November 6, 2026

IDU Statement on the Verdict Against Tundu Lissu

The International Democracy Union (IDU) condemns in the strongest terms today's verdict against IDU Executive Vice Chair Tundu Lissu, Chairman of CHADEMA, Tanzania's main opposition party.

The High Court in Dar es Salaam found that the charge of treason, on which Mr. Lissu has been imprisoned for nearly nineteen months, and which carried the death penalty, had not been proven. Rather than freeing him, the court convicted him of incitement, an offence with which he was never charged, and sentenced him to four years in prison.

This is no act of leniency, and the world should not mistake it for one. Yesterday, we called this judgment a defining test for Tanzania. Tanzania has failed that test. A verdict that collapses the case against a man and yet keeps him behind bars is a travesty of justice, and it confirms that this prosecution was always about silencing the country's opposition.

The IDU demands the immediate and unconditional release of Tundu Lissu, the quashing of this conviction, and the withdrawal of all politically motivated charges against detained CHADEMA leaders and members. Until then, Mr. Lissu must be granted bail pending appeal without delay, given the specialized medical care he requires and allowed to attend the burial of his brother, Alute Lissu, on November 10. We extend our deepest condolences to the Lissu family.

The IDU calls on democratic governments, the African Union, the East African Community, and the Southern African Development Community to not accept this outcome as a compromise. Imprisoning the leader of the opposition on an offence he was never charged with must carry serious consequences for their relations with Tanzania.

The IDU stands firmly with its partners in the Democracy Union of Africa (DUA), with Tundu Lissu, with CHADEMA, and with all Tanzanians in their struggle to choose their government freely.