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Tanzania Must Ratify the Convention Against Torture – A Call to Action on June 26

By Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC)

As the world marks the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June, Tanzania finds itself at a critical crossroads. Despite being a member of the United Nations and a signatory to numerous human rights instruments, Tanzania has yet to ratify the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) a glaring omission that places it among only two African countries, alongside Zimbabwe, that have not taken this important step.

This year's commemoration comes amid deeply troubling reports. In May 2025, renowned Kenyan activist Boniface Mwangi and Ugandan journalist Agatha Atuhaire were allegedly abducted and subjected to brutal torture while in Tanzania. Their accounts include sexual violence, beatings, and psychological abuse, reportedly carried out by state agents. These allegations have shocked the region and drawn condemnation from human rights organizations across East Africa.

The Tanzanian authorities have denied the claims, calling them hearsay. However, such serious accusations cannot be dismissed without thorough, independent investigations. The credibility of our justice system and our commitment to human rights are at stake.

Ratifying the Convention Against Torture would legally bind Tanzania to prevent and punish acts of torture. It would enable victims to seek justice through international mechanisms, strengthen domestic legal frameworks and accountability, and demonstrate Tanzania's commitment to human rights and international law.

Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) urges the Government of Tanzania to immediately ratify the UN Convention Against Torture as the convention laid down key foundations on prevention, criminalization, and victim redress. Therefore, the government should investigate all allegations of torture transparently and independently, provide justice and reparations to victims, and train law enforcement and security agencies on human rights standards.

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Torture is not just a violation of rights it is a betrayal of our shared humanity. On this day, we stand with survivors and renew our call for justice, dignity, and accountability.

Let this be the year Tanzania chooses justice over silence.