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## PUBLIC STATEMENT

### TANZANIA

#### **Zanzibar opposition members jailed on fabricated treason charges must be released**

As mediation talks continue in Tanzania between Commonwealth representatives, the Zanzibar Government and the opposition Civic United Front (CUF) party, Amnesty International today is again demanding the immediate release of 18 leading CUF members or supporters, most of them imprisoned since November 1997 on fabricated treason charges.

One of the prisoners, Juma Duni Haji, a member of the Zanzibar parliament and CUF's vice-presidential candidate in Tanzania's 1995 elections, had participated in the earlier Commonwealth talks.

The treason case against the prisoners remains at the pre-trial stage with bail refused, and there are still no details from the prosecution of the supposed offence. Amnesty International considers they are prisoners of conscience imprisoned on account of their non-violent opinions.

The CUF vice-chairman, Seif Sharif Hamad, was summoned by police for questioning on 9 July 1998 but was released after one hour and ordered to report again on 29 July.

Amnesty International has been concerned also about the deteriorating health and denial of adequate medical treatment for the 18 detainees. At their last court appearance on 9 July, the magistrate ordered that medical specialists should be sent to examine them in prison.

Some of the prisoners have since been examined in hospital in Zanzibar and have commenced some treatment back in prison, although it is not yet clear how adequate or successful this is. One of the two women prisoners, Zulekha Ahmed Mohamed, is said to need tests for a possible hernia operation, and Machano Khamis Ali was reportedly unable to stand up at the court hearing.

Amnesty International is appealing for them to receive all required professional medical care, with hospital admission as needed, and for improvements in their poor conditions of imprisonment.

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*For further information see Public Statement, 8 July 1998, AFR 56/02/98*