

Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security
Hon. Jack Jacob Mwiimbu, MP
Independence Avenue
P.O. Box 50997
Lusaka
Zambia

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my concern about the arbitrary detention of George Chisanga, a former Member of Parliament and a member of the opposition political party, Tonse-Pamodzi Alliance.

On 14 August, George Chisanga was arrested during a security operation that took place at a property linked to opposition presidential candidate Brian Mundubile in Lusaka, the capital. George Chisanga was arrested together with two members from another opposition party, National Reconciliation Party for Unity and Prosperity (NRPUP). During the operation a third individual, Mutotwe Kafwaya, a member of the TonsePamodzi alliance, was fatally shot at by state security forces.

Following his arrest, the authorities denied knowing his whereabouts until his family found him at Chelstone Police Station in Lusaka the following day. George Chisanga's family were initially denied access to him. Of particular concern is that George Chisanga remains detained without charge and is yet to be presented before a court. Under international human rights law, anyone who is arrested must be informed at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest, have immediate access to lawyers and their families, promptly brought before an independent and impartial court, and informed of any recognizable criminal charges against them.

The Zambian authorities' powers to investigate and, where there is sufficient evidence, prosecute genuine criminal offences, including offences relating to national security, must be exercised consistently with Zambia's obligations under international human rights law. National security cannot be used as a justification for arbitrary detention or for restricting the legitimate exercise of human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and association.

In light of the above, I urge the Zambian authorities to immediately release George Kangwa Chisanga as he appears to be detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. Pending his release, the authorities must ensure that he has unrestricted and confidential access to his legal representatives and access to his family. I urge you to end arbitrary arrests and detention and to ensure that criminal justice and national security laws are not misused to intimidate, punish or silence political opponents and other people peacefully exercising their human rights.

Yours sincerely,