

URGENT ACTION

WHEREABOUTS OF GOVERNMENT CRITIC UNKNOWN

Humphrey Polepole was abducted in Dar es Salaam on 6 October 2025 by unidentified security forces. He is an outspoken government critic who has criticized President Samia Suluhu Hassan and the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) for restrictions on civic space, crackdown on human rights and attacks on opposition including the jailing of opposition politician Tundu Lissu. The Tanzanian authorities must immediately disclose his fate and whereabouts, and if he is in their custody, release him immediately.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania

The Office of the President
P.O. BOX 670, Utumishi Street, Dodoma, Tanzania
Email: ps@utumishi.go.tz
X: @SuluhuSamia

Dear President Samia Suluhu Hassan,

I am writing to express grave concern about the enforced disappearance of Humphrey Polepole, an outspoken government critic and a former Tanzanian ambassador to Cuba who has criticized President Samia Suluhu Hassan and the ruling party CCM for restrictions on civic space, crackdown on human rights and attacks on opposition including the jailing of opposition politician Tundu Lissu.

On 6 October, he was abducted from his residence in Dar es Salaam by unidentified security agents. Responding to an alert that his home had been broken into, his family found the front door broken, perimeter electrical wires cut, and a significant amount of blood at the scene. According to our information, unidentified security forces were seen blocking the road leading to his house on the day he disappeared. Family and friends of the Humphrey Polepole have been unable to reach him since 6 October. To date, his whereabouts remain unknown.

On 6 October, police spokesperson David Misime issued a statement stating that the police were investigating what had happened. On 7 October, Humphrey Polepole's lawyers filed a habeas corpus application at the High Court in Dar es Salaam. It was dismissed on 24 October after the judge ruled that there was no evidence proving that the Tanzanian authorities were responsible for Humphrey Polepole's disappearance.

Humphrey Polepole appears to have been targeted by the Tanzanian authorities because he is an outspoken government critic, in violation of his rights to freedom of expression and association. He has been subjected to an enforced disappearance.

Humphrey Polepole's enforced disappearance adds to a growing list of cases of enforced disappearances, crackdown on peaceful dissent and other authoritarian practices in Tanzania.

In light of the above, I urge your government to:

- Immediately disclose the fate and whereabouts of Humphrey Polepole and, if he is in your custody, release him;***
- Pending his release, ensure he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and granted access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and adequate healthcare;***
- Put an end to the use of enforced disappearances and other authoritarian practices to crack down on peaceful dissent.***

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tanzania held its seventh general election on 29 October 2025 after which President Samia Suluhu Hassan was declared winner and sworn in for her second five-year term. The elections came amid a campaign of repression by Tanzanian authorities targeting political opposition parties and individuals and organizations deemed to be critical of the government.

Tanzanian security forces have engaged in a systematic pattern of enforced disappearances targeting opposition supporters – especially those affiliated to the main opposition party CHADEMA, human rights activists, and government critics. This wave of “mysterious abductions” that are rarely acknowledged and investigated by the authorities, reflects the failure of the authorities to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of everyone in the country.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English and Swahili

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 21 May 2026

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Humphrey Polepole (He/His)