URGENT ACTION

CONVICTED OPPOSITION LEADER IN POOR HEALTH

On November 6, Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu was acquitted of treason but convicted of incitement and sentenced to four years in prison by the High Court. He has already spent over 560 days in arbitrary remand detention, solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights – namely the peaceful expression of his views and political affiliation. His trial was marred by violations of his right to a fair trial and there are serious concerns for his detention conditions, including restrictions on access to his family and legal counsel. He is also in poor health and urgently needs specialized medical care. The Tanzanian authorities must quash Tundu Lissu's conviction and immediately and unconditionally release him. Pending his release, they must ensure he receives prompt access to the specialized medical care he requires.

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 ***Second UA 46.25***. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan
Office of the President
1 Julius Nyerere Road, Chamwino
P.O. Box 1102, 40400 Dodoma, Tanzania
Email: cs@gov.go.tz
X: @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: ubalozi@tanzaniaembassy-us.org

Dear President Hassan,

I am concerned about the poor prison conditions and health situation of detained and recently convicted opposition leader, Tundu Lissu. On November 6, the High Court acquitted Tundu Lissu of treason but convicted him of incitement and sentenced him to four years in prison.

Tundu Lissu is in poor health and urgently needs specialized medical care. After he was shot 16 times in an assassination attempt in 2017, he underwent 25 surgical operations, but a bullet remains lodged near his spine, requiring annual medical checkup. His family visits are limited to 15 minutes and can only take place on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays. Following his conviction, prison authorities still hold him in the same six-by-six-foot cell designated for prisoners sentenced to death.

Additionally, the proceedings against Tundu Lissu were marred by serious violations of his right to a fair trial. His committal proceedings lasted more than five months, beyond the applicable 90-day period. He was also denied confidential access to his lawyers.

I urge you to quash Tundu Lissu's conviction and immediately and unconditionally release him. Pending his release, I urge you to ensure that he has prompt access to adequate medical care, including specialist treatment of his choice, and that he is held in conditions that comply with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, including regular and confidential access to his lawyers and his family.

Yours sincerely,

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tundu Lissu was arrested on April 9, 2025 in Mbinga town, southwest Tanzania, after addressing a peaceful political rally. Police used excessive force, including firing teargas and shooting in the air, to disperse his supporters who gathered during the arrest. He was not informed of the reasons for his arrest until he had been driven overnight to Dar es Salaam, more than 1,000 kilometers away. On April 10, 2025, he was charged with treason, a non-bailable offense carrying the mandatory death penalty, and with publishing false information under the Cybercrimes Act, in connection with statements he made at a CHADEMA press conference on April 3, 2025 as part of the party's "No Reforms, No Election" campaign. On April 12, 2025, the Independent National Elections Commission barred CHADEMA, the main opposition party, from contesting the October 2025 elections.

In May 2025, human rights defenders **Boniface Mwangi** and **Agather Atuhaire**, who had traveled to observe Tundu Lissu's court proceedings, were arbitrarily arrested, held incommunicado, allegedly tortured and otherwise ill-treated, and forcibly deported.

Tundu Lissu's trial took place amid an escalating crackdown on opposition members and government critics. Amnesty International has documented how, over the past year, security agencies have committed human rights violations with impunity against government critics, opposition supporters, media organizations, and dissenting members of the ruling party. These include acts that may amount to torture or other ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, abductions, and severe restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Tanzanian authorities have failed to hold anyone accountable for the violence security forces inflicted on protesters, which left hundreds of people dead and thousands injured in the wake of the October 2025 general election. On November 14, 2025, President Samia Suluhu Hassan announced a Commission of Inquiry into election related killings, which found that at least 518 people died of unnatural causes, including from gunshot injuries. The authorities have withheld its report from the public, and not a single official has been criminally investigated, prosecuted, or punished for the killings. In August 2026, the president inaugurated a second Commission of Inquiry to identify those who planned, funded, coordinated, or executed the violence. Instead of delivering justice and accountability, the authorities have intensified attacks on civic space through the abuse of counterterrorism laws to target opposition supporters and government critics. In July 2026, police announced the arrest of 130 people over an alleged plot to hold Saba Saba protests, at least 64 of whom were charged with unbailable offenses under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Those targeted include CHADEMA members and students, some of whom reported being beaten and coerced into confessing.

Amnesty International has documented the repeated misuse of counterterrorism and other security-related laws to target opposition supporters and government critics in Tanzania.

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

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: May 16, 2027

NAME AND PRONOUN: Tundu Lissu (He/Him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/tanzania-opposition-party-chair-must-be-released/