

# **The right to vote in Tanzania: a critical analysis of the rights of the sidelined voters**

**Judith Mathew kakongwe**

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This dissertation critically analyses the electoral legal framework in Tanzania particularly the voting rights of sidelined voters. The sidelined voters identified under this study include persons who are presently barred from exercising their voting rights. This group involves a variety of citizens, however this study has limited its scope only to students, business persons, married persons, diplomats and officers in the diplomatic missions who are living abroad, persons with physical and visual disabilities, persons frequently move from one place to another, either for business, studies or employment hence happen not to be at the polling stations on the polling day and the imprisoned persons who serve sentences of less than six months. This study reviews various documents and field research was conducted in order to ascertain the practical point of view as regards treatment of sidelined voters. It was found that neither the *Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977 (here in after 'the Constitution)* nor the *National Elections Act, [Cap. 343, R.E. 2002]* outlaws the identified sidelined voters from exercising their right to vote. Unlike the current practice of excluding the sidelined voters from voting, all sampled stakeholders interviewed on the subject have supported the suggestion of setting the legal framework which will enable them to vote. Hence, the study suggests that the government should set up legal mechanisms which will entitle all citizens identified under this study as sidelined voters to participate in various general elections.