

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY**



**TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO INACCURACIES IN REPORTS
ON ARRESTS OF CRIMINAL SUSPECTS IN TANZANIA**

It has come to my attention that some organisations - local and international - have been issuing statements with factual inaccuracies and gross misrepresentation of facts about the recent arrests of three individuals in Tanzania alleged to be involved in criminal conduct.

The sweeping statements on the arrests have mixed up two separate things: the national debate that is currently openly taking place in Tanzania on proposed port investments on the one hand, and a rule of law issue, on the other.

The deliberate falsification of information about the actual circumstances in the arrests of the criminal suspects calls into question the real motive and credibility of the organisations behind the statements.

One of the more recent statements from an international rights group has resorted to a malicious distortion of facts by erroneously claiming that the suspects were arrested "simply for criticizing a port deal between Tanzania and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)."

The truth is that no one whatsoever has been arrested in Tanzania nor will be arrested for simply criticizing the port deal or any other Government project, plan, programme or policy for that matter.

The three individuals in question were arrested by the Police for making specific public threats of a serious criminal nature, which include calling for the violent overthrow of the Government of the day.

The suspects, some of whom publicly sought to incite citizens to bear arms against the Tanzania Police Force, were apprehended to send a strong message to deter any offenders from committing criminal offences.

The arrests do not in any way restrict freedom of expression in Tanzania, but are part of the enforcement of the law to prevent possible social unrest that may result from calls for a rebellion against a democratically-elected government.

Since coming into office in March 2021, President Samia Suluhu Hassan's Government has expanded the democratic and civic space in Tanzania by reversing a ban on public rallies for political parties, lifting the suspension of several newspapers and online TVs and broadening freedom of expression.

To this effect, individuals, groups, civil society, members of the academia, the media, clerics, political parties and institutions continue to freely discuss national issues and criticize the Government's position without any official intimidation nor arrests.

Opposition parties are currently freely holding public rallies across the country to criticise the port deal and other Government policies, something they were not able to do just a few years ago before President Samia Suluhu Hassan's administration came to power.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania will continue to uphold freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and allow a vibrant public debate - both offline and online - about national development projects and any other issues of public interest.

However, rights and freedoms also come with responsibilities to others and require all of us to abide by the law and refrain from criminally dangerous and reckless rhetoric.

This Government remains fully committed to democracy and the rule of law, but will not make any compromises against breaches of law and order that may jeopardise the peace, national unity, security and safety of Tanzania that we all cherish.



Hon. Nape Moses Nnauye

Minister responsible for Information, Communication and Information Technology

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