



STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE ABDUCTION OF MR. HUMPHREY POLEPOLE

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) strongly condemns the **abduction** of **Mr. Humphrey Polepole**, a prominent political figure and outspoken government critic, who was forcefully taken by unknown individuals on the night of **October 6, 2025**, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Mr. Polepole has been a Civil Society Actor, having previously served as the Chairperson of the National Council of NGOs (NaCoNGO). He is also a member of the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), where he held key leadership roles, including Secretary for Ideology and Publicity and Nominated Member of Parliament. Throughout his career, Mr. Polepole also served the government in various administrative and diplomatic capacities including as District Commissioner for Ubungu and Musoma, and as Tanzania's Ambassador to High Commissioner to Malawi from March 2022 to April 2023, and later as Ambassador to Cuba from April 2023 until July 2025.

Mr. Polepole's abduction under suspicious and violent circumstances raises urgent concerns for his safety and well-being. Mr. Polepole has been a vocal critic of the government for past few weeks. His abduction at such a critical juncture undermines the credibility of the electoral process and serves as a chilling warning to other citizens and opposition voices.

This deeply alarming incident represents a serious violation of human rights and a blatant assault to the principles of democracy, freedom of expression, and the right to political participation. Abductions and acts of intimidation targeting political opponents or government critics have no place in a society that upholds the rule of law and human rights. Such actions only deepen fear, erode public trust in state institutions responsible for safety and security of citizens.

THRDC has documented over 100 abductions and enforced disappearances targeting HRDs, online activists and political activists between 2024 and 2025 alone. Many of these cases remain unresolved, uninvestigated highlighting a disturbing trend of impunity and state inaction. The abduction of Mr. Polepole appears to follow this same pattern of targeting government critics and silencing opposition.

The coalition urges the Government of Tanzania and law enforcement agencies to fulfill their constitutional duty to protect all citizens, particularly those exercising their rights to freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and political engagement, as guaranteed under Article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.

This abduction serves as a grim reminder of the shrinking civic space and the increasing risks faced by human rights defenders, journalists, opposition members, and ordinary citizens who

dare to speak out. THRDC reiterates its strong condemnation of the ongoing pattern of political repression and state inaction.

Our Call and Recommendations

- a) We kindly advise Hon. President Samia Suluhu Hassan to intervene promptly and use all the available means to rescue the life of Mr H. Polepole and all those whose whereabouts is still not known. We also remind her, our long-time request for the formation of the National Oversight Organ to receive complaints and allegations against security organs.
- b) We call the abductors to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Polepole while alive and in good health.
- c) We call for a swift, independent, and transparent investigation into his abduction. The perpetrators regardless of affiliation must be held accountable under Tanzanian laws.
- d) Tanzania protection and security agencies should ensure that every citizen lives in freedom and security within Tanzania. The police force should be ready to protect citizens and their properties averse any bad occurrence.
- e) Due to this trend of abduction and disappearance of our fellow Tanzanians, we also advise President Samia to sign and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and those that are Detained, as well as the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- f) We call upon the International Community, Diplomatic Missions, Civil Society Organizations, the media, and all peace-loving citizens of Tanzania and beyond to stand in solidarity against these violations of human rights.
- g) We must remain vigilant, united, and firm in our defense of democratic values. Justice for Humphrey Polepole and all who are still missing is not only necessary it is essential for the future of democratic governance in Tanzania

Issued by

TANZANIA HUMAN RIGHT DEFENDERS' COALITION (THRDC)

Onesmo Olengurumwa (Advocate)

National Coordinator

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