



Statement by the Coalition on Right to Information (CoRI) Condemning the Suspension of JamiiForums

The Coalition on Rights to Information (CoRI) expresses its deep concern and strongly condemns the 90-day suspension of JamiiForums, a Tanzanian online platform that facilitates public discourse and whistleblowing, imposed today, September 6, 2025 by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA).

This decision constitutes a serious infringement of the fundamental constitutional right to freedom of expression and access to information as guaranteed under Article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, which provides that every person has the right to seek, receive, and disseminate information. The suspension of JamiiForums not only restricts these rights but also undermines the principles of transparency, accountability, and open dialogue that are essential in a democratic society.

Furthermore, such curtailment contravenes Tanzania's obligations under various international human rights instruments, including Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees the right to freedom of expression; Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which provides for every individual's right to receive information and express opinions; and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which affirms the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to seek, receive, and impart information through any media and regardless of frontiers.

According to the letter issued by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) to JamiiForums on 5th September 2025, the platform was accused of violating Regulations 9(a), (c), (e), (g) and (j); 12(a) and (i); 15A; and 16(1), together with Paragraphs 3(a), 9 and 10 of the Schedule to the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations, 2020. The allegations included publishing misleading and one-sided information through its platform and social media accounts (Instagram and X) without seeking clarifications from the government, as well as failing to prevent contributors on its platform from publishing inappropriate content containing

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abusive and defamatory language against the President of the United Republic of Tanzania through its forum, as well as retaining such content on its platform.

On the same day, JamiiForums was required to present its defence before TCRA, a demand which, in the view of CoRI, was inappropriate as it did not afford the platform reasonable time to prepare an adequate defence.

CoRI acknowledges the importance of responsible online content and compliance with legal requirements. However, we are deeply concerned that this action constitutes a disproportionate restriction on the rights to freedom of expression and access to information, particularly in a democratic state like Tanzania.

JamiiForums has played a critical role in facilitating civic engagement, transparency, and accountability in Tanzania. Suspending its operations for 90 days sets a dangerous precedent and undermines democratic governance. CoRI believes that the right to freedom of expression and access to information is not a privilege, but a fundamental cornerstone of democracy, accountability, and good governance.

As stakeholders committed to promoting freedom of expression and access to information, CoRI believes in engagement and dialogue. Therefore, suspending JamiiForums especially during this crucial electoral period effectively denies millions of its users and followers access to verified information, which they rely on to make informed decisions.

Our Call

- i. We call upon the TCRA to immediately lift the suspension and restore public access to JamiiForums, ensuring that citizens can continue to exercise their right to seek, receive, and disseminate information without undue restriction.
- ii. We urge the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to ensure that any restrictions imposed on media outlets and online platforms are lawful, necessary, and

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proportionate, in accordance with both national constitutional provisions and Tanzania's international human rights obligations. We consider the suspension of JamiiForums to contravene international standards and to be unwarranted in a democratic society like Tanzania.

iii. We appeal to all stakeholders including media practitioners, political actors, civil society, and the general public to continue defending the fundamental rights to freedom of expression, a cornerstone of democracy and an essential pillar of transparency, accountability, and democratic governance.

iv. We urge the Government and relevant authorities to refrain from using regulatory powers to silence, or unduly restrict platforms that play a vital role in promoting civic engagement, whistleblowing, and access to verified information.

CoRI reiterates that disproportionate restrictions on platforms like JamiiForums undermine democratic principles, the public's right to information, and trust in governance. Immediate corrective action is essential to uphold freedom of expression and access to information in Tanzania.

This statement has been authored and formally authorized by all 16 member organizations of the Coalition on Rights to Information (CoRI).

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September 06, 2025.