

20 November 2017

Tanzania: Judicial harassment of human rights defender Bob Chacha Wangwe

On 15 November 2017, human rights defender **Bob Chacha Wangwe** was sentenced to three years' imprisonment or a fine of 5 million Tanzanian shillings by Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

[Bob Chacha Wangwe](#) is a human rights defender and Director of the Law Department at **Tanzania Students' Networking Programme (TSNP)**. TSNP is a non-governmental organisation based in Dar Es Salaam which works with students on capacity building and advocacy programmes to enable them to advocate at the local, national and international levels to promote human rights and democracy in Tanzania.

On 15 November 2017, Bob Chacha Wangwe was sentenced to a fine of 5 million Tanzanian shillings (around 1,900 EUR) or three years' imprisonment by Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in Dar Es Salaam. He was sentenced for "publication of false information" under Section 16 of the Cybercrimes Act 2015. The human rights defender was arrested on 7 May 2016 and detained for twelve days before being released on bail awaiting trial. Bob Chacha Wangwe had posted comments on Facebook questioning the respect of procedures in the 2015 elections in Zanzibar. He intends to appeal his sentence.

Following the election of John P. Magafuli as president in 2015, the Tanzanian government has introduced restrictive legislation which has contributed to an increasingly hostile environment for human rights defenders across the country. Part of this new legislation, the Cybercrimes Act 2015, has introduced a number of new powers for police including search and seizure without a court order. This is not the first time that Front Line Defenders has reported on the targeting of Tanzanian human rights defenders under the Cybercrimes Act 2015. Instances include the targeting of human rights defender and blogger [Maxence M. Melo](#) for [refusing to disclose](#) anonymous sources and [police harassment](#) of other human rights defenders.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern about the judicial harassment of Bob Chacha Wangwe as it believes it is part of a larger [pattern](#) of harassment against human rights defenders in Tanzania.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Tanzania to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally quash the conviction of Bob Chacha Wangwe as Front Line Defenders believes that he has been targeted solely as a result of his legitimate human rights work;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Tanzania are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.