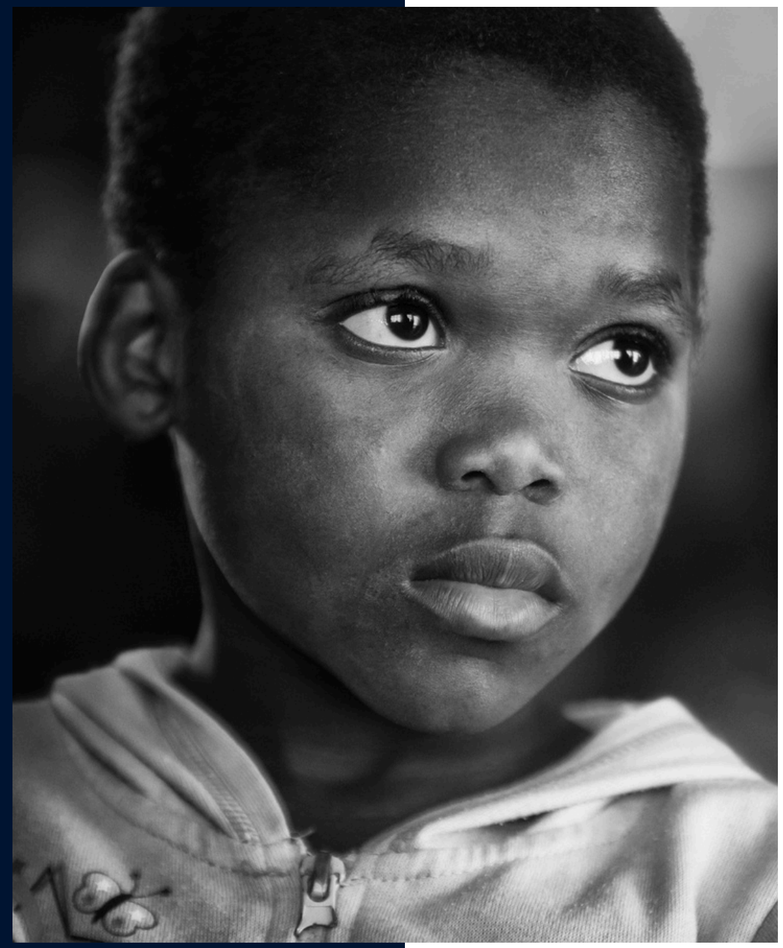
a) Rights when parents separate – When parents separate or divorce, children have a right to:

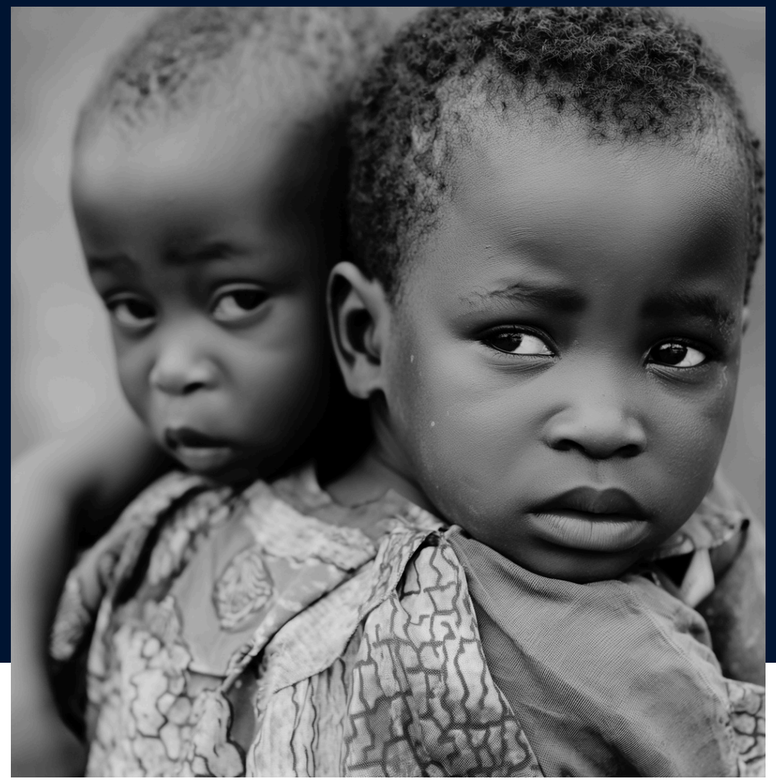
- Maintenance and education at the level they enjoyed before separation.
- Live with the parent who can best raise and maintain them.
- Visit and stay with the other parent when desired, provided schooling or training is not disrupted. Courts presume that children under seven should be with their mother unless it is not in the child's best interest.

See section 39(1) of the Law of the Child Act, Cap. 13 R.E. 2023, which directs courts to consider both the best interests of the child and the importance of a child being with his mother when determining custody. See also YMI v. M-G.S, Civil Appeal No. 11881 of 2025 TZHC 5131 (7 Aug 2025), p. 15, where the High Court reaffirmed a rebuttable presumption that children under the age of seven are ordinarily best placed in the custody of their mother, subject to the overriding principle of the child's best interests.



b) Ongoing contact with parents and relatives during placement – When a child is placed in foster care or an approved residential home, the patron/manager or foster parent assumes parental responsibility and must encourage contact with the child's parents, relatives and friends unless contact is contrary to the child's best interests. They must also ensure the child's development (health, education, etc.) and communicate with parents to plan for reunification.







c) Exclusion orders to protect children – Juvenile courts may issue exclusion orders that prohibit a named person from contacting the child where necessary for protection; they can authorize social welfare officers to search for and remove a child from harmful situations.



d) Protections against unlawful removal – It is an offence to remove a child from lawful custody or from an approved home/institution without authority.





e) Privacy during court proceedings – – No one may publish information or photographs that could identify a child involved in court proceedings without the court's permission; violation is a criminal offence.

Rights Related to Property and Maintenance

a) Right to parental property and inheritance – A child cannot be deprived of reasonable enjoyment of a parent's estate. Where DNA tests confirm parentage, the biological father must assume responsibilities, and the child has the right to be an heir.

b) Right to maintenance – Courts may order maintenance against a biological father or other persons legally liable to support a child. Applications may be made by the parent, guardian, the child (via representative), social welfare officer or relatives.



Rights of Expression and Participation

a) Right to be heard and to express opinions – Children capable of forming views have the right to express their opinions, to be listened to and to participate in decisions affecting their well-being. In juvenile court proceedings, the child has the right to give an account and express an opinion.

b) Right to privacy in matters before court – As noted above, Section 33 prohibits publishing information or photographs that may identify a child involved in court proceedings.





