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Kenya: Judicial harassment of land rights defender Bob Micheni Njagi

On 25 September 2021, land rights defender **Bob Micheni Njagi** was released on bail from the GK Prison Kitengela. On 3 July 2019, the land rights defender had been arrested at the GK police station and charged with theft. On 21 September 2021, he was found guilty and sentenced to six months in prison with bail set at 100,000 Kenyan Shillings (approximately 777 euros).

[Bob Micheni Njagi](#) is a land rights defender and the chair of [FreeKenya Referendum Initiative \(FreeKenya\)](#). FreeKenya is a non-profit NGO founded in 2018 and is a nationwide, people driven movement. The organisation promotes a referendum to amend the constitution of Kenya in order to ensure efficient and effective use of national resources and respect for the voice of the people.

On 25 September 2021, Bob Micheni Njagi was released on bail from the GK Prison Kitengela. On 3 July 2019, the land rights defender had been arrested without a warrant after presenting himself to the GK police station. Prior to his arrest, Bob Micheni Njagi had received a call to present himself at the station as he had been accused by a local private developer of stealing shipping containers. Bob Micheni Njagi reports that while in custody he was pressured by police officers to stop advocating for land rights. On 21 September 2021, he was found guilty and sentenced to six months in prison with bail set at 100,000 Kenyan Shillings (approximately 777 euros). The land rights defender will be appealing the conviction.

Front Line Defenders believes that the arrest and conviction of Bob Micheni Njagi is in relation to his work defending public land. A local private developer had claimed a public land plot in Kitengela that was originally reserved by the then county council of Olkejuado – now Kajiado County– for the construction of a new police station and had placed five shipping containers on the land to claim ownership. FreeKenya had been calling on the Kajiado County Minister of Lands to issue an updated validated letter of allotment for the construction of the new police station. On 2 July, the developer filed a complaint that the shipping containers had been stolen and accused Bob Micheni Njagi and FreeKenya of the act. The containers were found in an empty lot next to the Kitengela police station. On 26 July 2017, the land was validated by the county government as public land reserved for the construction of the Kitengela police station and issued the letter of allotment.

Front Line Defenders is concerned by the judicial harassment against land rights defenders Bob Micheni Njagi and believes that he is being targeted solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of land rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities of Kenya to:

1. Immediately quash the conviction of Bob Micheni Njagi as Front Line Defenders believes that he has been targeted solely as a result of their legitimate and peaceful human rights work;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Kenya are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.