

28 June 2017

### **Uganda: Killing of human rights defender Erasmus Irumba by security forces**

On 23 June 2017, **Erasmus Irumba** was shot and wounded during an alleged altercation with a commanding officer of the local Uganda People's Defence Forces and other security officials in Ntoroko District, western Uganda. He was then driven to a more rural area where he was shot again at close range and killed.

[Erasmus Irumba](#) was the coordinator of the activities of **Twerwaneho Listeners Club (TLC)** in Ntoroko District. TLC is a non-governmental organisation based in Fort Portal, in the Rwenzori Region of western Uganda. TLC carries out human rights advocacy through weekly radio programmes centred on human rights education, capacity building of human rights defenders, civic education, the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations and the challenging of unlawful government actions in court. TLC radio programmes generally aim at holding public leaders and corporations more accountable. Erasmus Irumba was particularly active in TLC's Village Budget Clubs, a project that sought to scrutinise the allocation and implementation of district budgets and ensure proper management of public funds at the local level.

On 23 June 2017, at approximately 7.30pm, Erasmus Irumba was reportedly summoned to go to Butungama trading centre for a meeting with senior security officials in his region, including the Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Richard Muhangi of Uganda People's Defence Forces 3rd Mountain Battalion, with two of his escorts, the Ntoroko District Police Commander and the District Internal Security Organ Officer. During this meeting, Erasmus Irumba and another civilian who was with him were shot in the leg in an altercation that has been this far presented as arising from his attempt to resist arrest. Whilst still alive, but severely bleeding, Erasmus Irumba and his colleague were put in the boot of a private car and driven to a more rural area where they were shot dead. Erasmus Irumba's body, which presented a gun wound in the forehead, was later taken to Buhinga Regional Referral Hospital in Fort Portal. In response to the killings, it is reported that some senior security officials including Lt. Col. Richard Muhangi and the Ntoroko District Police Commander have been arrested.

Front Line Defenders is concerned that the killing of Erasmus Irumba is linked to the corruption of the security officials involved and believes he was targeted due to his peaceful and legitimate work at TLC.

#### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Uganda to:**

1. Strongly and immediately condemn the killing of **Erasmus Irumba**;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of **Erasmus Irumba**, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in **Uganda** are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.