



Commonwealth Lawyers Association

CLA Statement on the Statement of the East Africa Law Society (EALS) condemning the ongoing detention of Mr Eron Kiiza and persistent attacks on the legal profession in Uganda

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association (“CLA”) notes the concerns expressed in the Statement by the East Africa Law Society (EALS) on 26th March 2025, over the detention of human rights lawyer Mr Eron Kiiza of Uganda

The EALS Statement comprised a “resolute condemnation of the continued detention and unjust contempt conviction of Mr Kiiza”.

The [Commonwealth Bar Leaders Declaration on Preserving and Strengthening the Independence of the Judiciary and on Ensuring the Independence of the Legal Profession](#) (known as the “Goa Declaration”), which was signed and approved by Bar Leaders from around the Commonwealth on the occasion of the Commonwealth Law Conference in Goa in 2023, states :

“.. that the independence of the legal profession and the professional associations to which lawyers belong is equally fundamental to the preservation, promotion and safeguarding of the rule of law;”

The Goa Declaration also observes that

“any form of attack, threat, harassment or intimidation of lawyers and professional associations of lawyers, and any improper hindrance or interference with the undertaking by them of their professional activities, from any quarter, violates international standards on fair trial and restricts access to justice for those who they represent”.

The [Commonwealth \(Latimer House\) Principles on the Three Branches of Government](#) which comprise core commitments of all Commonwealth members including Uganda states

“An independent, effective and competent legal profession is fundamental to the upholding of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.”

The EALS Statement, perturbingly, also notes that Mr Kiiza’s ordeal is not an isolated incident,

“but a stark manifestation of a broader campaign of repression by Ugandan Authorities targeting lawyers, human rights defenders and critics of the State.”

The CLA stands in solidarity with EALS in calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr Kiiza, the termination of military trials for civilians and a prompt and impartial investigation into the assault and torture of Mr Kiiza, and those culpable be held to account.

The CLA shares the salutary objectives of EALS to champion the rule of law, defend human rights and promote good governance. In this position of solidarity with EALS, the CLA notes these prescient words of the Goa Declaration

“Lawyers must be free to perform all their professional duties without threats, intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference or influence. Lawyers must not suffer or be threatened with any criminal prosecution, civil action, or sanctions of administrative, economic, or other nature for the discharge of their professional functions in accordance with recognized professional and ethical standards”

Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)

10th April 2025

The **Commonwealth Lawyers Association** is an international non-profit organisation which exists to promote and maintain the rule of law throughout the Commonwealth by ensuring that an independent and efficient legal profession, with the highest standards of ethics and integrity, serves the people of the Commonwealth. commonwealthlawyers.com