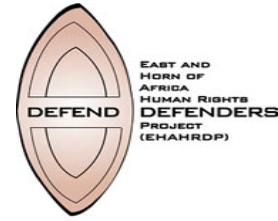




Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition [THRD-Coalition]

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POLICE MUST INVESTIGATE DEATH OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER IN MARA



The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRD) and its regional umbrella body of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRDN) have called upon the Police Force to conduct a thorough investigation of the death of a human right defender and their colleague Eustace Nyarugenda.

In a joint statement these networks, including those of the Lake Zone like the Mwanza based Kivulini and that of the ABC-Foundation where the late Nyarugenda used to work, declared that the untimely death is a severe blow to human rights defenders (HRDs) across the Lake Zone, this country and the entire region of the East and Horn of Africa, and that this death has been received with a great shock.

According to the deceased's deputy, who is attending a five days seminar for HRDs by the THRD-Coalition and the EHAHRDN, the late Nyarugenda who was the Executive Director of the Action Based Community Foundation, a member organization of the THRD-Coalition and EHAHRDN subsequently, was reported to be missing on Monday 3rd December at 6.00 AM.

The deceased, who was actively engaged against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and domestic violence, is reported to have bid farewell to his daughter in a calm situation. He was wearing blue jeans shorts, a T-shirt and sandals while holding his notebook. He promised his daughter that he would be back after a short while from the Musoma Township and that he would later proceed to Tarime within the same region.

According to reports by the deceased's colleague, who was informed by his workmates, and was confirmed by the deceased's daughter, this was the second time that the late Nyarugenda had disappeared in mysterious circumstances.

They recalled that a similar incident had occurred in August last year. On that occasion, Nyarugenda had been found four days later in a totally confused mood and highly traumatized in Bariadi within a new neighbouring region of Simiyu.

According to the Police Force through the Mara Regional Police Commander the SSP Japhet Lusingu the death of Nyarugenda is startling. He revealed that the deceased passed away at 23:40 PM when he was at the Bunda District Hospital waiting for treatment a day after his disappearance was reported.

While not going into long details in his press release, he mentioned that Nyarugenda, 46 years old, was found unconscious in a hotel known as Savana Bar and Guest House in Bunda District after an unusual

groan which prompted the breaking of the door of the room number four where he was earlier booked at 18:30 P.M in the same day.

At the time of this last occurrence he was coordinating a campaign against Gender Based Violence (GBV), this activism engagement function was organized by Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF).

At this juncture HRDs do not rule out the possibility of this death being related to the activities of the deceased in defending the rights of women and children. We therefore, appeal to the Police Force to come out with full and thorough investigations to establish the cause of Nyarugenda's death.

Yours Sincerely,



Onesmo Olengurumwa
THRD-Coalition National Coordinator.