



October 04th 2021

PRESS STATEMENT

REF: ARREST AND INCARCERATION OF CARTOONIST OPTATUS FWEMA

It is with great dismay and disbelief that we receive reports of the arrest and incarceration of cartoonist Optatus Fwema at the Oysterbay Police Station, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

On behalf of the East African Cartoonists' Society – KATUNI we condemn this blatant attack on press freedom and individual rights.

Mr Optatus has been incarcerated at the Oysterbay Police station since 23rd September 2021 after he was picked up from his Bunju residence. So far no charges have been preferred against him. This is in total disregard to the law that states that the police should not hold a suspect for more than 48 hours without charge. He has also been denied bail and is therefore being held illegally.

He has been questioned over a cartoon he posted on his social media pages.

As KATUNI we condemn this illegal act and demand the immediate release of the cartoonist since his continued incarceration is in violation of his rights and an outright affront to the law.

James Kamawira
Chairman, East African Cartoonists' Society - KATUNI

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Kamawira". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the typed name and title.