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Arrest and risk of execution of Tundu Lissu, Chair of Chadema, the main opposition party in Tanzania

European Parliament resolution of 8 May 2025 on the arrest and risk of execution of Tundu Lissu, Chair of Chadema, the main opposition party in Tanzania (2025/2690(RSP))

(C/2026/580)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rules 150(5) and 136(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Tundu Lissu, leader of Chadema, Tanzania's main opposition party, was arrested on 9 April 2025 in Mbinga, following a peaceful rally advocating electoral reforms;
- B. whereas Lissu narrowly survived an assassination attempt in 2017 and was forced into exile, only to face renewed persecution upon his return to Tanzania;
- C. whereas on 10 April 2025, Lissu was charged with treason, along with three offences of publication of false information under cybercrime laws; whereas treason in Tanzania carries a potential death sentence; whereas the EU is unequivocally opposed to the death penalty under all circumstances;
- D. whereas shortly after Lissu's arrest, Chadema was disqualified from the October 2025 presidential and parliamentary elections, based on the party's refusal to sign an electoral code of conduct;
- E. whereas ahead of the November 2024 local elections, Tanzania's Government impeded opposition meetings, arbitrarily arrested hundreds of opposition supporters, imposed restrictions on social media access and banned independent media; whereas thousands of opposition candidates were disqualified from participating; whereas at least four government critics were forcibly disappeared and one Chadema official was abducted and brutally killed;
- F. whereas Tanzania's ranking in Freedom House's freedom report was downgraded in 2025 to 'not free';
 1. Condemns the arrest of Lissu and expresses grave concern over the charges against him, which appear to be politically motivated and carry the risk of capital punishment; calls on the Tanzanian Government to immediately and unconditionally release him, ensuring his safety and his right to a fair trial and legal representation;
 2. Urges the Tanzanian authorities to end the escalating crackdown, arbitrary arrests, violence, attacks and harassment against opposition members, human rights defenders, indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ+ activists, journalists and civil society organisations, and to independently investigate police abuses and enforced disappearances, to uphold the rule of law, freedom of expression, press, media and association, and judicial independence, to bring Tanzania's cybercrime and media laws in line with international human rights law, to respect the rights of political parties and to ensure free and fair elections;
 3. Calls on the Tanzanian authorities to reinstate Chadema's full participation in the October 2025 elections and to engage with all political parties in transparent and inclusive dialogue on electoral reform, in consultation with civil society groups and other stakeholders;
 4. Calls for the EU and its Member States to critically engage with the Tanzanian authorities regarding Lissu's case and to closely monitor the trial; urges them to consider appropriate measures if the human rights situation continues to deteriorate; urges Tanzania to abolish the death penalty and commute all death sentences;
 5. Reiterates the need for the EU to ensure that its development cooperation with Tanzania, including the Global Gateway initiative, is consistent with the promotion of human rights, freedom of expression and fair trial standards;
 6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of Tanzania, the African Union and the VP/HR.