Protection and Welfare Rights

a) Protection from torture, cruel punishment and degrading treatment – No one may subject a child to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment; discipline must be reasonable and not humiliating.

b) Duty to report abuse or neglect – Members of the community have a duty to report evidence of child abuse or neglect (failure to provide food, shelter, education, medical care, play and leisure); failure to report is an offence.

c) Investigation and immediate protection – Social welfare officers may enter premises with police to investigate suspected abuse or neglect and remove the child to a place of safety for up to seven days, after which the matter must be brought before a court.

d) Local government duty to safeguard children – Local government authorities must promote child welfare; maintain a register of vulnerable children; provide assistance and accommodation to lost or abandoned children; and trace parents or relatives.

e) Prohibition of female genital mutilation (FGM) – Section 160 (R.E 2023) explicitly prohibits female genital mutilation on a child.

f) Protection against harmful cultural practices and harmful employment – Beyond FGM, the Act forbids harmful cultural practices and any employment that may injure a child’s health or development.

Rights within the Juvenile Justice System

- **Right to a specialized juvenile court** – Children charged with offences must be tried in a Juvenile Court, which is separate from adult courts and sits in different premises whenever possible.
- **Child-friendly procedure** – Juvenile court proceedings must be held in camera, be as informal as possible, and avoid exposing the child to adversarial procedures. A social welfare officer must be present; a parent, guardian or next of kin has the right to attend; the child must be informed of their right to appeal; and the child has the right to express an opinion.
- **Right to bail and separation from adults in custody** – Police must release a child on recognizance (with or without sureties) unless the charge is serious, releasing the child would defeat justice, or it is not in the child's interest. They must also prevent a child in custody from associating with adult offenders (unless the adult is a relative).
- **Right to fit-person custody instead of prison** – When remanding a child who is not released on bail, the court must hand the child to the care of the Commissioner, a fit person or an institution, instead of prison.
- **Procedural rights in court** – Juvenile courts must explain charges in simple language; allow the child's parent/guardian or social welfare officer to assist the child and cross-examine witnesses; ensure the child's right to present a Defence and cross-examine witnesses; and consider the child's background and best interests before sentencing.
- **Right to probation and non-custodial sentences** – Courts may discharge a child conditionally with probation of up to three years, supervised by a parent/guardian or social welfare officer.

Benefits of Juvenile Justice Protections to Society

Why it matters: Establishing strong, child-friendly justice protections isn't just about supporting individual youths, it produces measurable social benefits.

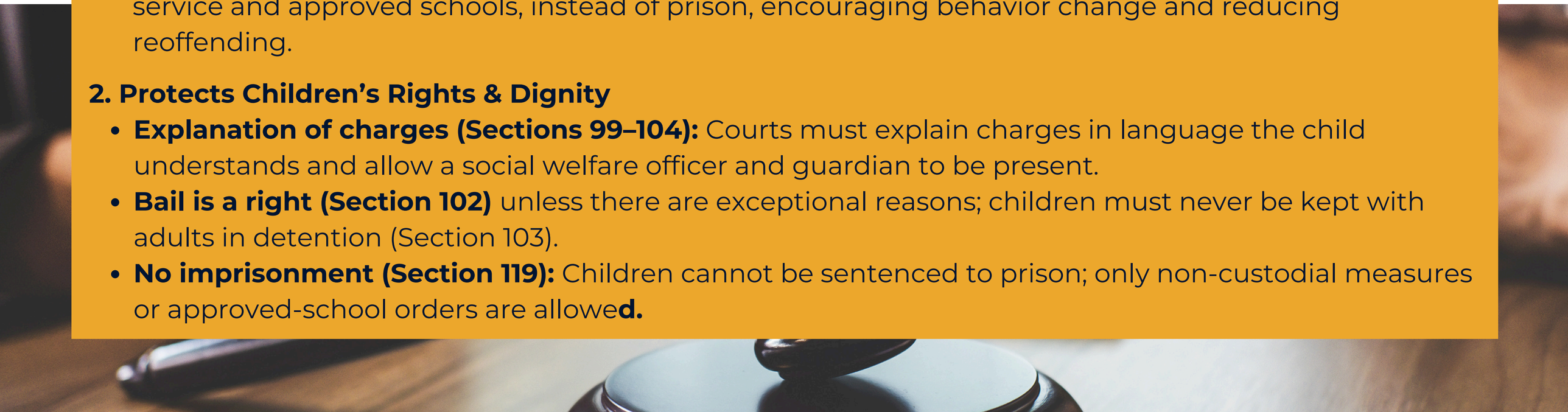
Context: Chapter IX (Sections 97–121) of the **Law of the Child Act** deals with *children in conflict with* the law. These provisions establish specialized juvenile procedures that protect children's rights and ultimately benefit the wider community.

1. Reduces Recidivism & Promotes Rehabilitation

- **Juvenile court jurisdiction (Sections 97–99):** Criminal cases involving children must be heard in a **Juvenile Court** or by a judge sitting in chambers. This child-specific forum allows informal, inquiry-based hearings that prioritize reform over punishment.
- **Probation & community sentences (Sections 117–121):** Sentencing focuses on probation, community service and approved schools, instead of prison, encouraging behavior change and reducing reoffending.

2. Protects Children's Rights & Dignity

- **Explanation of charges (Sections 99–104):** Courts must explain charges in language the child understands and allow a social welfare officer and guardian to be present.
- **Bail is a right (Section 102)** unless there are exceptional reasons; children must never be kept with adults in detention (Section 103).
- **No imprisonment (Section 119):** Children cannot be sentenced to prison; only non-custodial measures or approved-school orders are allowe**d.**



3. Supports Family & Social Reintegration

- **Fit-person custody** (Section 104): When bail is denied for a serious offence, courts must entrust the child to a **fit person or social welfare institution** rather than a remand prison. This keeps children in supportive environments and preserves family ties.
- **Time limits & speedy trials** (Rule 34 of the Juvenile Court Procedure Rules, 2016): Trials should conclude within six months; delays can extend for only three months. Quick resolution helps children resume school and family life.

4. Enhances Public Safety & Reduces Costs

- By focusing on rehabilitation, these protections lower the likelihood that children will become lifelong offenders, benefitting public safety.
- Non-custodial sentences and community-based measures are **less expensive** than imprisoning juveniles, reducing the long-term costs of crime and incarceration.

5. Furthers International Commitments

Tanzania's framework aligns with the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** and the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child,** both emphasize rehabilitation, proportionality and the best interests of the child in juvenile proceedings.



Other Protections

- **Privacy and confidentiality** – No publication of the child's information in court matters is allowed without court permission.
- **Child witnesses** – Courts may accept unsworn evidence from a child who does not understand an oath if the child is sufficiently intelligent and understands the duty to tell the truth; the court may convict based solely on such evidence if it believes the child.
- **Protection of mothers in prison with children** – Prison authorities must ensure that a child living with its mother in prison receives adequate diet, nutrition, healthcare and immunization, and notify the social welfare officer when the child is no longer breastfeeding so that suitable alternative care can be arranged.
- **Protection of children in day-care centers and institutions –** Only vetted and registered persons may operate day-care centers or crèches; persons with convictions against children or sexual offences are barred. The Commissioner and social welfare officers must ensure that day-care centers and residential homes meet standards that promote children's development.



