



December 22nd, 2020

ActionAid condemns the arrest and detention of its Chairperson, Nicholas Opiyo

ActionAid International Uganda received with shock and dismay the news of the unlawful and brutal arrest of Mr. Nicholas Opiyo, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of ActionAid International Uganda and renown Human Rights Lawyer this afternoon, Tuesday 22nd December 2020 in Kampala, Uganda's capital.

A courageous defender of human and people's rights and a distinguished leader within civil society in Uganda and internationally, Nicholas Opiyo has dedicated his life and profession fighting for social justice and seeking peace and reconciliation in the country.

His arrest fits a pattern of increasing crackdown on dissent and attack on civil society in the country by agents of Uganda's state security establishment as the country nears its next general election scheduled to take place next month on 14th January 2021. We are particularly dismayed by the timing of this arrest that comes at a time when Nicholas was leading Civil Society efforts to challenge cascaded attacks by state agencies against civil society organizations and initiatives, including the recent freezing of NGO accounts by the Financial Intelligence Authority.

We remind the security forces and the government of Uganda of its obligation to respect and protect human rights of citizens and the rule of Law in Uganda.

ActionAid International joins the rest civil society in Uganda and elsewhere in condemning the manner of his arrest and demand his immediate unconditional release or production in Uganda's Courts of Law.

We express our solidarity with his family and all civil society leaders in the country and pledge to do all in our means to ensure he and those he was arrested with achieve justice.

**The National Governing Board
ActionAid International Uganda**