



PRESS STATEMENT

CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CONDEMNS THE NINE-MONTH JAIL SENTENCE AGAINST UGANDAN LAWYER ERON KIIZA AND CALLS FOR HIS IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22 January 2025

The Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, calls for the immediate release of Ugandan lawyer Eron Kiiza, who was condemned to a nine-month jail sentence [summarily passed](#) by Uganda's military court martial.

Kiiza is one of the defence Counsels in the [contested](#) military trial of civilian opposition politicians, [Kiiza Besigye](#) and his assistant – Obeid Lutale. The two were [abducted from neighboring Kenya](#) on 16 November 2024, by unidentified Ugandan armed security operatives who held them incommunicado for four days before being arraigned and charged in a Kampala military court which has since remanded them. They were charged with possession of firearms – two pistols and ammunition – at the time of their arrest and soliciting military support overseas supposedly to destabilise national security. These charges were escalated on 13 January 2025, by the inclusion of a new [charge of treachery](#) which attracts a death sentence on conviction.

Kiiza's arrest and detention on 7 January 2025, followed his [physical obstruction](#) by military personnel from accessing the court's section for defendants' lawyers, where he was expected to address the military court in the resumed proceedings against their clients. A [video recording](#) of the incident reveals that as Kiiza protested his obstruction – by shouting and banging on the courtroom barricade – soldiers, led by the Judge Advocate of the military Court, violently assaulted and removed him from the courtroom.

The sentence against Mr Kiiza was issued in a [two-minute trial](#) without the minimum standards of a fair trial process; the charges were not read to him, he was not afforded an opportunity to defend himself, [reportedly tortured](#), and his lawyers have not been issued with a formal ruling to pursue an appeal.

Reports coming in from Uganda also indicate that civilians and lawyers attending hearings in political cases before the General Court Martial are traditionally subjected to intimidation and different forms of harassment, including withdrawal of gadgets and invasive searches after long hours of waiting before being [permitted to access the Court](#).

As noted, the pattern of intimidation and interference cited in several other instances in Uganda violates the internationally recognised [rights of lawyers](#) in the performance of their professional duties.

We join other actors who have expressed solidarity with and have called on the authorities in Uganda to reverse the sentence against Eron Kiiza. We call on the authorities to desist from subjecting civilians to politically motivated military trials, to observe fair trial standards and to stop the alleged ill-treatment of civilians and lawyers attending proceedings before independent courts and tribunals.

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