



September 22, 2022

Joint Statement

TANZANIA - CARTOONIST OPPTERTUS FWEMA DISCHARGED BY COURT BUT IMMEDIATELY REARRESTED WITHIN COURT CORRIDORS.

Cartooning for Peace (CFP), Cartoonists Rights Network International (CRNI), Creative Industry Network Tanzania, and Africartoons deplore the harassment of cartoonist Opptertus Fwema.

After being unjustly arrested and illegally detained for a cartoon he drew, cartoonist Opptertus Fwema's trial was postponed several times, denying him justice in that process. Eventually, on September 20th, he was discharged by court after the prosecution entered Nolle Prosequi under section 91(1) of the Criminal Procedure Act CAP 20 R.E 2022, indicating that they had no intention of pursuing the charges against Opptertus and confirming our belief that the charges held against him had no credibility.

However, as soon as he left court chambers, he was re-arrested by the police within court corridors and taken back into custody. He was later released on bail upon guarantee of two sureties. No new charges have been made against Opptertus. The cartoonist has been ordered to report to Oysterbay Police Station on September 23rd where he will be represented by his lawyer Shilinde Swedy.

We express our concern and dismay at this latest development, which reflects an unjustified persecution of a cartoonist whose only crime was the execution of his job. We call for an immediate halt to this prosecution in keeping with the fundamental principles of freedom of expression as asserted in the [Arusha Declaration on World Press Freedom Day, 2022](#).

We remind Mrs. Samia Suluhu Hassan, the President of the Republic of Tanzania, of the promise that she made in her [Arusha speech](#) to "protect journalists and open more space for freedom of expression and media"; a promise echoed by the Minister of Information, Communication and Information Technology, Mr. [Nape Nnauye](#), who said; "The Ministry will continue to defend journalists and press freedom in Tanzania and Africa". We urge the Government of Tanzania to diligently work towards a better, safe and free working environment for cartoonists in Tanzania.