

1. Disclaimer

This information is not meant to be definitive, nor is it to be taken as a substitute for independent legal advice. Neither Her Majesty's Government nor its staff take any responsibility for the accuracy of the information, nor accept liability for any loss, costs, damage or expense that you might suffer as a result of relying on the information. Some of the information may not be relevant to your circumstances. The language used is intended to be general and factual and is not meant to cause offence.

2. Introduction

This guide aims to explain the process when a British National dies in Tanzania. Specific guidance and information about contact details and local conditions can be found below and support is available from the Consular Team at the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in London.

The death of a relative or friend is always distressing. If a death happens abroad, the distress can be made worse by practical problems. Consular Directorate in the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and our High Commission in Tanzania are ready to help in any way that they properly can. You may be uncertain what to do next or who to contact for advice. These notes are designed to help you through the practical arrangements you will need to make. While care has been taken in compiling these notes, the British High Commission, or HM Government, accepts no legal liability for their contents.

You should be aware that Tanzanian procedures differ from those in the United Kingdom. While we understand your need to make arrangements as quickly as possible, this may not always be possible and our High Commission is not able to intervene in or overrule local law or procedure.

3. Standard Procedures

Normally, our High Commission is notified of a death by local police or local service providers (e.g. funeral home). Following the death of a British national in Tanzania, the next of kin (NOK), or a formally appointed representative, must decide whether to:

- repatriate the deceased to the UK
- have a local burial
- have a local cremation and the ashes repatriated to the UK
- have a local cremation and the ashes scattered in Tanzania

If the deceased was covered by travel insurance, it is important for the NOK to contact the insurance company without delay. If there is no insurance cover, the cost of repatriation/cremation/funeral will need to be met by the family. Neither the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office nor the High Commission in Tanzania has budgets to meet these costs.

The services of an international funeral director are normally necessary to help with these arrangements. If your loved one had travel insurance, the insurance company normally make arrangements directly with the international funeral director. All hospital bills should be paid before the deceased can be released.

4. Storage

The deceased will normally be taken to a local hospital mortuary. You should be aware that storage facilities vary depending on the part of the country. Although we will do everything we possibly can do to ensure the deceased is placed in appropriate storage, we cannot guarantee that the mortuary facilities will be comparable to the UK. We recommend that arrangements for your loved one are made as quickly as possible.

5. Repatriation

If the deceased was covered by travel insurance, the insurance company will normally have a standing agreement with an international funeral director to arrange repatriations. If the deceased is not covered by insurance, the NOK will need to appoint an international undertaker. Tanzanian undertakers have links with international undertakers in the UK and they normally work well together to ensure that all necessary requirements are met in Tanzania and in the UK.

Local undertakers in Tanzania are equipped to carry out repatriation procedures and will provide the special caskets required for the international carriage of human remains. A local civil registry death certificate, a certificate of embalming, and a certificate giving permission to transfer the remains to the UK is required to ship the body.

The undertaker will arrange this. Local formalities for repatriation normally take 3 to 4 days to complete. In certain circumstances repatriation may not always be possible. Our consular staff will try and inform next of kin as soon as possible if this is the case.

It is important to remember that if the deceased was travelling with a tour operator, they can be a valuable source of assistance and advice. We appreciate that the NOK may not always live in the UK. Repatriations can be organised to most countries in the world.

6. Local Cremation

Cremation can be carried out at the Hindu Crematorium in Dar es Salaam. Prior notice of half a day has to be given. A notification of death, letter from NOK giving permission, two passport size photos, copy of the passport and a 'no objection' letter from British High Commission to cremate its citizen are normally required.

Cremations may take place on a funeral pyre in the open air. If the next of kin choose to have a local cremation and wish to take the

ashes back to the UK themselves, the High Commission and local undertaker will work together to arrange the necessary paperwork for the return of the ashes to the UK.

7. Local burial

A burial is also possible. If the cause of death is an accident or an unknown reason, a legal post mortem report, a notification of death, a burial permit, letter from NOK giving permission to bury, copy of the passport and a 'no objection' letter from British High Commission to bury its citizen are normally required. If the death is natural, a notification of death, a burial permit, a letter from NOK giving permission to bury, copy of the passport and a 'no objection' letter from British High Commission to bury its citizen are required. The undertaker can arrange for the burial permit.

