

Press Release



Michèle Rivasi, Claude Gruffat & Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana
Members of European Parliament

Monday 4th of September 2023

Three Greens/EFA MEPs denied entry to the Tanzanian territory.

The MEPs Michèle Rivasi, Claude Gruffat and Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana were due to travel to Tanzania on Monday 4 September as part of an independent observation mission following civil society alerts on expulsions suffered by members of the Masai indigenous community and the arbitrary arrests and detentions of which they are alleged to be victims. After months of preparation and while all the details of this mission were settled, the Tanzanian government through its ambassador to the EU said it had decided to “defer this visit to a later date”, 24 hours before the delegation should have left. An incomprehensible decision that calls into question all the work done in cooperation with the Tanzanian government, NGOs and EU representatives.

Michèle Rivasi, co-chair of the EELV delegation and MEP referring indigenous peoples and local communities in the European Parliament’s development committee, said:

This mission stems from a round table that I organised in the European Parliament last May to gather the testimonies of the Masai and the arguments of the Tanzanian government. Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, also gave us the honour of his presence. The debate was rich, sometimes heated, but led to a promise from Tanzanian government representatives: the possibility for us, MEPs, to carry out an independent observation mission in Tanzania, with all the free circulation that this would require.

Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, MEP die Grünen, Vice-President of the development committee added:

This promise was not fulfilled, as we were ordered not to travel to Tanzania by the country’s representatives 24 hours before we left. This is the third observation mission to Tanzania aborted by the government, following attempts by Mr Francesco Cali, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in December 2022 and then by UNESCO World Heritage in August 2023. This decision is unacceptable to us in view of our willingness to have the views of all stakeholders on the ground, starting with the representatives of the Tanzanian Government.

Michèle Rivasi and Claude Gruffat, EELV MEPs concluded:

We expect a clear message from the Tanzanian government to complete this observation mission within a respectable timeframe. Its success will depend on the involvement and good faith of all stakeholders. NGOs and Masai representatives can count on our commitment to highlight the respect for the rights of the Masai people in their ancestral lands, territories and natural resources. We must ensure that international and national obligations to protect freedom of peaceful assembly, prior, free and informed consent and non-discrimination are respected.

Michèle Rivasi, Claude Gruffat & Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana

INFOS PRATIQUES

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