

26 October
For immediate release

PRESS STATEMENT: ISLA and CHESA joint statement on that status of the
Tanzania 13, 26/10/2017

It will be recalled that a legal consultation convened by the Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA) and Community Health Education Services and Advocacy (CHESA) was raided by Tanzanian police on Tuesday 17 October 2017. The consultation was convened in order to get more instructions and evidence on a case that was planned to be filed before a court. The case concerns a challenge to government's decision to limit the provision of certain health services that it had previously provided. Thirteen people were arrested and by Wednesday 18 October 2017, all were granted bail. On Friday 20 October 2017, bail was revoked without explanation and they were placed in police custody. To date, no charges have been brought. In the circumstances, they are being arbitrarily detained.

One of the detainees currently in custody is the Director of CHESA, Mr John Kashiha. We received news that John's father has sadly passed on in the early hours of this morning. We are advised that his father was under treatment at Muhimbili Hospital. We have been further advised that John's lawyers have been calling on authorities to allow John to visit his father while in hospital and these requests were refused. Heartfelt condolences to John Kashiha and his family.

Today marks the 7th day of detention and it bears repetition that no charges have been laid and requests for bail have been refused. The High Court habeas corpus application filed on behalf of all detainees has still not been enrolled despite it being filed as an urgent petition. The continued arbitrary detention is an egregious violation of human rights and cannot be condoned. Several human rights organisations at every level: domestic, regional and international have condemned the arrests as being wrongful and despite their calls for the detainees to be released immediately, the arbitrary detention persists.

We reiterate the call upon Tanzanian authorities to immediately release the individuals who are currently arbitrarily detained; to allow citizens to access legal representation without intimidation; to discontinue the ongoing persecution of human rights defenders, lawyers and their clients and refrain from such future actions; and to allow the foreign nationals, whose passports have been seized, to leave the country.

For enquiries please contact: Matilda Lasseko +27 (0) 11 3389028/ +27 (0) 72 7 40 1764 I Matilda@the-isl.org

ISSUED BY ISLA AND CHESA