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IDU and DUA Statement on the arrest of CHADEMA Chairman Freeman Mbowe

Free them all – Immediately release of Chairman Freeman Mbowe and all CHADEMA members

The International Democrat Union (IDU) and the Democrat Union of Africa DUA are very concerned about the latest developments in Tanzania. Wednesday night, the Hon. Freeman Mbowe, leader of CHADEMA, Tanzania's main opposition party, and 11 other party leaders were arrested by police forces. The arrest correlated with CHADEMA's planned conference on constitutional reforms for the country.

Since Freeman Mbowe was accosted by an army of police officers at his hotel at 2:30 a.m., there has been no information on his whereabouts.

The IDU demands that the Government of Tanzania guarantee the safety and the immediate release of Chairman Mbowe and all other CHADEMA leaders.

This latest incident comes after yet another arrest of CHADEMA members and leaders of the party just four days ago. Last Saturday, Mwanza Regional Police Forces arrested 128 people, including Bishop Emmaus Mwamakula, as they prepared to attend a conference to demand a new constitution for Tanzania. They were later released, after 30 hours.

Despite now having a new president, the human rights situation in Tanzania has not improved, and fundamental rights like freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press are still not guaranteed. President Samia Suluhu has chosen to act in the same autocratic manner as her predecessor, Magufuli. It is time to stop the Tanzanian drift into authoritarianism.