



JOINT PRESS STATEMENT ON THE ATTACK AND SHOOTING OF TUNDU ANTIPHAS LISSU HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER, MP AND THE PRESIDENT OF TANGANYIKA LAW SOCIETY (TLS) (TANZANIAN BAR ASSOCIATION)

We the undersigned, representing East African human rights organizations, condemn the attempted assassination of Tundu Antipas Lissu, human rights defender, Member of Parliament for Singida East and President of the Tanganyika Law Society (Tanzanian Bar Association).

On 8th September 2017 at around 13:00 hrs, Mr. Lissu left the parliament building and on his way home, when he was shot at Area D, Dodoma in the Central region by unknown assailants. He was seriously injured and was admitted at Dodoma Regional Hospital. Due to security reasons and his critical condition, Mr. Lissu was on the same day, transferred to Nairobi for further treatment.

Tundu Antipas Lissu is a prominent human rights defender who focuses on the right to freedom of expression, rule of law, freedom of assembly, democracy and good governance. Mr. Lissu has been involved in demanding ethical and responsible governance of extractive industries since 1996, and joined the Lawyers Environmental Action Team in 1998 which investigates violations of environmental and land rights in Tanzania.

Before the incident, on 19th July 2017, Mr. Lissu was arrested at Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam while on his way to Rwanda to attend the East African Law Society (EALS) meeting. He was subsequently arraigned to court and charged with hate Speech contrary to section 63C(1)(a) and 2 of the penal Code. In August this year, Mr. Lissu had spoken with the media about police

officers from Tanzania Intelligent Security Service (TISS) hunting him but no measures were taken to investigate the matter.

In recent months, lawyers and human rights defenders have experienced threats, harassments and physical attacks in a context of growing impunity. On 16th February 2017, the Bar Association of Tanzania was threatened with deregistration by the former Minister of Constitution and Legal Affairs, Dr. Harisson Mwakyembe. The government had in April this year expressed its interest in establishing a new board to regulate the legal profession.

On 11th September 2017, the Prime Attorneys' office of Advocate Hudson Nduziyepo was invaded by unknown gunmen and the offices' safe were raided. On 26th August 2017, the offices of IMMMA Advocates were bombed and their security officers abducted and found unconscious.

With the above selected events, it is quite clear that the legal fraternity in Tanzania is under serious attack. The trends shows that the aim of all these incidents is to totally paralyze the said profession. It should be noted that, lawyers/attorneys' work according to the law and procedures enshrined under both national and international law. Any attempt to crackdown the activities of lawyers or the legal profession in general is therefore a violation of national and international norms whose impacts have far reaching repercussions.

Intimidation of Human rights defenders is not unique to Tanzania but prevalent in the East and Horn of Africa region. We are concerned that governments in the sub region are increasingly intolerant to voices of dissent, and have attacked or threatened attack of human rights defenders and CSOs that advance human rights. Civil Societies in Kenya have as recently as August 2017 been faced with serious personal threats because of documenting electoral malpractices and human rights violations during election period. Staff and officials of two leading human rights organizations – Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and

African Centre for Open Governance (AfriCOG) were targeted for online and offline vilification and were threatened with arrest, de-registration of the organization as well as criminal and administrative action by the NGO Coordination Board.

We, the undersigned organizations, call upon the government of Tanzania;

- To conduct swift, thorough and transparent investigations into the shooting of Mr. Tundu Antipas Lissu and all other attacks and threats against lawyers and HRDs;
- To protect the rule of law and promote a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders in Tanzania

We also call upon all well-wishers, donors, development partners, CSOs to contribute whatever amount of money they may have to assist the medical costs of Mr. Tundu Antipas Lissu.

Signed

DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)

Protection International

National Coalition on Human Rights Defenders - Kenya

Issued in Nairobi

This 15th September 2017