Tanzania is a party to important international instruments on children's rights, notably the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, which it ratified in 1991. The CRC guarantees rights such as survival, development, protection from abuse, and participation for children. Tanzania has also ratified the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**, a regional treaty affirming similar child rights. These commitments at the international level reinforce and guide the domestic laws. In 2009, Tanzania enacted the Law of the Child Act in part to fulfill its obligations under these treaties, ensuring that the rights outlined above are not only moral or policy goals but also **legal entitlements**. If a child's rights are violated, for example, if a child is being abused or denied basic needs, the law provides mechanisms for intervention. Courts can make orders to protect the child, and perpetrators of child abuse or exploitation can face criminal charges. Importantly, community members and professionals (such as teachers) are required by law to report incidents of child abuse or neglect (more on this under "Responsibilities of Citizens").



CORE HUMAN RIGHTS GUARANTEED TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL

Beyond the national framework, there are core human rights universally recognized by virtue of being human. These are reflected in international instruments, many of which Tanzania has ratified, and they closely align with the rights enshrined in Tanzania's Constitution.

Globally, the foundational document is the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, adopted by the United Nations in 1948. It outlines basic civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that apply to all people, everywhere. As a UN member state, Tanzania upholds the UDHR's principles, and its Constitution expressly directs the government to preserve human dignity in accordance with its spirit.

Tanzania is also a party to key international treaties on children's rights. It ratified the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC**) in June 1991, along with its **Optional Protocols** on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography in April 2003. In March 2003, it also acceded to the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)**. These instruments complement the national **Law of the Child Act**, setting out a comprehensive framework of civil, political, economic, and social rights, and impose obligations on both the State and families to uphold and protect these rights.

RIGHTS UNDER THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

The CRC applies to everyone under 18 and rests on the principles of non-discrimination, the child's best interests, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the child's views. Articles of the Convention translated by UNICEF's child-friendly summary outline the following rights:

Categories of Rights	Key Provisions and Examples
Equality, best interests and duties	All children have the Convention's rights regardless of who they are; adults must consider the child's best interests when making decisions; governments must create an environment where children can grow and reach their potential; parents and families have a responsibility to help their children exercise and enjoy these rights.
Identity and family environment	Children have the right to life, a name and nationality, and an identity. They should live with parents or family members who care for them and, if separated by borders, have the right to reunification and protection from kidnapping.

Categories of Rights	Key Provisions and Examples
Participation rights	Children have the right to express their opinions and for adults to listen and take them seriously. They have freedom to seek and share information through speech, drawing, writing or any other medium, to choose their own religion and beliefs with parental guidance, and to associate with friends and join groups as long as this does not harm others. Their privacy must be respected, and they should have access to information that benefits their well-being while adults help ensure the information is not harmful.
Protection from abuse, exploitation and harmful practices	Children must be protected from all forms of physical or mental harm or mistreatment and receive special care when they cannot live with their parents. They have rights to protection and support in adoption and foster-care placements and special protection when they are refugees or have disabilities. They must enjoy the best possible health, including safe water, nutritious food and a clean environment. Children living away from home are entitled to regular review of their living arrangements and to social assistance if they are poor or in need. They must not be forced into work that is harmful to their health or education and, if they do work, they are entitled to safety and fair pay. They must be protected from harmful drugs, sexual abuse, abduction or sale and any form of exploitation. Cruel or degrading punishment is prohibited.

Categories of Rights	Key Provisions and Examples
Rights in situations of war and justice	Children have the right to protection from war and cannot be recruited or used in armed conflict. They are entitled to help if they have been hurt or neglected and to legal assistance and fair treatment in the justice system that respects their rights
Development, education and culture	Every child has a right to food, clothing and a safe place to live, and to have their basic needs met so they are not disadvantaged compared with other children. They have the right to good-quality education and should be encouraged to attend school to the highest level possible. Education must develop the child's talents and abilities and teach respect for others, the environment and peaceful living. Children have the right to practice their own culture, language and religion and to rest, play and engage in leisure activities.

Optional Protocols to the CRC: Tanzania has also ratified the Optional Protocols that

a) prohibit the forcible recruitment of children under 18 into armed forces and their use in hostilities and

b) require states to outlaw the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

c) A third protocol allows children to bring complaints directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child when their rights have been violated

Implementation of Child Rights in Tanzania: Tanzania ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its African counterpart in 1991/2003, respectively, and has since integrated child rights into national law. According to a 2016 analysis by the African Child Policy Forum, the country has made “remarkable progress” in ensuring children’s issues are part of development planning: there is near-universal immunization coverage, expanded access to primary and secondary education, and reforms to include early childhood development in new policies. Tanzania has simplified birth registration, formed district child-protection committees and most-vulnerable-children committees, and launched a National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children (2016–2021). These measures demonstrate a commitment to upholding CRC rights. However, the same report notes that implementation often falls short of expectations due to capacity and budget constraints and weak coordination; stronger mechanisms and increased investment are needed to fully realize children’s rights.

APA 7th edition citation of the above

African Child Policy Forum. (2016). Implementing child rights in Tanzania: Progress, challenges and way forward. The African Report on Child Wellbeing. https://2018.africanchild.report/images/Implementing-Child-Rights-in-Tanzania-final-13-10-16.pdf

RIGHTS UNDER THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACRWC)



The ACRWC is a regional treaty reflecting African realities and was ratified by Tanzania in March 2003. Its provisions mirror those of the CRC but extend them in some areas:

a) Definition and fundamental principles: The Charter defines a child as anyone under 18 years and acknowledges the special place of African children, emphasizing non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, life and development, and child participation

b) Civil and political rights: Children are recognized as having rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, thought, religion and conscience. Their private lives must be protected. The Charter allows children to petition the African Committee of Experts when their rights are infringed

c) Protection from exploitation and harmful practices: The Charter requires states to safeguard children against all forms of economic exploitation and hazardous work that interferes with their education or health; to protect them from abuse, harmful cultural practices, exploitation, sexual abuse and illegal drugs; and to prevent the sale, trafficking, kidnapping and begging of children. It specifically prohibits child marriages and betrothals and calls for the prohibition of the recruitment of children under 18 for armed conflict. The Charter also gives girls the right to return to school after pregnancy and urges affirmative action to promote girls' education.



d) Socioeconomic and cultural rights: Similar to the CRC, the Charter stresses children's rights to education, health, protection from exploitation and to be raised in a loving family. It emphasizes African communal values by making reference to the child's extended family and calling on states to support parents in times of need. It also calls for special protection of internally-displaced and refugee children and for children with disabilities

APPLICATION TO TANZANIA

By ratifying the CRC and ACRWC, Tanzania has committed itself under international law to respect, protect and fulfil the rights listed above. These instruments complement the national Law of the Child Act and require the government to take legislative, administrative and other measures to ensure that children in Tanzania enjoy:

- **Equality and protection from discrimination and harmful practices.**
- **A legal identity, family care and the ability to participate in decisions affecting them.**
- **Access to health care, education, adequate living standards, play and cultural life.**
- **Protection from violence, exploitation, hazardous labour, harmful substances, war and trafficking.**
- **Special protection for vulnerable groups such as refugee children, children with disabilities and those separated from parents**
- **Fair treatment and legal assistance in juvenile justice systems and mechanisms to seek redress.**



Together, international human rights instruments and Tanzania's Constitution and statutes form a comprehensive framework for protecting the dignity and development of every individual, especially children.

