



STATEMENT CONDEMNING ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION OF CARTOONIST OPTATUS FWEMA

Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) strongly condemn the unlawful detention of a cartoonist Optatus Fwema. Mr. Fwema was arrested at his home, Bunju area in Dar es Salaam on Friday 24th September 2021. Since then, he has been under unlawful detention at Oysterbay Police station.

On 30th September 2021 Mr. Fwema was interrogated in absence of his advocate or family members for cyber offences. To date, no formal charge has been instituted in any court against him. Such unlawful prolonged detention is contrary to Section 32 of the Criminal Procedure Act Cap 20 R.E 2019 which obliges the Police Force not to detain a suspect in custody for more than 24 hours without releasing him on bail or arraigning him to a court of competent jurisdiction. Unlawful detention is a denial of one's constitutional right to liberty guaranteed under Article 15 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977 [Cap 2 R.E 2002].

THRDC also condemn the unlawful arrest and detention of journalist Mr. Harlod Shemsanga of Mgawe Tv. He was arrested on 2nd October 2021 and detained at Mbweni Police station on mere allegation of conducting jogging without Police authorization. He was arrested alongside with other women members of the opposition political party CHADEMA. Also, no formal charges have been laid against them.

Human rights advocates under THRDC's instructions are currently struggling to ensure the two journalists are granted bail and treated according to the required standards of treating suspects

THRDC's Call

THRDC urges the Police Force to release Mr. Fwema and Mr. Shemsanga or rather to arraign them in court in order for their rights to be determined.

Issued today by;

Onesmo Olengurumwa (Advocate)

National Coordinator - Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC)

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

4th October 2021.