



EAST AFRICAN
HUMAN RIGHTS
INSTITUTE

THRDC/EAHR Monthly Online Training Course Series

March 2026 Topic: Online training on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR): Strengthening CSOs Effective Engagement in the Upcoming 2026 Tanzania 4th Cycle Review

Proposed Date: 2nd April, 2026

Platform: Online (Zoom Meeting)

Organizer: Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) in Collaboration with East Africa Human Rights Institute (EAHRI)

1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), in collaboration with the East Africa Human Rights Institute (EAHRI), continues its structured Monthly Online Training Series aimed at strengthening the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in engaging with key human rights and governance processes.

For over a year, THRDC and EAHRI have been jointly offering these online sessions, reaching a wide network of CSOs and HRDs across Tanzania and beyond. The trainings have created an important platform for learning and exchange on topical and practical issues relevant to civil society operations. These include compliance with regulatory authorities, engagement with human rights mechanisms at national, regional, and international levels, as well as resource mobilization and organizational sustainability. Through this sustained initiative, thousands of participants have been able to enhance their knowledge, skills, and coordination in advancing human rights work.

The March 2026 session is specifically dedicated to the United Nations human rights system, with a strong focus on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and enhancing CSOs' effective participation in Tanzania's 4th Cycle Review taking place in 2026. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique peer-review mechanism under the UN Human Rights Council, established in 2006 through UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251. It mandates the review of the human rights records of all UN Member States on a rotating basis. Through this process, states are expected to report on progress made, challenges encountered, and measures taken to promote, protect, and fulfill human rights. The UPR also provides a platform for sharing best practices and fostering accountability at the global level.

Tanzania is currently under review in the fourth UPR cycle (2022–2026), with 2026 being its reporting year. This review represents a critical opportunity to assess the country's implementation of recommendations accepted during the previous cycle, while also addressing ongoing and emerging human rights concerns, including civic space, access to justice, and protection of fundamental freedoms. The outcomes of this process will significantly influence national human rights priorities and commitments in the years ahead.

While states remain the primary duty bearers in the UPR process, the role of CSOs is indispensable. CSOs contribute through independent reporting, stakeholder submissions, advocacy engagements, and monitoring the implementation of recommendations. However, many organizations still face challenges such as limited awareness of the UPR process, gaps in technical capacity for documentation and reporting, and weak coordination in advocacy efforts.

This makes the March 2026 training session particularly timely and strategic. As Tanzania approaches its review, there is a crucial window for CSOs to:

- a) Prepare and submit high quality stakeholder reports jointly and at thematic levels
- b) Engage effectively with UN mechanisms and diplomatic missions jointly and at thematic level
- c) Influence more participation of CSOs in the ongoing formulation of UPR recommendations and reports led and coordinated by THRDC, LHRC and Save the Children
- d) Highlight priority human rights concerns based on credible evidence; and
- e) Develop follow-up and monitoring strategies post-review.

The session will therefore focus on strengthening practical knowledge and skills across the entire UPR cycle from preparation and documentation to reporting, advocacy, and post-review follow-up. It will also provide updates on Tanzania's reporting progress and identify concrete entry points for CSO engagement in 2026.

As an umbrella organization with a network of over 350 members across mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, THRDC has been mobilizing and coordinating civil society engagement in various human rights mechanism including this process. By equipping CSOs and HRDs at this critical moment, the training aims to ensure meaningful participation, stronger advocacy, and increased accountability within Tanzania's human rights landscape.

Ultimately, this session is key because it comes at a decisive time empowering civil society not only to participate in the UPR process, but to actively shape Tanzania's human rights agenda through informed, coordinated, and strategic engagement. Currently a draft report for CSOs joint reporting has been developed, this session will provide an opportunity to be provide with the progress. According to coordination team, the process is at the level technical drafting, consolidation of data and views after validation session done early March 2026.

The final stakeholder report will be submitted to OHCHR in accordance with official deadlines. From April to August 2026, civil society engagement will shift toward advocacy and high-level engagements. This period will involve structured in-country briefings with diplomatic missions in Dar es Salaam, development of UPR advocacy factsheets, and direct engagement with Permanent Missions in Geneva. Applications and preparations for participation in UPR Info Pre-Sessions will also take place during this period.

2.0 THE RATIONALE OF THE TRAINING

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) is strategically utilizing the March 2026 online training session to further widen and strengthen effective participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. This session comes at a critical moment, as it coincides with the final stages of drafting and consolidating Tanzania's CSOs Joint UPR Stakeholder Report for the 2026 review.

The joint report is being collaboratively coordinated by THRDC, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), and Save the Children, bringing together inputs from a wide range of CSOs across mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. In this context, the training serves as a key platform to enhance the quality, coherence, and inclusiveness of contributions by equipping CSOs with practical knowledge on documentation, evidence-based reporting, and alignment with UPR requirements.