These rights are universal: they apply to all people regardless of nationality, citizenship, or status. Tanzania has ratified several key treaties that make these rights legally binding. Notably, Tanzania acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1976, thereby committing to uphold freedoms such as expression, fair trial, education, health, and decent work. It is also a party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which affirms similar rights within the regional context.

In essence, all individuals in Tanzania are entitled to the fundamental rights to life, liberty, equality, and dignity. These rights are protected under national law and reinforced by international standards. Where violations occur, individuals have access to remedies through courts, human rights commissions, and other legal mechanisms. The State, in turn, has a tripartite obligation to respect (refrain from violating rights), protect (prevent violations by others), and fulfill (take positive measures to promote and realize rights, for example, through education and health services within available resources).

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS IN TANZANIA

Rights come hand-in-hand with responsibilities. The Tanzanian Constitution explicitly outlines **duties of every person** in addition to rights. All people in Tanzania (and particularly citizens) have a responsibility to conduct themselves in ways that respect the law and the rights of others. Key legal responsibilities include:

a) Obeying the Law: Every person has a duty to **observe the Constitution and obey the laws** of the land. This foundational obligation means that citizens must refrain from illegal activities and respect the rules set by society through its laws. Ignorance of the law is generally not an excuse; the expectation is that one should learn and follow the laws in force. Abiding by the law maintains order and allows everyone to enjoy their rights safely.

b) Respecting the Rights of Others: In exercising one's own rights and freedoms, there is a duty not to infringe upon the rights and freedoms of other people or the public interest. This principle is written into the Constitution; it stresses that your rights are limited by the need to respect your neighbor's rights. For example, you have freedom of expression, but you are not free to slander someone or to incite violence (because that would violate others' rights or public peace). Likewise, you have freedom of movement, but you cannot trespass on someone's private property without permission. Citizens should practice tolerance, respect differences, and avoid actions that harm others in the community.

c) Upholding Unity and the Public Good: The Constitution urges citizens to promote the well-being of society. There is a general duty to **protect public property and resources,** for instance, to safeguard national resources and infrastructure from theft, vandalism, or misuse. Every Tanzanian is expected to combat corruption, wastage, and mismanagement of public assets, as these harm the common good. Additionally, citizens have a duty to **defend the nation's sovereignty and security**. While Tanzania doesn't have compulsory military service, Article 28 of the Constitution states that every citizen has the duty to protect and preserve the independence and territorial integrity of the country. Patriotism, such as reporting threats to security or contributing to national defense if called upon, is part of this responsibility.

d) Civic Participation and Duty to Work: It is expected that citizens will participate in the development of the nation. The Constitution encapsulates a socialist ethos in saying "every person who is able to work, should work" and contribute to society. While this is more of a guiding principle than an enforceable law, it underlines that idleness is discouraged and that each person should use their talents and labor for personal and community benefit. Paying taxes lawfully due is another fundamental responsibility, taxes fund public services that benefit all (while not explicitly spelled out in the Constitution, tax obligations are established by law, and compliance is mandatory). Jury service is not a feature of Tanzanian courts (most cases are decided by judges), but citizens may be called to serve their community in other ways, such as participating in local governance, attending community meetings (barazas), or contributing to communal projects

e) Reporting Wrongdoing and Protecting the Vulnerable: A specially important responsibility is that citizens should not remain silent in the face of serious wrongdoing. **Tanzanian law imposes a duty on individuals to report certain crimes and abuses** that they witness. For example, Section 8 of the Criminal Procedure Act (Cap. 20 R.E 2023) **requires every person** who becomes aware that a criminal offense is being planned or has been committed to **promptly report it to the police or local authorities**. This legal obligation covers serious offenses under the Penal Code and situations like discovering a violent or suspicious death. By reporting, citizens help maintain public order and enable justice to be done. Failing to report a serious crime, in some cases, could itself be an offense.

i. Witnessing Abuse or Violence: If a citizen witnesses child abuse, domestic violence, or any form of violence, they should take action to alert authorities. In fact, under the **Law of the Child Act**, certain people are specifically duty-bound to report child abuse or neglect. **Teachers, social workers, health workers, and caregivers** are under a general obligation to report any evidence of child abuse to a social welfare officer. Moreover, any member of the community who knows that a child's rights are being violated – for instance, a neighbor aware of a child being beaten or denied care, **must report this to the local government authority** (such as the village/ward executive officer or social welfare department) so that action can be taken. This community reporting duty helps protect children by getting authorities involved early. Similarly, if one witnesses domestic violence (which is a criminal offense under assault laws and certain provisions of the law of marriage), the responsible action is to notify the police or local leaders. While not every minor offense requires citizen reporting, any situation involving harm to others, public danger, or serious illegality generally calls for citizens to alert authorities.

ii. Witnessing Corruption or Theft of Public Resources: Corruption is a serious issue that undermines rights and development. Tanzanian citizens have a moral and civic responsibility to report **corrupt activities** or misuse of public funds. In many cases, those working in public service have legal duties to report corruption (and are protected when they do so). Even for ordinary citizens, the government encourages reporting corruption through mechanisms like the **Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB)**. There is a dedicated toll-free hotline (113) to report corruption in Tanzania. Furthermore, Tanzania enacted the **Whistleblower and Witness Protection Act, 2015** to provide protection to individuals who come forward with information on corruption or other crimes. Under these frameworks, a citizen who reports corruption is shielded from retaliation or legal liability, so long as they report in good faith. In practice, this means if you see an official soliciting a bribe, or any corrupt practice, you should inform the PCCB or police, rather than ignoring it.

iii. General Crime or Emergencies: For other unlawful behavior, say you witness a robbery, a traffic accident caused by a drunk driver, or an environmental crime like illegal logging, the responsible thing to do is to contact law enforcement. As mentioned, the law requires reporting of serious crimes. Even when not legally mandated, it is a civic duty to assist in keeping your community safe. This might simply mean calling the police or, if safe and possible, intervening to stop the harm (though citizens are advised not to put themselves in danger, the primary role is to alert authorities). Tanzania's legal system even allows for the concept of a **citizen's arrest** in certain circumstances (for instance, any person may arrest someone whom they see committing a serious offense and immediately hand them to the police), but this should be exercised with caution and only when absolutely necessary.

Importantly, Tanzanian law protects and encourages those who fulfill their duty by **reporting crimes or abuses**. Under Section 8 of the Criminal Procedure Act, anyone who in good faith reports an offense or suspicious death is explicitly protected from civil or criminal liability for the report. In other words, you cannot be successfully sued or prosecuted for damages just because you reported a crime that you honestly believed had occurred. This legal protection is meant to remove the fear of repercussions and to empower citizens to speak up. Likewise, the Whistleblower Act provides that whistleblowers (people who report misconduct, especially corruption) can have their identity kept confidential and are legally guarded against retaliation from those implicated in wrongdoing.

