

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 44TH LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO  
4 CHARLES III, 2026

# Bill 135

## **An Act to proclaim the month of July as Swahili Heritage Month**

### **Co-sponsors:**

MPP K. Wong-Tam

MPP A. Gilmour

MPP R. Lennox

Mr. T. Rakocevic

### **Private Members' Bill**

1st Reading      June 2, 2026

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



## An Act to proclaim the month of July as Swahili Heritage Month

### Preamble

Swahili, or Kiswahili, is a beautiful Bantu language spoken throughout eastern and central Africa and across the global African diaspora, including in Ontario. Ontario's thousands of Swahili speakers and their families, many of whom have called this province home since the 1960s, deserve to be celebrated and honoured for the cultural, artistic and economic richness that they bring to Ontario's neighbourhoods.

Swahili can be heard every day in Ontario, spoken by fluent speakers as well as those who unknowingly speak the language through increasingly popular phrases. Expressions such as "Hakuna Matata" (no worries), "Rafiki" (friend) and "Udugu" (brotherhood) are all Swahili. Similarly, the African-American and African-Canadian holiday Kwanzaa received its name from the Swahili word meaning "first harvest".

By proclaiming July as Swahili Heritage Month, the Province of Ontario recognizes Swahili's increasing role in Ontario's linguistic and cultural landscape and celebrates the unique culture, traditions and history of Swahili speakers in Ontario and around the world. The month of July is a perfect time to honour Swahili heritage as it aligns with UNESCO's World Swahili Language Day, celebrated each year on July 7.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

### Swahili Heritage Month

**1** The month of July in each year is proclaimed as Swahili Heritage Month.

### Commencement

**2** This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

### Short title

**3** The short title of this Act is the *Swahili Heritage Month Act, 2026*.

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill enacts the *Swahili Heritage Month Act, 2026*. The Act proclaims the month of July in each year as Swahili Heritage Month.