

Resolution on the arrest and risk of execution of Tundu Lissu, Chair of Chadema, the main opposition party in Tanzania

2025/2690(RSP) - 08/05/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the arrest and risk of execution of Tundu Lissu, Chair of Chadema, the main opposition party in Tanzania.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, Renew, Greens/EFA groups.

As a reminder, 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. Lissu narrowly survived an assassination attempt in 2017 and was forced into exile, only to face renewed persecution upon his return to Tanzania.

On 10 April 2025, Lissu was charged with treason, along with three offences of publication of false information under cybercrime laws. Treason in Tanzania carries a potential death sentence. 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.

Parliament condemned the arrest of Lissu and expressed grave concern over the charges against him, which appear to be politically motivated and carry the risk of capital punishment.

It urged Tanzania to:

- abolish the death penalty and commute all death sentences;
- immediately and unconditionally release him, ensuring his safety and his right to a fair trial and legal representation;
- 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;
- independently investigate police abuses and enforced disappearances, 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;
- 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.

Lastly, the resolution called on 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 standard.