

URGENT ACTION

OPPOSITION PARTY CHAIR MUST BE RELEASED

On April 9, 2025, Tanzanian police arrested Tundu Lissu, the Chairperson of the country's main opposition party, Chadema, after holding a political rally in Mbinga town, southwest of Tanzania. He was then transferred to Dar es Salaam, more than 1,000 kilometers away by road during the night. Police used excessive force, including by firing teargas and shooting in the air to disperse his supporters who gathered around during the arrest. Police later charged Tundu Lissu with a non-bailable offense of treason – which carries the death penalty - alongside two other offenses under the country's cybercrime laws. Tanzanian authorities must stop the repression of opposition leaders and immediately release Tundu Lissu, as he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **UA 46.25**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan

President's Office
Utumishi street, P.O. BOX 670,
Dodoma, Tanzania
Email: ps@utumishi.go.tz
Twitter: @SuluhuSamia

Send a copy of your letter to the address below

CC: Tanzanian Embassy in the United States Ambassador Dr. Elsie Sia Kanza

1232 22nd Street, NW,
Washington DC 20037
Email: ekanza@tanzaniaembassy-us.org

Dear President Hassan,

I am writing to express grave concern about the arrest and arbitrary detention of opposition leader, **Tundu Lissu**, the Chairperson of Chadema, the main opposition party in Tanzania.

Tundu Lissu was arrested on April 9 after holding a political rally in Mbinga town. He was then transferred to Dar es Salaam during the night. Police used excessive force, including by firing teargas and shooting in the air to disperse his supporters who gathered around during the arrest. On April 10, he was charged with a capital and non-bailable offense of treason – which carries the death penalty – alongside two other offenses under the country's cybercrime laws in relation to his social media posts calling for Tanzanians to boycott the forthcoming elections, citing the possibility of rigging.

I urge your government to immediately and unconditionally release Tundu Lissu as he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. I also urge you to end all arbitrary arrests and the growing crackdown on opposition leaders ahead of the October 2025 general elections. I further urge you to refrain from all attacks on opposition party members, real or perceived government critics, human rights defenders, and journalists.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tanzania will hold its seventh general election in October 2025 with President Samia Suluhu Hassan seeking a second five-year term. The elections come amid a campaign of repression by the incumbent government's first term targeting members and leaders of political opposition parties, individuals, and organizations critical of the government.

On April 12, 2025, the Independent National Elections Commission (INEC), Tanzania's electoral commission, barred Chadema – the main opposition party – from contesting the October elections, asserting that the party had failed to sign a mandatory code of conduct agreement. In 2024, [four government critics were forcibly disappeared and one was killed](#). The police prevented opposition members from holding meetings and other political gatherings, subjecting them to mass arrest, arbitrary detention, and unlawful force.

On August 11, 2024, police arrested Chadema party members, including **Tundu Lissu**, at, or on their way to, a meeting in Chadema's Nyasa office in Mbeya, in south-western Tanzania, ahead of International Youth Day on August 12, 2024. They were accused of violating a ban on a youth conference and planning a violent demonstration. The next day, police arrested party leaders, Freeman Mbowe and John Pambalu, after they went to Mbeya in response to the arrests. All party leaders were released on bail on August 13, 2024; the others were bailed in the following days. On September 13, 2024, the police announced a ban on all Chadema protests and on September 23, 2024, arrested Freeman Mbowe, Tundu Lissu, and six other party officials in Dar es Salaam before planned protests against killings and abductions of government critics. They were released on bail the same day. Three journalists from Mwananchi Communications Ltd and East Africa TV were arrested while covering protests and released the same day.

Dioniz Kipanya, a Chadema party official, disappeared on July 26, 2024 when he left home following a telephone conversation with an unidentified person. Deusdedith Soka and Jacob Godwin Mlay, both Chadema youth activists, and Frank Mbise, a motorcycle taxi driver, were abducted by a group of men suspected to be police officers on August 18, 2024. The body of Ali Mohamed Kibao, a senior Chadema member, was found on September 8, 2024.

On October 17, 2024, United Nations human rights experts [called](#) on Tanzania to end the ongoing and escalating pattern of human rights violations against opposition political party members, civil society organizations, journalists, Indigenous Peoples, and human rights defenders.

International law and standards prohibit the imposition of the mandatory death penalty, as it denies the possibility of taking into account the circumstances in the case. Moreover, international law and standards require that the imposition of the death penalty be restricted to the "most serious crimes" involving intentional killing. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. As of today, 113 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes and 145 are abolitionist in law or practice.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Kiswahili, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: August 31, 2025

NAME AND PRONOUN: Tundu Lissu (He/him/his)