

URGENT ACTION

FORMER MP'S CONVICTIONS MUST BE QUASHED

On January 30, 2024, former opposition leader, Job Sikhala, was released after 595 days of arbitrary detention. Job Sikhala was arrested on June 14, 2022, and convicted on May 3, 2023, for obstruction of justice and given a suspended six-month sentence with an option of paying US\$600 as a fine. On January 30, 2024, he was convicted and sentenced to a suspended two-year prison term under a law that no longer exists after he was accused of posting a video on Facebook claiming that a police officer had killed a baby. The Zimbabwean authorities must immediately overturn Job Sikhala's convictions and sentence and stop weaponizing the criminal justice system to target, harass, and intimidate opposition leaders.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 90.22**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

President of the Republic of Zimbabwe
Emmerson Mnangagwa
Office of the President
Munhumutapa Building
Samora Machel Avenue
Private Bag 7700, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe
Email: info@opc.gov.zw

Embassy of Zimbabwe in the United States
His Excellency Ambassador Tadeous T. Chifamba
1608 New Hampshire Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20009
Email: general@zimembassydc.org

Your Excellency,

While I welcome his release from unlawful detention, I am concerned about the harassment and intimidation of opposition member of parliament, **Job Sikhala** through the justice system. Job Sikhala was arrested with fellow opposition leader, **Godfrey Sithole**, and 14 other men (collectively known as the 'Nyatsime 16') on June 14, 2022. They were charged with 'obstructing justice' and 'incitement to commit violence and disorderly conduct'.

On May 3, 2023, Job Sikhala was convicted and fined for 'obstructing justice', which was overturned in November 2023. However, Job Sikhala remained in prison, awaiting trial for the incitement to commit violence and disorderly conduct charges. On January 30, he received a suspended two-year prison sentence for incitement to commit violence and was subsequently released after 595 days of pretrial detention. On February 15, Job Sikhala received a nine-month suspended prison sentence for charges of 'false statements prejudicial to the state'. Meanwhile, Godfrey Sithole and the other 14 men in the 'Nyatsime 16' case were granted bail in November 2023, but the 14 men will stand trial on politically motivated 'incitement to commit violence and disorderly conduct' charges. Godfrey Sithole was convicted of incitement to commit violence and given a suspended two-year prison sentence.

I call on you to ensure that the convictions of Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole are immediately quashed and to end the intimidation and harassment against them and other opposition leaders. Additionally, I urge you to drop all charges against the other 14 men arrested whose trial is ongoing.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On May 24 2022, **Moreblessing Ali**, an activist from the main opposition party Citizens' Coalition for Change (CCC), was abducted at Chibhanguza shopping center in Nyatsime, Chitungwiza, a dormitory town, 22km from Harare, Zimbabwe's capital. The alleged abductor, identified by people at the shopping center, was a well-known activist with the ruling ZANU PF party. On June 11, 2022, Moreblessing Ali's mutilated body was found dumped in a well at the home of a ZANU PF supporter. ZANU PF supporters quickly denied that Moreblessing Ali's abduction and murder was politically motivated, instead calling it a "relationship gone sour".

Job Sikhala, a CCC MP and lawyer, who has been arrested a total of 67 times on politically motivated charges, led the search for Moreblessing Ali and was appointed by her family to be their lawyer. He mobilized calls for justice, which supporters of the ZANU PF opposed. One ZANU PF councilor insisted that the mourners were not supposed to gather in Nyatsime to mourn Moreblessing Ali's death, despite Moreblessing Ali's home being in Nyatsime.

On June 14, 2022, during Moreblessing Ali's funeral, there were clashes between members of ZANU PF and the CCC which resulted in the destruction of property. Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole, another CCC member of parliament, were arrested and charged with 'incitement to commit violence or public violence' on the false basis that they had made utterances which incited violence and that they supplied vehicles to ferry CCC supporters from the towns of Chitungwiza and Epworth to Nyatsime. If convicted, the offense carries a lengthy prison term, often at the discretion of the magistrate. On July 14, Job Sikhala was additionally charged with 'obstructing the course of justice' under section 184(1) (e) of the Criminal Reform and Codification Act, which carries a prison term not exceeding 6 months or a fine or both.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: MAY 7, 2024

NAME AND PRONOUN: Job Sikhala, Godfrey Sithole, Nyatsime 16 (All he/him/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr46/6135/2022/en/>