Finally, citizens also have a responsibility to *cooperate with law enforcement and the justice system* when called upon. If you witness a crime, you might be asked to give a statement or testify in court as a witness. Doing so truthfully is part of your duty to society (and lying under oath, i.e. perjury, is a criminal offense). Serving as a witness helps ensure that justice is carried out for the victims and that offenders are held accountable.

In summary, the legal responsibilities of citizens in Tanzania include obeying all laws, respecting the rights of others, contributing to the community, and proactively helping to uphold justice by reporting and not tolerating abuses, corruption, or criminal acts. These duties complement the rights citizens enjoy, creating a balance where everyone’s rights are secured by each person acting responsibly

STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU SEE THE LAW BEING BROKEN

Witnessing a crime or any unlawful act can be alarming, but how you respond is very important. Here are the **practical steps someone should take if they see the law being broken:**

a) Ensure Your Safety First: Do not put yourself in harm's way. Before anything else, evaluate the situation. If the incident is violent or poses immediate danger (for example, an armed robbery or a physical assault in progress), keep a safe distance. Your first responsibility is to stay safe; you won't be able to help anyone if you become a victim as well. Avoid confrontations with perpetrators, do not attempt to stop an armed or dangerous suspect on your own. Instead, focus on being a good witness. Take note of important details like what exactly is happening, descriptions of the people involved (appearance, clothing, any vehicles or license plates, etc.), the time and location, and any other observations. This information will be very useful to authorities later. In some cases, minor incidents where you judge it is safe and you are capable, you might intervene (for example, verbally discouraging a group of kids from vandalizing property, or separating brawling individuals). But this should only be done if you are sure, it won't endanger you or others. When in doubt, **do not intervene physically**, leave it to the police. Your role can be to observe and report.





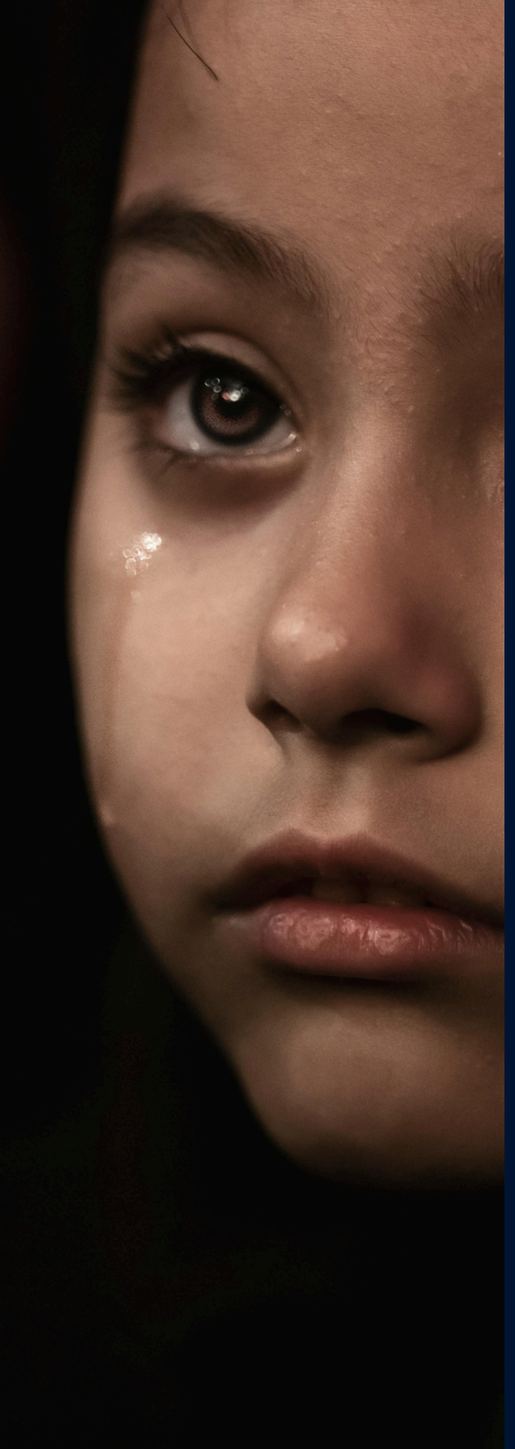
b) Call the Authorities or Emergency Services: Report the incident as soon as possible to the appropriate authorities. If it's an emergency or serious crime in progress, call the police immediately. Tanzania has toll-free emergency numbers: Dial 112 or 999 for police assistance (these numbers can also connect to ambulance and fire services in many areas). Explain clearly to the operator what is happening, where you are, and what help is needed. For example: **"I am reporting a burglary in progress at [location]. There are two suspects, I can see them breaking into a shop."** Speak calmly and give as much detail as you can. If someone is injured or in danger, also request medical assistance. The police dispatcher will either send officers to the scene or direct you to what to do. **Do not hang up** until the operator has all the information they need; they might have questions. If the situation is not an active emergency (say you discovered after the fact that a crime occurred, or you witnessed something like corruption), you should still report it promptly, either by calling local police or visiting the nearest police station to make a report. In rural areas, you might report initially to the village executive officer or local leader who can help contact the police. The key is: don't delay reporting. Quick reporting can lead to quick action (for example, catching suspects or securing evidence).





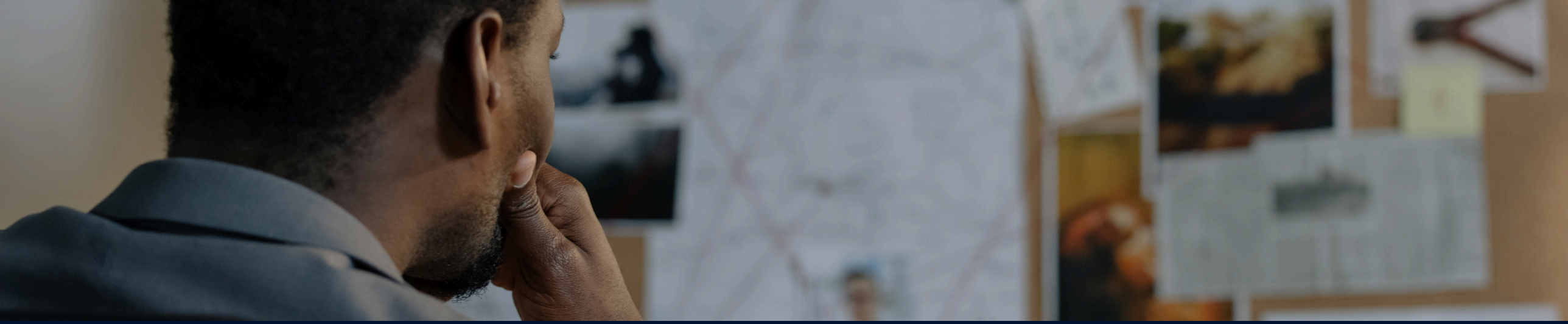
c) Contact Specialized Authorities if Applicable: Certain issues might require informing agencies other than (or in addition to) the police:

i. If you witness corruption (like someone soliciting a bribe or embezzling funds), you can contact the **Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB)**. The PCCB has offices in regions and a hotline **113** dedicated to anti-corruption reports. You can call 113 to report corrupt practices. They may ask for details and possibly evidence if you have any. You also have the option to report anonymously if you fear retaliation.



