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## United Republic of Tanzania

*Decision adopted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at its 179th session (Geneva, 2 to 18 February 2026)*



Mr. Tundu Lissu reacts to supporters upon his return to the United Republic of Tanzania on 27 July 2020 after three years in exile following a failed attempt on his life. STR/AFP

### TZA-04 – Tundu Lissu

#### Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process in proceedings against parliamentarians
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Violation of freedom of assembly and association
- ✓ Abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate

#### A. Summary of the case

According to the complainant, Mr. Tundu Lissu, a former opposition member of parliament belonging to the *Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo* (CHADEMA – Party for Democracy and Progress) has been facing regular and serious acts of intimidation at the hands of the government in response to his vocal criticism.

On 7 September 2017, Mr. Lissu, at the time a member of the National Assembly, escaped an assassination attempt when attackers armed with AK-47s sprayed his vehicle with bullets outside his house in a normally heavily guarded government housing compound in Dodoma. Mr. Lissu was shot 16 times but survived. According to the IPU President and then Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms. Tulia Ackson, given the proximity of Mr. Lissu's house to hers, her domestic help, at home at the time

#### CASE TZA-04

**United Republic of Tanzania:** Parliament affiliated to the IPU

**Victim:** A former opposition member of parliament

**Qualified complainant(s):** Section I.1(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

**Submission of complaint:** November 2019

**Recent IPU decision:** November 2020

**IPU mission(s):** - - -

**Recent Committee hearing:** Hearing with the complainant at the 161st session of the Committee (January 2020)

#### Recent follow-up:

- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Clerk of the National Assembly (September 2025)
- Communication from the complainant: September 2025
- Communication to the authorities: Letter to the Clerk of the National Assembly (September 2025)
- Communication to the complainant: January 2026

of the crime, was able to assist in getting Mr. Lissu to hospital.

The complainant draws attention to several elements to suggest that the assassination attempt was carried out with government involvement. The authorities have yet to provide information indicating that a serious investigation was opened, let alone that it led to any progress towards holding those responsible to account. In September 2024, Mr. Lissu announced that he intended to take legal action against the government and telecommunications company Tigo over the failed assassination attempt in 2017, given that [new evidence](#) presented at a London tribunal reportedly revealed that Tigo had shared Mr. Lissu's mobile phone data – including his location – with the Tanzanian Government, with the tracking allegedly becoming 24/7 live monitoring in the week before the assassination attempt. The implication was that the company was assisting the government in its harassment of the politician. Tigo's owners have reportedly [distanced themselves](#) from these reports.

The complainant states that, in the years immediately following the failed assassination attempt, Mr. Lissu was arrested eight times and charged in court six times for sedition and related offences in connection with public statements critical of the Government.

The complainant also states that Mr. Lissu was wrongfully stripped of his parliamentary mandate in June 2019, largely on grounds related to his absence from the National Assembly, even though the authorities and the public knew that he was out of the country recovering from the shooting.

In early 2020, Mr. Lissu, after undergoing 24 surgical interventions in Kenya and Belgium, was declared sufficiently well enough to return home. However, according to the complainant, after he made public his intention to return home, death threats made by persons known to be connected to the country's intelligence and security apparatus started to appear on social media and in the press.

Mr. Lissu travelled back to the United Republic of Tanzania on 27 July 2020. According to the complainant, since his return and in the lead-up to the general election of 28 October 2020, Mr. Lissu received numerous threats to his life and person, including threats of arrest from government officials and of murder through poisoning, which have allegedly all gone unpunished. In August 2020, Mr. Lissu was officially nominated by CHADEMA as its presidential candidate in the general election of October 2020 and validated as a contender in the presidential elections by the National Electoral Commission. President Magufuli was re-elected, and the opposition won only two of 264 directly elected parliamentary seats in the October 2020 elections, down from 75 seats in 2015. Tanzania's two main opposition parties called for a re-run of the elections after alleging widespread fraud, which the authorities rejected.

