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First UA: 98/25 Index: AFR 56/0505/2025 Tanzania of November 21, 2025

TANZANIA

WHEREABOUTS OF KNOWN GOVERNMENT CRITIC UNKNOWN

Humphrey Polepole was abducted in Dar es Salaam on October 6, 2025, by unidentified security forces. A well-known government critic, he has spoken out against President Samia Suluhu Hassan and the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). He has raised concerns about shrinking civic space, human rights violations and attacks on opposition members, including the jailing of opposition politician Tundu Lissu.

The Tanzanian authorities must immediately reveal where Humphrey is and what has happened to him. If he is in state custody, they must release him at once.

Write to the Tanzanian President urging her 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.

Write to:

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
Salutation: Your Excellency,

And copy:

His Excellency Joseph Edward Sokoine
High Commissioner
High Commission for the United Republic of Tanzania
50 Range Road
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J4
Tel: (613) 232-1500, -1509 Fax: (613) 232-5184
Email: contact@tzrepottawa.ca

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tanzania held its seventh general election on October 29, 2025. President Samia Suluhu Hassan was declared the winner and began her second five-year term. The vote took place during an ongoing campaign of repression. Authorities targeted opposition parties, civil society groups and anyone seen as critical of the government. During this period, security forces carried out a pattern of enforced disappearances, especially against CHADEMA supporters, human rights defenders and government critics. These “mysterious abductions,” which are rarely acknowledged or investigated, show the government’s ongoing failure to uphold human rights for everyone in the country.

On October 6, unidentified security agents abducted Humphrey Polepole from his home in Dar es Salaam. His family arrived after receiving an alert that someone had broken into the house. They found the front door forced open, the perimeter electrical wires cut and a large amount of blood inside. Witnesses reported that unidentified security forces were blocking the road leading to his home that same day. No one has been able to reach him since October 6. His fate and whereabouts are still unknown.

That same day, police spokesperson David Misime announced that police were investigating the incident. The next day, Humphrey’s lawyers filed a habeas corpus application with the High Court in Dar es Salaam. The court dismissed the case on October 24, stating there was no proof that the authorities were responsible for his disappearance. Humphrey appears to have been targeted because he is a vocal government critic, which violates his rights to freedom of expression and association. His case adds to a growing list of enforced disappearances, repression of peaceful dissent and other authoritarian practices in Tanzania.

Please take action as soon as possible until May 26, 2026. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.