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President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
Parliament of Uganda
Parliament Avenue
Kampala
Uganda

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Dear President Museveni,

**I am writing to express grave concern about the assault, arbitrary detention, conviction and nine-month sentencing of lawyer Eron Kiiza solely for carrying out his professional duties.**

On the morning of 7 January, during a hearing for his client, soldiers physically prevented Eron Kiiza from entering the military court’s section for defence lawyers. He responded by shouting and banging on the courtroom barricade. Soldiers then punched Eron Kiiza in the face, head, and body while removing him from the courtroom. They then arrested him and placed him in the dock alongside his client. Only a few hours later, and without even reading the charges or hearing arguments, the General Court-Martial (a military court) convicted him of «contempt of court» and sentenced him to nine months imprisonment at Kitalya prison, where he remains held. His lawyers have appealed his conviction. When his lawyers visited him in detention on 20 January, they noticed he had lost a significant amount of weight and had bruises on his arms and legs. Eron Kiiza told his lawyers that prior to being brought to prison he was tortured including thoroughly beaten by military personnel.

Eron Kiiza had publicly opposed military courts trying civilians, stating rightly that the practice is un-constitutional and contravenes courts decisions in Uganda. In July 2021, rulings from the Supreme Court and Constitutional Court held that it is unconstitutional for civilians to be tried in military courts and that the jurisdiction of military courts over criminal cases should be limited to trials of military personnel for breaches of military discipline.

Eron Kiiza’s arbitrary detention is yet another example of the Ugandan authorities’ targeting of high-profile critics and perceived opponents of the President and members of the first family with measures including enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrests and detention. Amnesty International strongly believes that Eron Kiiza’s detention and conviction is based solely for carrying out his professional duties and the peaceful exercise of his human rights.

**I urge your government to immediately release Eron Kiiza as he is detained solely for carrying out his professional duties and peacefully exercising his human rights. I further urge you to ensure a prompt, impartial and effective investigation is carried out into the assault on Eron Kiiza and allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and bring to justice those suspected to be responsible in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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