ii. If you **suspect a child is being abused, neglected, or otherwise in danger**, you can call the **National Child Helpline 116**, which is a toll-free number available across Tanzania. The child helpline is run in coordination with social welfare services and NGOs, and they can advise you and take action by involving social workers or police. Additionally, you can report to the **district social welfare officer** or the nearest police station (every police station in Tanzania is supposed to have a Gender and Children's Desk where officers are trained to handle cases of child abuse and gender-based violence in a sensitive manner). If the situation is immediate (for example, you hear a child screaming in violent abuse next door), calling the police emergency line is appropriate. If it's an ongoing concern (like a child being constantly mistreated in your neighborhood), you might both alert local social welfare authorities and the police. They often work together in child protection cases.

iii. For other specific issues: If you witness an environmental crime (like illegal fishing with dynamite, poaching, or dumping of toxic waste), you might notify the relevant authorities such as local environmental officers or wildlife authorities, aside from the police. If you see a fire hazard or accident, calling the fire brigade (114) or ambulance (115) might be necessary. In case of witnessing fraud or cybercrime, reporting to the police is the first step, but there are also cybercrime units you might be referred to.



d) Gather and Preserve Information (If Safe to Do So): While waiting for authorities to arrive, or in the course of witnessing the event, try to **remember as many details as possible**. If you have a phone or camera and can safely take photos or video without exposing yourself to risk, this evidence can be very useful (for instance, capturing a vehicle's license plate or a clear image of a suspect). However, do not do this if it might provoke the suspects or put you in danger. Even noting things on paper soon after the incident, such as the sequence of events, appearances of perpetrators, any spoken words you heard, etc., can help you recall details accurately later. When police or relevant authorities arrive, provide them with all the information you have. If there are other witnesses around, encourage them to stay and talk to the officers as well (multiple perspectives can give a fuller picture). **Do not disturb the scene** of an incident, for example, if it's a traffic accident or a break-in, don't move or clean up anything until law enforcement checks, as that could be evidence. By being observant and detail-oriented, you increase the chance that the wrongdoers will be identified and brought to justice.

e) Follow Instructions from Authorities: Once you have reported, the authorities may give you certain instructions. They might tell you to stay at a safe location until help arrives, or to check on any victims if you are capable of providing basic help (like first aid) and if it's safe. Comply with these directions. When police arrive, calmly explain what you saw. They may separate witnesses to take individual statements, this is normal. Give a truthful, factual account. If you're unsure about something, it's okay to say you're not sure (avoid guessing or assuming). If the incident leads to an investigation, you may be asked to provide a written statement or even testify in court later. Cooperating with these procedures is part of fulfilling your duty as a witness. Remember, telling the truth is paramount; providing false information is a crime in itself.

f) Aftermath – Seek Support if Needed: Witnessing a serious crime or accident can be traumatic. Don't hesitate to seek support for yourself after the incident. You can talk to a counselor or support organizations, especially in cases of witnessing violence. For instance, if you intervened in a domestic violence situation or saw something disturbing, there are NGOs and support groups (often accessible through the Gender and Children's Desk or social welfare offices) that offer counseling. There is also a Victim Support Unit within the police in some areas. Taking care of your mental well-being is important. Additionally, if after reporting you feel that no action was taken, you have the right to follow up. You can politely inquire with the police station about the status of the case you reported. If it's a corruption case and you don't see results, you might escalate it to higher authorities or watchdog organizations. While the wheels of justice can sometimes turn slowly, citizen engagement (following up, providing any new information you learn, etc.) can help ensure the matter isn't dropped without reason.

In all cases, the guiding principle is **“see something, say something”**, but do so in a manner that is safe and effective. By promptly involving the proper authorities and providing good information, you maximize the chance that unlawful behavior will be stopped and addressed. Your actions could save lives, protect someone vulnerable, or prevent further harm. Tanzania’s laws not only expect this from responsible citizens, but as noted in the previous section, they also provide legal protection for those who step up and do the right thing






WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP AND THE PROPER PROCESS TO FOLLOW

When you witness unlawful behavior or need to address a legal issue, it’s crucial to know who you should turn to and how the reporting and follow-up process works. Different situations call for different authorities or support systems. Here’s a breakdown of where to seek help and what process to expect:

a) Local Police and Law Enforcement: For most crimes (theft, assault, robbery, fraud, etc.) and emergencies, the police are the first and main point of contact. You can reach them via the emergency numbers **112 or 999** (both widely used in Tanzania) for immediate response. Alternatively, you can go to the nearest police station to report an incident. When you report to the police, they will typically have you give an oral statement first and then guide you to make a written statement (known as a police affidavit or report). The police will open a case file and start investigating. You may be given a reference number for your case, keep this for future follow-up. If the incident is under the jurisdiction of a special unit (for example, cybercrime, narcotics, etc.), your case might be referred to those specialists, but initial reporting is still through the regular police channels.

Process: After reporting, the police may visit the scene, collect evidence, and take statements from witnesses and the suspect (if known). If a suspect is arrested, the case will proceed through the criminal justice system, charges may be filed, and the matter will go to court. As the reporter/witness, you might be called by the prosecution to testify when the court hearings commence. Throughout, you can contact the police investigator assigned to the case for updates, or if you recall additional information. Police are expected to keep complainants informed, though in practice one may need to be proactive in inquiring.



b) Local Government Authorities: In some situations, especially in rural areas or small communities, you might report issues to local leaders. This includes the **Kitongoji (hamlet) or Village Chairman** in villages, or the **Mtaa (street) Chairman** in urban neighborhoods, as well as Ward Executive Officers or Village Executive Officers (WEO/VEO). These local authorities are often more immediately accessible and known in the community. They can help mediate minor issues or escalate matters to the police. For example, if you witness a minor dispute or a communal issue (like a neighbor consistently dumping garbage illegally), you might inform the mtaa or village leader who can address it in a community meeting or involve the relevant authority.

Process: Local leaders will either handle the issue within community structures (if it's something like a bylaw infraction or a family dispute, they might summon the parties and attempt reconciliation) or refer it to the police/district authorities for serious matters. They also often accompany or guide victims to the police station to file reports, helping bridge any language or literacy gaps. They are part of the local government framework and play a supportive role in enforcement.



c) Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB): For issues of **corruption, bribery, and other corruption-related offenses**, the PCCB is the specialized agency in Tanzania. If you have evidence of a public official taking a bribe, embezzlement of public funds, vote-buying, or other corrupt acts, you can report directly to the PCCB. They have regional offices, and as noted, hotline **113**.

