

**EDUCATION** This change presents a challenge for the over 300,000 graduate teachers currently unemployed

# Graduate teachers risk becoming irrelevant in new recruiting system

While the new system presents challenges for some, it signifies Tanzania's commitment to improving education quality by ensuring teachers entering the profession are well-equipped

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**Dar es Salaam.** Tanzania's planned approach to hiring teachers through interviews, irrespective of when they graduated, poses a potential risk of irrelevance for the thousands of graduate teachers.

This change, set to commence in 2025, mandates that all teaching candidates undergo rigorous interviews, with those who have been waiting for employment for years cautioned to continuously update their skills and knowledge.

Education, Science and Technology minister Prof Adolf Mkenda, while in the 2024 digital teaching skills competition for English among primary school teachers on June 25, 2024, highlighted the importance of continuous profes-

sional development.

"We will not look at when you graduated; therefore, it is best for every graduate to have a routine of refreshing and developing themselves to stay up to date. We cannot hire teachers out of sympathy; instead, we want to uphold the teaching profession like any other." This caution serves as a wake-up call for over 300,000 graduate teachers who completed their studies between 2014 and now but remain unemployed.

The upcoming interview system aims to select the best candidates, aligning with global standards observed in countries like Singapore, the United States, and Germany.

In these nations, proficiency exams, practical assessments, and

psychological tests ensure that only the most capable individuals enter the teaching profession.

Tanzania's initiative mirrors this approach, striving to enhance the quality of education by hiring competent and well-prepared teachers.

Education expert Ms Justina Mtambalike supports this move, asserting that without practice, it is difficult for those who have been without employment for several years to pass the expected interview or examination system.

"The Minister of Education is right. You cannot sit for more than four years and still have the same abilities without regularly refreshing or volunteering."

The current employment system, where selected applicants directly report to schools, has faced criticism for its inefficiency and susceptibility to nepotism, according to the minister.

"The new interview-based hir-

ing process aims to eliminate these issues and ensure that only the most qualified teachers are entrusted with educating the nation's children," Prof Mkenda noted. Quality assurance expert Mr Daniel Mbwana believes that this system will improve teaching standards, although he urges the government to provide ample job opportunities to address the existing teacher shortage.

"There is no problem at all, and I believe if someone needs a job in their profession, they will prepare to take that qualifying exam. But through this system, the government should plan to hire more teachers to help implement new curricula," Mr Mbwana stated.

His perspective highlighted the dual necessity of maintaining high standards while also addressing the significant demand for teachers in Tanzania.

The demand for primary and

secondary school teachers remains critical. According to the President's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government Authorities (PO-RALG), as of February 2023, Tanzania needed 362,189 primary school teachers but had only 175,864 employed.

This disparity results in an average of one teacher for every 70 students, far above the desired ratio of 1:45. For secondary schools, the shortage is equally dire, with 84,700 teachers employed against a requirement of 174,632.

In response to these challenges, the government plans to hire 13,000 teachers this year under the existing system before transitioning to the interview-based method.

"Those of you teachers who are continuing and those we are hiring soon will not be involved in this process. What we want is to bring in your fellow teachers who will be able to help implement the current education demand," he said.

The push for higher standards in teacher recruitment aligns with Tanzania's broader efforts to reform its education system. The implementation of the new Education and Training Policy 2024 and revised curricula across all education levels reflects a commitment to quality education.

## WAR CRIMES

### French court confirms arrest warrant against Syria's Assad

**Paris.** Paris judges on Wednesday confirmed a French arrest warrant for Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad over alleged complicity in crimes against humanity for 2013 chemical attacks, the plaintiffs' lawyers said.

The Paris appeals court found Assad could be sought over deadly August 2013 attacks on Syrian soil with chemical weapons.

"This is a historic decision. It's the first time a national court has recognised that a sitting head of state does not have total personal immunity" for their actions, said plaintiffs' lawyers Clemence Bectarte, Jeanne Sulzer and Clemence Witt.

Prosecutors from a unit specialised in investigating terrorist attacks had sought to annul the warrant, arguing that immunity for foreign heads of state should only be lifted for international prosecutions, such as before the International Criminal Court (ICC). (AFP)

## SECURITY: Samia makes a courtesy visit at the National Defence College in Kunduchi



President Samia Suluhu Hassan is saluted by Lieutenant General Salim Haji Othman (third left) and Chief of Army Staff Major General Marco Gaguti (second left) as she arrives at the National Defence College (NDC) Kunduchi in Dar es Salaam yesterday. PHOTO | STATE HOUSE

# Tanzania's e-Mrejesho platform wins UN award

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**Dar es Salaam.** An initiative by the e-Government Authority, e-Mrejesho, has been recognised for its transformative approach to enhancing citizen-government communication.

This platform received one of the prestigious awards at the 2024 United Nations Public Service Awards, held during the United Nations Public Service Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea.

The forum emphasised the impor-

tance of innovative public sector solutions in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A statement from the e-Government Authority said yesterday that the recognition highlights the initiative's significant contribution to improving governance through technology.

By centralising citizen complaints, inquiries, and feedback, the platform streamlines government operations and promotes data-driven decision-making. Its allowance for anonymous submissions addresses privacy concerns and encourages broader

citizen participation, ensuring diverse voices are heard. This fosters a culture of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness within government institutions.

The awards saw 400 applications from 73 countries, with only 15 initiatives being honoured after rigorous evaluation. e-Mrejesho's success emphasises its commendable impact on a national scale, meeting objectives related to enhancing communication, transparency, and accountability in governance.

"e-Mrejesho represents a significant step forward in our efforts to

bridge the gap between the government and its citizens. This recognition by the United Nations shows our commitment to fostering transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in public administration," said the Director General of the e-Gov-

ernment Authority, Mr Benedict Ndomba. President Samia Suluhu Hassan is on record as having been quoted urging public leaders to use the e-Mrejesho Electronic Communication System to receive and provide feedback from citizens.

This system will enhance our efficiency and responsiveness. To sustain and enhance e-Mrejesho, Eng Ndomba outlined plans for ongoing improvements: "We will integrate advanced data analytics, increase outreach to encourage participation and ensure robust cybersecurity to protect user data."

Number of countries that submitted their applications for the 2024 United Nations Public Service Awards

73