

14 July 2017

### **Tanzania: Judicial harassment of two human rights defenders**

On 12 July 2017, two human rights defenders, **Bibiana Mushi** and **Nicodemus Ngelela**, were arrested while conducting a capacity building workshop for local government officials in Kishapu District of Shinyanga region in Tanzania.

Bibiana Mushi and Nicodemus Ngelela work for **Actions for Democracy and Local Governance – ADLG** which advocates for active participation of citizens, local democracy and governance in the Shinyanga region of Tanzania. [ADLG](#) was formed to combat the poor governance and political decision-making that affects the welfare of poor and marginalised Tanzanians by building capacity of communities to effectively advocate for their rights. Its work particularly focuses on mining, farming and fishing communities. ADLG has been running its governance programme since 2011 and a core component of the programme is training sessions and on-going mentoring and coaching to encourage communities to demand a voice in the policy-making process at local and national levels.

On 12 July 2017, Bibiana Mushi and Nicodemus Ngelela were conducting a capacity building seminar, which had started the day before on 11 July 2017, for local government officials working near areas of mineral extraction. During the seminar, they were reportedly arrested under orders of the District Commissioner. The two human rights defenders were then arraigned in the Kishapu District Court where they were charged with Disobedience of Statutory Duty under Section 123 of the Tanzanian Penal Code, which if found guilty, can carry a sentence of two years. They have been released on bail and their court date has been scheduled for 10 August 2017.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern at the charges brought against the two human rights defenders Bibiana Mushi and Nicodemus Ngelela which it believes are directly linked to their peaceful and legitimate work at ADLG.

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

1. Drop all charges against Bibiana Mushi and Nicodemus Ngelela, as Front Line Defenders believes that they are solely as a result of their legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Tanzania and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.