

# URGENT ACTION

**ACTIVIST HELD IMMEDIATELY AFTER RETURNING HOME**  
**Fumba Chama, affectionately known as Pilato, was arrested on 16 May on arrival at Kenneth Kaunda Airport in Lusaka. He had been forced to flee the country on 5 January after receiving threats on his life from members of the ruling Party, Patriotic Front.**

**Fumba Chama**, affectionately known as **Pilato**, was arrested on 16 May at approximately 3:45pm on arrival at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport. Pilato, who fled to South Africa for fear of his safety, had decided to return to Zambia to attend trial. Pilato, an activist and musician, was arrested after going through immigration by three plain clothed policemen. He has not been formally charged.

Pilato was forced to flee because he released a song in December 2017 entitled Koswe Mumpoto (rat in the pot), which members of the ruling party, the Patriotic Front (PF), considered insulting to President Lungu and his ministers. On 11 December 2017, members of the ruling party ordered radio and TV stations to stop playing Pilato's song and instructed Pilato to stop singing the song. The police also prohibited his live shows. Pilato started receiving death threats from PF supporters on his mobile phone in the form of anonymous calls, whatsapp voice notes and videos. He was forced to flee Lusaka fearing for his life.

In 2017, Pilato was arrested and jointly charged with five other activists for protesting over corruption in the procurement of 42 fire trucks at an exorbitant cost of 42 million US dollars. The six activists were charged with 'disobedience to lawful orders' contrary to section 127 of the Penal Code which attracts a penalty of imprisonment of up to two years. The six were released on bail pending a trial which began in January 2018 after Pilato had already fled the country. After his failure to appear in court, the magistrate issued a bench warrant of arrest for Pilato. The state prosecutor mentioned that they would be engaging Interpol to bring Pilato back into the country to attend the trial. Pilato returned to Zambia to attend the trial. Amnesty International believes Pilato is a prisoner of conscience, detained for peacefully exercising his right to the freedom of expression.

**Please write immediately in English or your own language:**

- Calling on the Zambian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Pilato and guarantee his safety, personal security and wellbeing ensure that he is protected from abuse by ruling party members;
- Urging them to drop all charges against Pilato and five other activists and ensure that human rights activists are not unlawfully detained, arrested or threatened in the legitimate exercises of their work;
- Urging them to end misuse of the criminal justice system to persecute human rights activists and Perceived opponents of the ruling party Patriotic Front.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 JUNE 2018 TO:**

Director of Public Prosecutions

Ms. F.L Shawa-Siyunyi S.C

Ministry of Justice

Plot BLX 29B

Independence Avenue

Lusaka, Zambia

Email: ca@npa.gov.zm

**Salutation: Dear DPP**

Minister of Justice

Mr Given Lubinda

Ministry of Justice

P.O. Box 50106

Fairley Road, Ridgeway

Lusaka, Zambia

**Salutation: Honourable**

**And copies to:**

Zambia State President

His Excellency, Edgar C Lungu

Office of the President

Plot 1 Independence Avenue

10101 Lusaka, P.O.Box 50212

Zambia

Email: lunguedgar@gmail.com

Twitter: @EdcarCLungu

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY MR MUYEBA SHICHAPWA CHIKONDE  
 High Commissioner, High Commission for the Republic of Zambia, Zambia House, 2 Palace Gate W8 5NG, 020 7589 6655, Fax 020 7581 1353,  
[zhcl@btconnect.com](mailto:zhcl@btconnect.com), [www.zhcl.org.uk](http://www.zhcl.org.uk)

**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Pilato is a Zambian musician, activist and political commentator whose music is full of political satire in a country where freedom of expression is severely restricted. This has led to his arrest several times.

The environment in Zambia is increasingly hostile to anyone perceived to be an opponent of the State. Intimidation and harassment of activists who are seen as non-conforming or even having different views from those of government is widespread. The Zambian government has not held members of the ruling party to account for intimidating and harassing human rights defenders and other members of the public. Prominent government officials have in some cases attended trials of activists or people arrested for insulting the president. Their presence has served to intimidate magistrates who are inclined to rule in favour of the ruling party.

On 15 December 2017, Pilato left Lusaka fearing for his life and was offered shelter in a village after PF (the ruling party) supporters sent him a recorded video message threatening his life. On 31 December 2017, he attempted to flee to neighbouring Zimbabwe but was denied exit by authorities from Zambia. He successfully left Zambia for South Africa, through Livingstone International Airport on 5 January.

Pilato has been arrested before on charges of defamation of the President President Lungu after he released the song, Alungu Anabwela in 2015, which was interpreted to be targeting the president. Currently he is charged jointly with Mika Mwambazi (f) Sean Tembo (m), Lewis Mwape (m), Laura Miti (f) and Bonwell Mwewa (m) for disobeying lawful orders, following a protest held outside parliament over corruption in the procurement of fire tender trucks.

Name: Fumba Chama, also known as Pilato

Gender m/f: Male

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