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## **NIGERIA ACTIVISTS JAILED FOR ANTI-PRESIDENT T-SHIRTS FREED**

Activists, Larry Emmanuel, Anene Victor Udoka, Samuel Gabriel, Henry Nwodo, and Ben Mannaseh, who had been arbitrarily detained in connection to their peaceful activism, have been released on bail. On 4 July, they attended a church service at the Dunamis International Gospel Center in Abuja, the Nigerian capital, when they were arrested and beaten by the Center's security unit for wearing #BuhariMustGo T-shirts. On 29 July they were charged with 'constituting themselves as vagabonds' to disturb public peace. Amnesty International believes the charges to be baseless and in connection to the activists' peaceful expression of their dissenting views.

**No further action is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.**

On 3 August, Nigerian authorities released activists Larry Emmanuel, Anene Victor Udoka, Samuel Gabriel, Henry Nwodo, and Ben Mannaseh (also known as 'the Dunamis5') after spending 29 days in the custody of Nigeria's secret police, the Department of State Services (DSS). On 26 July, a Federal High Court issued an order that the activist be released but the DSS disregarded it and kept them in custody. On 29 July, the DSS arraigned the five activists before a magistrate court where they were charged with 'constituting themselves as vagabonds' to disturb public peace. If convicted, they face a minimum of three years in jail. Amnesty International believes the charges to be fabricated. They must be dropped.

On 4 July, the five activists were attending a Sunday church service when the security guards at Dunamis International Gospel Center, Abuja, arrested them for wearing #BuhariMustGo branded T-shirts. The shirts were in reference to President Buhari and were worn by the activists in protest against bad governance in Nigeria. In detention, they were denied access to their lawyers and family. Their prosecution is punishment for expressing dissenting opinions, which is covered by their right to freedom of expression.

The right to peacefully protest and express dissent is increasingly being criminalised in Nigeria. Individuals who exercise their right to freedom of expression in Nigeria risk physical attack, arrests, and trumped-up charges. Also, the abuse of existing laws and growing impunity imply that perpetrators of these violations are not prosecuted. In most cases individuals who suffer abuses never get justice.

Through alternative channels, Amnesty International will continue its campaign to ensure that the criminal charges against the activists are dismissed.

'Amnesty International spoke out for us and we are free. We would not relent in speaking out for others. Thank you!', shared the Dunamis5.