8. Inquests

If the circumstances of the death were not unusual (see below), registration of the death is permitted and the deceased will be released for repatriation or cremation within a few days. However, if the police are not satisfied after a preliminary examination of the facts, a post mortem examination may be required. Further investigations and interviews with witnesses may also be called for before a decision is made as to cause of death.

In theory, the post-mortem report is usually available within a month after the death has occurred, however our High Commission has experienced significant delays in receiving both post mortem and police reports in some cases.

In cases of sudden or unexpected death, whether by accident or misadventure, or where a person dies unattended, the police will prepare an initial report of their findings. Our High Commission can

request a copy of this report if you wish, however we have no locus to insist that it is shared.

However, if death was caused by a criminal act the police will be ordered to conduct a full investigation. The State Prosecutor will then decide whether to prosecute. This can sometimes delay the release of the deceased and their funeral arrangements.

9. Post Mortem Examinations

Legal Government pathologists carry out post mortems in Tanzania. During the examination, organs can be removed for testing, including toxicological studies, at the discretion of the doctor and without consent of next of kin. Occasionally, these organs are not returned.

10. UK Coroners

When a body is repatriated to England or Wales, a coroner will hold an inquest only if the death was violent or unnatural, or if the death was sudden and the cause unknown. However, if the deceased is repatriated to Scotland or Northern Ireland, this process will not take place.

Coroners in England and Wales are independent judicial officers appointed for local authority areas, cities or counties. Although appointed and paid for by local authorities, they are not local government officers, but work directly for the Crown.

In Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) deals with the investigation of all sudden, suspicious, accidental, unexpected and unexplained deaths which occur in Scotland. However, the COPFS does not have the jurisdiction to investigate deaths that occur outside Scotland apart from a few limited circumstances. Coroners in Northern Ireland have no jurisdiction for

investigating the deaths of persons being returned from abroad. However, NOK can apply for a judicial review if no inquest is held.

In Jersey the Coroner's role is performed by the Deputy Viscount, in Guernsey by the Attorney General and in the Isle of Man by HM Coroner for Inquests.

In some countries the cause of death is not given on the death certificate, and coroners do not generally have access to judicial files from other countries. Consequently coroners may order a post-mortem as part of the inquest.

Coroners can request copies of post-mortem and police reports from the Tanzanian authorities via the FCDO in London. However, these may only be provided once any judicial proceedings are completed. In some instances this can take many months.

11. Release of Information

Access to information concerning a death, other than post-mortem and police reports, is restricted. The Tanzanian authorities will not provide this information directly to next of kin. Requests for this information should be made through a legal representative. In some circumstances the British High Commission can also assist in trying to get information released. Our consular staff can provide lists of English speaking lawyers throughout main Tanzanian regions. The release of any information can take many months.

12. Legal Aid/ Court proceedings

Legal Aid is unfortunately not available in Tanzania. You may wish to engage the services of a local lawyer to represent your interests should a trial be necessary. In some cases you may be able to act as co-plaintiffs and play a more active role in the court proceedings. Should you wish to act as a co-plaintiff, or have detailed feedback

from court proceedings, you may wish to engage a lawyer before the case passes to the public prosecutor. A [list of English-speaking lawyers](#) is available online or at the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam.

13. Consular Death Registration

There is no obligation for the death of a British national overseas to be registered with the British High Commission. However, you may wish to register the death in the United Kingdom so that their death is recorded with the General Register Office in the UK. More information about this procedure can be found [here](#).

You should be aware that regardless of whether you apply for a UK death registration, it is your responsibility to ensure authorities such as the Department of Work and Pensions, local councils, and DVLA are informed about your loved one's death.

14. Bereavement Counselling

Bereavement counselling is, unfortunately, not available in Tanzania. In the UK there are a number of organisations that can support and help bereaved families and friends to understand their grief and come to terms with their loss. Useful contacts include [Cruse Bereavement Care](#) and [Samaritans](#).

15. International Undertaker Contact Details

A [list of International Funeral Directors](#) can be found online.

16. Local Undertaker Contact Details

An updated [list of funeral directors in Tanzania](#) can be found online.