By linking the training directly to the ongoing report finalization process, THRDC aims to ensure that participating CSOs are not only informed about the UPR mechanism but are also actively contributing to a credible, well-coordinated, and impactful stakeholder submission that reflects the realities on the ground.

a) **Technical and time-bound nature of the UPR process**

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process is both highly technical and time sensitive. While many CSOs possess valuable field-based evidence, they often lack the practical skills required to translate this information into structured and credible stakeholder submissions that meet UPR standards. Without timely capacity strengthening, there is a significant risk that critical human rights issues may be underreported or inadequately presented.

ii) A critical entry point for influence

The stakeholder report represents one of the few formal avenues through which CSOs can influence the international assessment of a country's human rights situation. Strengthening CSO capacity at this stage ensures that submissions are evidence-based, well-coordinated, and strategically aligned, thereby increasing their potential to shape recommendations during the review process.

iii) Need for enhanced coordination among CSOs

Many CSOs operate independently, often resulting in fragmented reporting, duplication of efforts, and missed opportunities for collective advocacy. This training provides a platform for coordination, harmonization of priority issues, and joint engagement an essential approach at this stage of the UPR cycle.

iv) Accessibility through online delivery

The online format enables rapid, inclusive, and cost-effective participation for CSOs and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) across Tanzania and beyond, ensuring wider reach and engagement.

v) Beyond reporting: ensuring long-term impact

In addition to report preparation, the training equips CSOs with knowledge and skills to engage in the full UPR cycle, including advocacy, follow-up, and monitoring of recommendations. This ensures sustained participation and contributes to long-term accountability and human rights impact.

3.0 OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE TRAINING

To strengthen the capacity of CSOs in Tanzania to effectively participate in the UPR process through improved knowledge, documentation, reporting, and follow-up.

3.1 Specific Objectives

- a) Enhance CSOs' understanding of the UPR process and reporting framework
- b) Track Tanzania's progress in human rights reporting and implementation
- c) Build skills in human rights documentation and evidence-based reporting
- d) Strengthen collaboration among CSOs and promote joint submissions including providing updates on the ongoing process of developing CSOs joint reports
- e) Promote CSO engagement in monitoring and follow-up of UPR recommendations, including participation in the UPR session in Geneva at the end of 2026 and develop a resource mobilization road for effective CSOs participation.

4.0 TRAINING COVERAGE AND MODULES

4.1 Module I: Overview of the UPR Mechanism, Role of CSOs, Joint & Thematic Reporting, and Advocacy Strategies – THRDC

a) Learning Objectives

- i) Understand the structure, purpose, and principles of the UPR mechanism.
- ii) Identify the formal and informal entry points for CSO engagement in the UPR cycle.
- iii) Gain practical skills for preparing joint and thematic UPR stakeholder reports.
- iv) Learn effective advocacy strategies for influencing recommendations and follow-up.
- v) Strengthen knowledge of CSOs' roles in documentation, reporting, and post-review monitoring.

4.2 Module II: Development and Validation of the State Report – Ministry of Constitution and Legal Affairs

a) Learning Objectives

- i) Understand the national process for preparing and validating the State UPR Report.
- ii) Gain insights into government procedures for data collection, inter-ministerial coordination, and drafting.
- iii) Identify opportunities for CSOs to contribute constructively to the State reporting process.
- iv) Strengthen understanding of the interaction between State and CSO submissions within the UPR framework.

4.3 Module III: Techniques for Human Rights Documentation, Evidence Gathering, and Effective Engagement in UPR Sessions and Pre-Sessions – UPR Info

a) Learning Objectives

- i) Develop skills in evidence-based human rights documentation and data verification.
- ii) Learn practical methods for compiling and presenting credible stakeholder information.
- iii) Understand how to strategically engage in UPR Pre-Sessions and sessions in Geneva.
- iv) Strengthen the capacity of CSOs/HRDs to communicate findings to diplomatic missions and UN bodies.

4.4 Module IV: Progress of Human Rights Reporting in Tanzania, the UPR Process, and Presentation of the Draft Joint CSO Report – THRDC/LHRC

a) Learning Objectives

- i) Understand Tanzania's progress in implementing previous UPR recommendations.
- ii) Review key human rights trends and priority issues from the ongoing joint CSO drafting process.
- iii) Analyze the structure and content of the draft CSOs report.
- iv) Provide feedback to strengthen completeness, accuracy, and thematic alignment of the draft report.

4.5 Module V: The Role of the UN and Diplomatic Missions in Supporting CSO Participation in the UPR Cycle – United Nations Tanzania

a) Learning Objectives:

- i) Understand how UN agencies and diplomatic missions support UPR engagement.
- ii) Identify strategic partnerships that enhance CSO advocacy before, during, and after the review.
- iii) Learn how to develop factsheets, talking points, and advocacy messages tailored for missions.
- iv) Strengthen understanding of multilateral engagement for effective UPR influence.

5.0 EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND TARGET GROUP

More than 300 CSOs working on human rights (both members and non-members of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition) will be reached.

- a) Strengthened understanding of the UPR process and Tanzania's progress in implementing human rights commitments.
- b) Improved capacity of CSOs and HRDs to produce credible, evidence-based human rights reports.
- c) Enhanced coordination and collaboration among CSOs in UPR-related activities
- d) Increased preparedness of CSOs for active participation throughout the UPR cycle.

7.0 EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- i) Higher levels of CSO participation in the ongoing UPR engagement and report development.
- ii) Availability of updated and reliable information on Tanzania's human rights situation.
- iii) Strengthened CSO coordination structures for joint reporting.
- iv) Increased number of CSOs endorsing the joint stakeholder report
- v) Increased submission of thematic CSO reports.
- vi) Increased CSO thematic representation in Geneva during the UPR review.

8.0 FACILITATION

The session will be facilitated by experienced human rights practitioners with expertise in international human rights mechanisms, CSOs coordination, particularly the Universal Periodic Review process from UN, CSOs and the Government.

9.0 Conclusion

This online training provides a timely and practical platform to strengthen the role of CSOs in international human rights reporting. By enhancing knowledge, building technical skills, and fostering collaboration, the training will contribute to more effective and coordinated participation of Tanzanian CSOs in the UPR process, ultimately strengthening accountability and the promotion of human rights in the country.