



TRIALWATCH TO MONITOR TRIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER NICHOLAS OPIYO IN UGANDA

This statement can be attributed to a spokesperson for the Clooney Foundation for Justice. For further inquiries, please contact media@cfj.org.

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The Clooney Foundation for Justice announced today that its partner the American Bar Association Center for Human Rights will monitor the upcoming trial of Nicholas Opiyo in Uganda as part of CFJ's TrialWatch initiative. TrialWatch monitors criminal proceedings around the world and works with legal experts to assess their fairness according to international and regional human rights standards.

Nicholas Opiyo, the founder of the organization Chapter Four, has campaigned for the rule of law and human rights in Uganda, including LGBTQ+ rights. In late December, he was arrested on money laundering charges and detained for a week. He was released on bail on December 30, 2020. To date, the only information the authorities have provided is a sparse charge sheet alleging he acquired \$340,000 in the name of Chapter Four "knowing at the time of receipt that the said funds were proceeds of crime." The charge carries a potential sentence of up to five years' imprisonment.

The trial comes amidst a crackdown on voices critical of the Government of Uganda, including both before and after Uganda's recent presidential election. TrialWatch has previously documented the misuse of Uganda's criminal justice system against critics and those perceived as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Trial monitoring, which entails sending a neutral observer into court to observe criminal proceedings, permits an impartial assessment of whether a trial meets international fair-trial standards. **The Clooney Foundation for Justice calls on Uganda to ensure that any prosecution "is well-founded upon evidence reasonably believed to be reliable and admissible" and is not an effort to suppress Mr. Opiyo's human rights work.** CFJ further stresses the need for any trial to respect Mr. Opiyo's fair-trial rights.



The Clooney Foundation for Justice's TrialWatch initiative monitors and grades the fairness of trials of vulnerable people around the world, including journalists, women and girls, religious minorities, LGBTQ persons and human rights defenders. Using this data, TrialWatch advocates for victims and is developing a Global Justice Ranking measuring national courts' compliance with international human rights standards.