In October 2020, the Clerk of the National Assembly responded to the IPU that the alleged death threats against Mr. Lissu since his return to the United Republic of Tanzania were before the courts and that the National Assembly had no mandate to interfere with matters that fell within the ambit of the law enforcement bodies, as doing so would be against *sub judice* rules. In addition, the Clerk stated that the complainant had made the allegations about renewed threats almost a year after Mr. Lissu had been stripped of his parliamentary seat in accordance with the Tanzanian Constitution and the Standing Orders of the National Assembly. In this context, the Clerk stated that parliament had no authority to involve itself in such allegations.

In 2025, Mr. Lissu's situation sharply worsened ahead of the 29 October 2025 general election. Shortly after being elected Chairperson of CHADEMA and confirmed as the party's presidential candidate, he was arrested in April 2025 and charged with treason on the basis of statements made at a public rally where he had called for electoral reforms and urged civil resistance if reforms were not implemented. Treason is a capital offence in the United Republic of Tanzania and does not allow bail, resulting in Mr. Lissu's continued detention. His trial has reportedly been repeatedly postponed and only formally started on 6 October 2025 and has allegedly been marked by due process concerns.

Incumbent President Samia Suluhu Hassan was declared the winner of the presidential election of 29 October 2025 having received 98% of the votes. Immediately after polling day, mass protests erupted across the United Republic of Tanzania against the perceived lack of free and fair elections. Security forces reportedly responded with a heavy crackdown, including the use of lethal force, curfews, mass arrests and an internet shutdown. Estimates of the death toll vary widely: opposition figures and civil-society groups speak of hundreds killed and thousands detained, often on serious charges such as treason. In response to the events, the Government announced that it had established a committee to investigate the deaths and alleged abuses during the post-election period.

## B. Decision

### The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

1. *Is deeply concerned* that the primary and very serious matter in this case, which relates to the time when Mr. Lissu was still a parliamentarian, remains the attempt on his life in 2017, which he survived by pure miracle, and the apparent lack of accountability for this crime; and *deeply regrets* in this regard that, despite multiple high-level exchanges and requests for information in the past eight years, the Tanzanian authorities have yet to provide any details on the steps taken to identify and hold to account the culprits of the assassination attempt;
2. *Recalls* the repeatedly made allegation that the crime was carried out with the support of the authorities; *points out* in this regard that the complainant has stated that Mr. Lissu had previously been the direct target of serious threats and intimidation by the government, that the armed guards normally present at the location where the shooting took place allegedly happened to be off duty that day, and that CCTV footage of the crime reportedly disappeared soon after; and *considers* that more recent statements made before a court in London could lend further credence to the allegations by the complainant in this regard;
3. *Urges*, therefore, once more, the relevant authorities to carry out diligent and effective investigations, as is their duty, into the assassination attempt, and to provide, as a matter of urgency, information on action taken to this end; *recognizes* that responsibility for the investigations falls first and foremost to the law enforcement and judicial authorities and that adhering to the democratic principles of the separation of powers and independence of the judiciary is crucial; *considers*, nevertheless, that the *sub judice* rule cannot be invoked as an obstacle to justice or accountability and that parliament is responsible for helping to ensure that all state institutions, including the judiciary, fully abide by the rule of law; *urges*, therefore, the newly elected National Assembly to take all necessary measures to this end; and *wishes* to be kept informed of any action taken by the new National Assembly for this purpose;
4. *Remains convinced* that an IPU on-site mission to the United Republic of Tanzania would offer a useful opportunity to discuss and clarify the important concern that has arisen in this case with the executive, parliamentary and judicial authorities, as well as with any third party able to help it to advance towards the satisfactory settlement of the case at hand; and *requests* the Secretary General to renew his consultations with the parliamentary authorities with a view to finally organizing the said mission as quickly as possible;
5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary and other relevant national authorities, the complainant and any interested third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information to assist it in its work;
6. *Decides* to continue examining this case.