



STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE ARREST OF CHADEMA LEADERS, ADVOCATES, JOURNALISTS, AND ACTIVISTS AHEAD OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) strongly condemns the arrest of several individuals, including Advocate Tundu Lissu, who is also the Vice Chairman of CHADEMA, CHADEMA Secretary General Hon. John Mnyika, CHADEMA's Nyasa Zone Chairman Hon. Joseph Mbilinyi, Advocate Deogratias Mahinyila, Jambo TV journalists' Ramadhan Khamis and Fadhil Kirundwa, and activists and BAVICHA leaders such as Twaha Mwaipaya, Moza Ally, and Deusdedith Soka. The total number of those arrested is unofficially estimated to be over 300, with the Police yet to provide clear reasons for their arrests.

On the night of August 10, 2024, Deusdedith Soka and at least ten others were arrested at the CHADEMA district office in Temeke and taken to various Police stations, including Chang'ombe, Kilwa Road, and Kigamboni, on allegations of holding an illegal gathering within their party office. These activists were awaiting transportation to Mbeya for International Youth Day celebrations.

On August 11, 2024, in separate incidents, activists and youths traveling to Mbeya for the International Youth Day event, organized by the CHADEMA Youth Council, were arrested in their rented vehicles and subjected to searches at various locations, including Mikese in Morogoro (about 80 people), Iringa (about 90 people), Makambako (about 70 people), and Mbeya (about 100 people).

In the evening, Advocate Tundu Lissu (CHADEMA Vice Chairman), Secretary General Hon. John Mnyika, Nyasa Zone Chairman Hon. Joseph Mbilinyi, and other leaders were arrested and taken to different Police stations in Mbeya. We believe these arrests aim to prevent them from participating in the International Youth Day celebrations scheduled for August 12 in Mbeya.

Articles 18 and 20(1) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania guarantee the right to freedom of assembly, meetings, celebrations, and freedom of expression. These rights are also enshrined in various international and regional treaties to which Tanzania is a party.

THRDC is deeply concerned about this constitutional violation and believes that these ongoing arrests undermine the spirit of reconciliation, resilience, reforms, and rebuilding (4Rs) that President Samia Suluhu has been promoting since assuming office. The youth have the right to gather and celebrate their day, and arresting them may endanger the peace of the nation, as they may resort to other means to express their feelings, potentially leading to significant harm.

We call upon the Inspector General of Police to immediately release all those arrested without conditions so that they can celebrate International Youth Day, as other parties have done without incident.

Furthermore, unconfirmed reports suggest that force was used during the arrests, and some detainees were beaten. If true, we strongly condemn this as it violates the Constitution, laws, and proper procedures for arrests.

We urge national leaders, including the President of Tanzania, to recognize the severity of this issue, which tarnishes the country's image, and take swift action, including instructing the police

to release all those detained so that they can continue with the planned Youth Day activities, in line with the President's emphasis on democracy and the 4Rs.

We also advise youth leaders and all participants in the celebrations to maintain calm, peace, and adherence to the laws of our country. THRDC continues to closely monitor this situation in collaboration with various advocates who are following the case.

Issued by:

Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC)

August 12, 2024,

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.