Process: You can write a letter, send an email, call, or visit their office. The PCCB will typically keep the identity of complainants confidential (you can even choose not to give your name). They will investigate the matter, often covertly at first. If the report has merit, PCCB investigators can collect evidence and conduct sting operations. Ultimately, they can arrest and prosecute offenders (PCCB has prosecutorial powers for corruption cases). As the person who reported it, you might not be actively involved unless you are needed as a witness (for instance, if you directly witnessed the act or have documents to tender). The **Whistleblower and Witness Protection Act** ensures that if you fear harm, measures can be taken to protect you (such as identity protection, or even physical protection in serious cases). So, you should feel encouraged to report corruption knowing there are processes to safeguard you.





d) Social Welfare and Child Protection Services: If the issue concerns child abuse, **child labor, or any violation of a child's rights,** you have multiple avenues:

i. The Social Welfare Office: Every district has social welfare officers who handle cases of child protection, family welfare, etc. You can report to them directly. For example, if you suspect a child is being abused at home, a social welfare officer can investigate by visiting the home and can work with police to remove a child from a safe place if necessary.

ii. The Police Gender and Children's Desk: As mentioned earlier, most police stations have a dedicated desk for gender-based violence and children's issues. These desks are staffed by officers (often in plain clothes) trained to handle such cases with sensitivity. If you go to report a rape, domestic violence incident, or child abuse, ask for the Gender and Children's Desk. They typically have a private room to take your statement, to maintain confidentiality and make you more comfortable. They also coordinate with medical services (for example, in a rape case, to get the victim to a hospital for examination and care) and with social welfare.

ii. Child Helpline (116) and NGOs: The toll-free 116 helpline is run by C-Sema in partnership with the government. It's a 24/7 hotline for anyone (children or adults) to report child rights concerns or seek counseling. If you call them, they will listen and then connect with police or social welfare on your behalf if needed. There are also NGOs like **Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, etc.**, active in many communities, who assist in child protection. They might have local offices or volunteers you can approach.

Process: For child abuse cases, after a report, typically social welfare and police will do an assessment. If the child is in immediate danger, they may remove the child to a safer environment (a relative's care, or a government-approved shelter). The abuser can face criminal charges under the Law of the Child Act and Penal Code. As a reporter, you might be asked for more details. If you are a teacher or doctor reporting from your professional capacity, you have fulfilled your legal obligation by reporting (and you would likely also give a witness statement). The case might go to court, where again you could be a witness. Importantly, these cases often involve a multi-disciplinary approach, involving social workers, police, healthcare (for treating injuries or performing medical exams), and sometimes magistrates in juvenile courts. Your report can set this whole protection process in motion.





e) Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Domestic Violence Support: Victims or witnesses of domestic violence, sexual assault, or other GBV can seek help from both the police and support organizations. Apart from the police desks, Tanzania has a network of **One-Stop Centers** in some hospitals for GBV survivors (where they can get medical treatment, counseling, and legal aid in one place). As a witness, if you're helping a victim, you should encourage them to get medical care (especially in sexual violence cases, within 72 hours, to prevent HIV/STIs and collect forensic evidence) and to report to the police. If the victim is afraid or unable to report, you can still inform the police, who can initiate inquiries. There are NGOs like **TAWLA (Tanzania Women Lawyers Association)** or **WiLDAF** that offer legal advice, and **TGNP** or government social welfare that offer shelter referrals.

Process: Once police are notified, they will typically issue a PF3 form for the victim to get a medical examination (this form is required for the medical report to be used as evidence in court). The case investigation and prosecution then follow. Support agencies might provide counseling and even representation in court. As a concerned person, your role after reporting might simply be to support the survivor emotionally or as a companion in these., if you know them personally.





f) Reporting Deaths and Serious Incidents: If you come across a situation like a **dead body** or someone who died under unusual circumstances, Tanzanian law (as noted in Section 7 of the Criminal Procedure Act) requires reporting to authorities as well. You would inform the police immediately. The police, in cases of unexplained or suspicious deaths, will in turn inform a coroner or conduct an inquest. Your responsibility is just to report – do not tamper with anything at the scene.

Process: Police will secure the scene, possibly call medical examiners, and investigate it as a potential crime or unexplained death. You might be asked about how you found the body or any observations. Similar protocol goes for major accidents: report to police, who then handle them (with traffic police for road accidents, etc.). In accidents or emergencies, also call for medical help (115 for ambulance, or 112 which can dispatch medical services).



g) Court Process and Giving Evidence: After reporting an incident, if the case goes to court, **who do you turn to?** The answer is generally the **Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP**) or the **prosecuting authority** will take charge of the case for criminal matters. They will build the case and present it in court. You, as a witness, will be contacted by them or by police when it's time for a hearing. If you ever feel threatened because you reported a crime (for instance, someone tries to intimidate you to withdraw your testimony), you should report this new development to the police immediately. Tampering with witnesses is a serious offense. The authorities can take steps to protect you, such as retaining the accused in custody or providing police protection. Under the Whistleblower/Witness Protection law, you can apply for protective measures – this could include keeping your address secret, providing escort to court, or in extreme cases, relocation. In practice, witness protection is still developing in Tanzania, but the legal provisions exist. If you feel unsure about the court process, you can also reach out to the justice ministries or legal aid organizations for guidance. For example, the **Tanzania Legal Aid Organization** or **TLS (Tanzania Law Society)** might help witnesses understand the process. Some courts have Court User Committees or information desks to assist the public.

