

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER, ACTIVISTS ARBITRARILY HELD

**Thirteen health and human rights activists, including two South Africans and one Ugandan, have been detained by Tanzanian authorities. They were arrested during a consultative meeting to discuss the Tanzanian government's decision to limit the provision of certain health services that it had previously provided. The 13 have been accused of 'promoting homosexuality' in Tanzania though they are yet to be formally charged.**

On 17 October, Tanzanian police raided a legal consultation meeting convened by the Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA) and the Community Health Services and Advocacy (CHESA). The meeting had been convened to deliberate on a case the two organizations had planned to file before a court to challenge the Tanzanian government's decision to limit the provision of certain health services that it had previously provided. The police had been informed beforehand about the meeting and the agenda for the meeting had been shared with them.

**Thirteen health and human rights activists**, including South African human rights lawyer and ISLA's executive director, Sibongile Ndashe, and CHESA's director, John Kashiha, were arrested during the raid. They were detained before being released on bail and without being charged. The next day, the Regional Commissioner of Police issued a press statement accusing the 13 of 'promoting homosexuality'.

The 13 health and human rights activists were re-arrested and detained on 20 October after their bail was revoked. The police informed them that a fresh investigation against them would be conducted. They have yet to be formally charged.

This arrest and detention is seen as an attempt to intimidate the 13 health and human rights activists. It is also part of ongoing attempts by the government to harass the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Tanzania.

### 1) TAKE ACTION

**Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:**

- Calling on the Tanzanian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the 13 health and human rights activists as they have been detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
- Urging them to end the harassment of the human rights defenders, activists and lawyers;
- Urging the Tanzanian authorities to respect the right to seek legal redress which is enshrined in Tanzania's Constitution.

**Contact these two officials by 4 December, 2017:**

Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania

Hon. George Mcheche Masaju

20 Barabara ya Kivukoni

P.O. Box 11492

Dar es Salaam

Tanzania

Fax: +255 22 2113236

Email: [ag@agctz.go.tz](mailto:ag@agctz.go.tz)

**Salutation: Honourable**

H.E. Ambassador Wilson Mutagaywa Kajumula Masilingi, Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania

1232 22nd St. NW, Washington DC 20037

Phone: (202) 939-6125 OR (202) 884-1080 OR 202 939 6127

Fax: (202) 797-7408

Email: [ubalozi@tanzaniaembassy-us.org](mailto:ubalozi@tanzaniaembassy-us.org)

Contact Form: [http://tanzaniaembassy-us.org/?page\\_id=62](http://tanzaniaembassy-us.org/?page_id=62)

**Salutation: Dear Ambassador**

### 2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 244.17*

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**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Tanzanian Constitution enshrines the right to seek legal redress when fundamental rights have been violated (Art 30(3)). The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which Tanzania is a signatory to, also recognizes an individual's right to an appeal to competent national organs against acts violating his fundamental rights as recognized and guaranteed by conventions, laws and customs in force (Art 7(a)). Tanzania is a signatory to a number of international human rights treaties that recognizes these and other related rights.

The arrest of the 13 is an attempt to intimidate citizens from approaching judicial institutions when their rights have been violated. Furthermore, the arrest of lawyers while they are advising their clients on the steps to be taken to seek legal redress is aimed at creating an environment where lawyers are afraid to provide legal representation and to create an environment where it is difficult and dangerous to hold the state accountable for human rights violations.

Name: 13 health and human rights activists  
Gender m/f: both

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