

URGENT ACTION

UNIVERSITY LECTURER MUST BE RELEASED

Dr Stella Nyanzi, a Ugandan university lecturer, was arrested on 7 April and subsequently charged with insulting the president and violating his right to privacy. She remains in detention awaiting a court hearing on 25 April and may be subjected to a mental health evaluation.

Dr Stella Nyanzi, a university lecturer, was arrested and detained on 7 April for criticizing the president on her social media accounts. She was charged in court on 10 April with insulting the president on her social media accounts and violating his right to privacy under the Computer Misuse Act of 2011. She pleaded not guilty and was remanded in custody until 25 April when she is due to appear in court. Her continued detention and prosecution violate Uganda's obligations under the country's constitution and international human rights law regarding the rights to liberty and freedom of expression.

During the hearing in which Dr Stella Nyanzi was charged, the state attorney requested for an examination of her mental health. To support his request, the state attorney said that there was evidence that Dr Stella Nyanzi had previously been a patient at Butabika Hospital, a mental health national referral hospital and has a history of mental health issues. The defence team asked the court for more time to respond to the claims by the state prosecution as the information presented against their client had not been shared with them. The magistrate accepted the defence team's request and adjourned the matter to April 25.

Amnesty International considers her to be a prisoner of conscience, held solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Calling on the Ugandan authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Dr Stella Nyanzi as she is a prisoner of conscience held solely for her peaceful expression;
- Urging them to comply with Uganda's obligations under its constitution and international human rights law to respect, protect and fulfil her rights to liberty and freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure, that she is protected from torture and other ill-treatment pending her release.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 MAY 2017 TO:

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
Major General (rt) Kahinda Otafiire
Bauman House, Plot 5, Parliament Avenue
P. O. Box 7183
Kampala, Uganda
Fax: +25641254829
Email: info@justice.go.ug
Salutation: Major General

Inspector General of Police
General Kale Kayihura
Katalima Road, Naguru
P. O. Box 7191
Kampala, Uganda
Fax: +256414255630
Email: info@upf.go.ug
Salutation: General

And copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sam Kutesa
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2A/B Apollo Kaggwa Road
P. O. Box 7048
Kampala, Uganda
Fax: +25641258722/232874
Email: protocol@mofa.go.ug

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr Stella Nyanzi's arrest comes less than two months after she started criticizing First Lady Janet Museveni, who is the education and sports minister, for the government's failure to provide sanitary pads to all schoolgirls. This was a campaign promise made by her husband as he campaigned one and a half years ago for another term in office. The First Lady told parliament on 14 February that the government had no money to buy sanitary pads.

Dr Stella Nyanzi has organized a public fundraising drive, to facilitate the purchase of sanitary pads for girls in Uganda, which has raised thousands of dollars and gained widespread publicity among Ugandans at home and abroad.

The police questioned Dr Stella Nyanzi on 6 March for her critical comments against President Yoweri Museveni and the First Lady, and prevented her from boarding a plane to the Netherlands, a week later, to attend an academic conference. In a rare TV interview on 30 March, the First Lady said she had forgiven her, but Dr Stella Nyanzi was then arrested days later.

Name: Dr Stella Nyanzi

Gender: f

UA: 89/17 Index: AFR 59/6060/2017 Issue Date: 19 April 2017