

URGENT ACTION

ANOTHER JOURNALIST ARRESTED TO SILENCE DISSENT

Erick Kabendera, a well-respected journalist whose investigations have been critical of the human rights record of the Tanzanian government, was taken by six men in plainclothes from his home in Dar es Salaam on 29 July without explanation, according to family sources. Held incommunicado for more than 24 hours, he was charged on 5 August with three offences that he allegedly committed between January 2015 and July 2019 in Dar es Salaam. Concerns have also been raised for his wellbeing, as his health has deteriorated since his detention.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President John P. Magufuli

P.O. Box 11400,

Dar es Salaam,

Tanzania

Email: ikulu@ikulu.go.tz

Your Excellency,

*I am writing to express my concern for **Erick Kabendera**, a journalist who was arrested by plain clothed men at his home on 29 July 2019 and remains in detention. Charged with leading organised crime, failure to pay tax and money laundering on 5 August 2019, his case has since been postponed four times.*

I also wish to bring to your attention Erick Kabendera's deteriorating health. He has breathing problems and one of his legs is paralyzed.

I fear that the arrest and continued detention of Eric Kabendera is part of a wider pattern of increasing intimidation of journalists and repression of press freedom by the Tanzanian government, and that he is being detained solely for peacefully expressing his right to freedom of expression.

I therefore call on you to:

- ***Ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Erick Kabendera and ensure that all charges against him are dropped***
- ***Ensure that journalists in Tanzania are allowed to freely carry out their work in a safe environment and without any harassment, intimidation or fear of reprisals.***

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Erick Kabendera is a well-respected journalist whose investigations have been critical, providing information about the human rights record of Tanzania's government, both at home and abroad. According to his family, he was taken by six men in plainclothes from his home without explanation, in Dar es Salaam on 29 July 2019. The following day, after being held incommunicado for more than 24 hours, Dar es Salaam Special Zone Police Commander, Lazaro Mambosasa, called a press conference and announced that Erick Kabendera was arrested and was being questioned about the validity of his Tanzanian nationality.

While the police questioned him on alleged seditious offences, Kabendera was charged with three offences – leading organised crime, failure to pay, and money laundering. He allegedly committed these crimes between January 2015 and July 2019 in Dar es Salaam.

Kabendera's case was scheduled to be heard in a Dar es Salaam court four times over the past two months, but the hearings have been postponed after the state prosecutor asked for more time for investigation. Most recently, the hearing was delayed due to Kabendera being unwell and in need of urgent medical care. He has since been allowed to access medical treatment at Amana Referral Hospital.

Under Tanzania's Criminal Procedure Act of 1985, individuals accused of economic crimes do not qualify for bail and can be held in pre-trial detention pending investigations. Erick Kabendera is currently being held at Segerea maximum security prison in Dar es Salaam.

Since President John Magufuli took office in November 2015, his government has used repressive laws to restrict the right to freedom of expression and media freedom, in violation of Tanzania's Constitution and the country's international human rights obligations. The restrictions, which are enforced by police and regulatory authorities, are used to arbitrarily arrest and detain journalists that are critical of the policies and human rights record of the Tanzanian government in country and abroad.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 11 November 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Erick Kabendera (he/him)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS: Tanzania High Commission, 3 Stratford Pl, Marylebone, London W1C 1AS