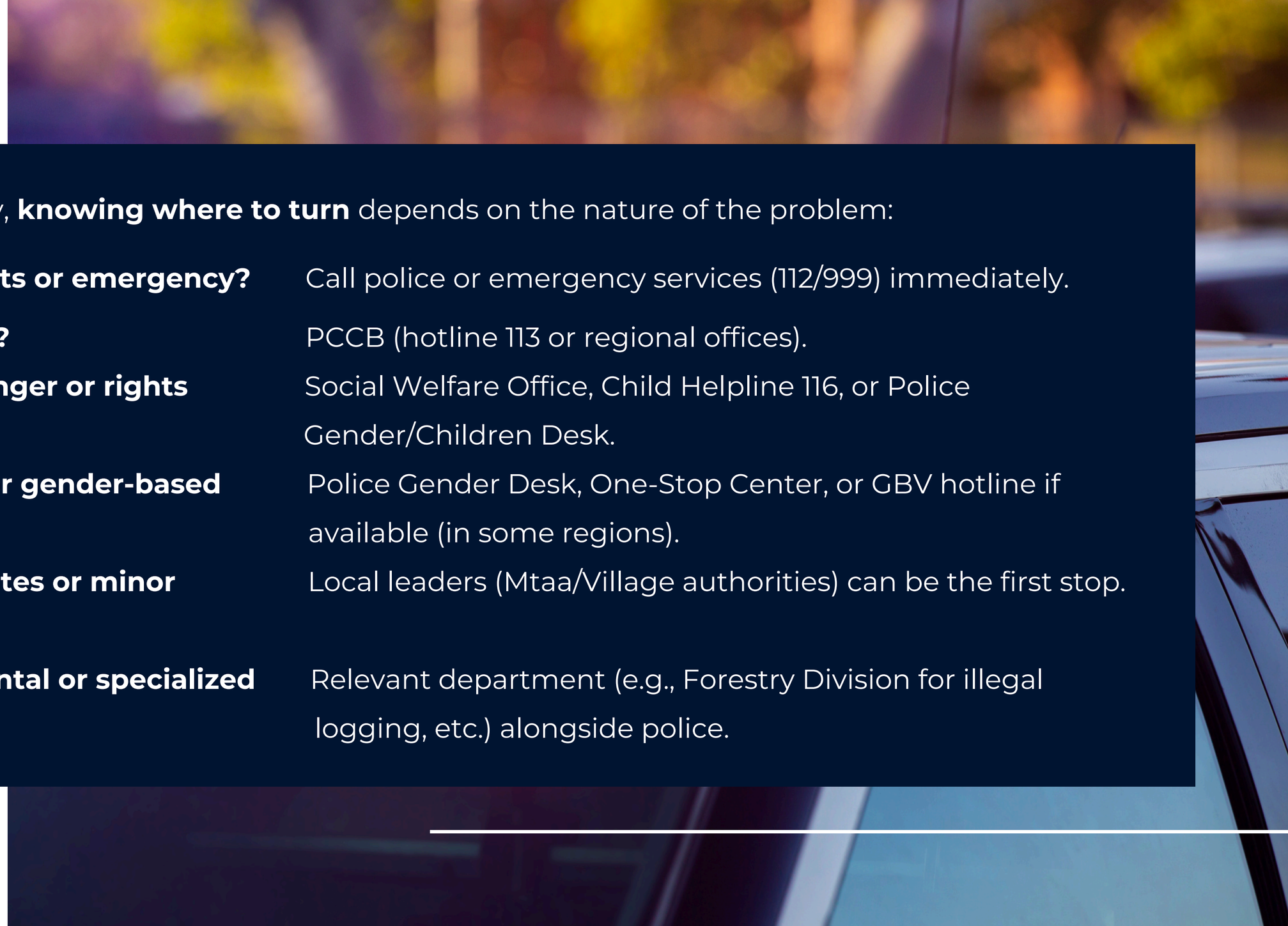






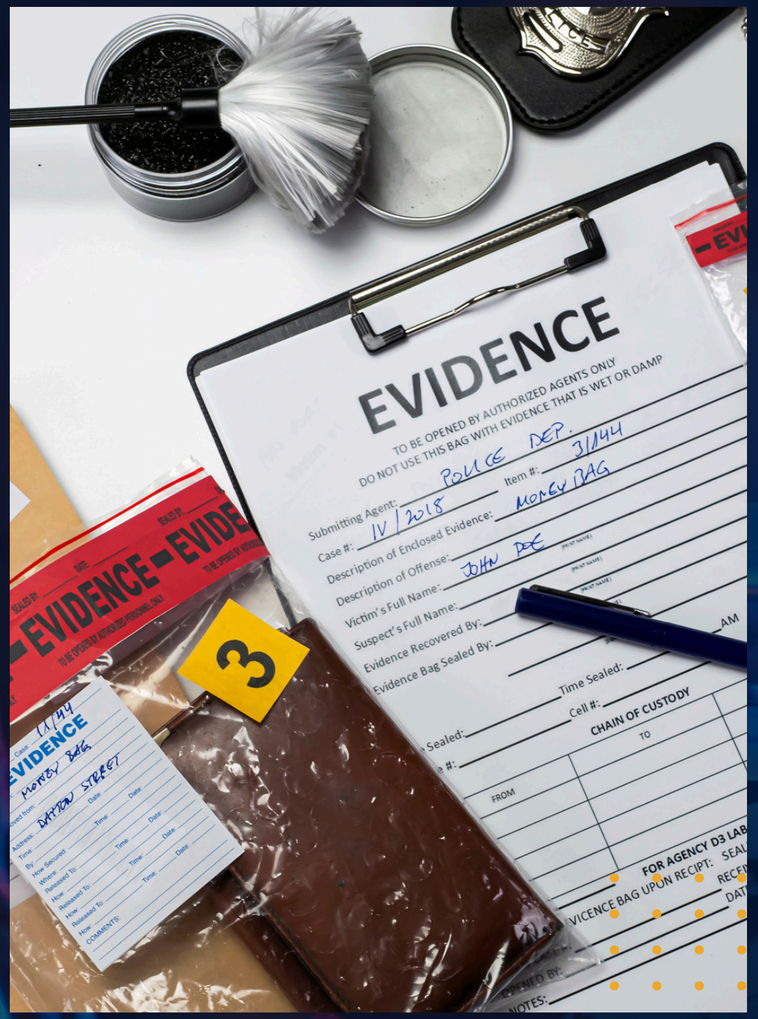


h) Alternative Avenues: In addition to formal authorities, sometimes you might consider using media or hotlines to expose wrongdoing. Tanzania has a few avenues like the **“Crime Stoppers” hotline 111**, which allows anonymous tips to police. There are also civil society organizations and helplines for specific issues (for instance, a wildlife crime hotline, or trafficking in persons hotline, etc., if those have been set up in collaboration with NGOs or the government). While these can be useful, they should complement, not replace, reporting to the official authorities. Media (like calling a journalist or a radio show to report a corrupt official) can bring public attention but remember that ultimately only the legal authorities can arrest or prosecute the offender. So, one might contact media in cases where authorities are unresponsive, but generally, start with the agency responsible (police, PCCB, etc.)



In summary, **knowing where to turn** depends on the nature of the problem:

Criminal acts or emergency?	Call police or emergency services (112/999) immediately.
Corruption?	PCCB (hotline 113 or regional offices).
Child in danger or rights violated?	Social Welfare Office, Child Helpline 116, or Police Gender/Children Desk.
Domestic or gender-based violence?	Police Gender Desk, One-Stop Center, or GBV hotline if available (in some regions).
Local disputes or minor issues?	Local leaders (Mtaa/Village authorities) can be the first stop.
Environmental or specialized issues?	Relevant department (e.g., Forestry Division for illegal logging, etc.) alongside police.



And remember the **process** after turning to these channels often involves giving statements, possibly testifying, and allowing the authorities to carry out investigations or interventions. Be prepared to participate as needed – your cooperation can be pivotal for a successful resolution. The system works best when citizens and authorities collaborate, you provide tips or complaints, and then the institutions use their legal powers to take action. By knowing the proper channels and following through, you help uphold the rule of law and protect your community.

Above all, **do not be afraid to report**. The law is on your side when you act as a concerned, law-abiding citizen. Tanzania's framework, from the Constitution down to specific statutes, is designed to empower citizens to enforce rights and justice. When in doubt, reach out to law enforcement or legal aid groups for advice, it's better to ask and report than to stay silent and allow harm to continue unchecked.



THANK YOU!

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