



Press Release

15 June 2016

## **8 out of 10 citizens disapprove of the ban on live coverage of Parliament 9 out of 10 think that it is important that Parliament be aired live**

**15 June 2016, Dar es Salaam:** The majority of citizens (79%) disapprove or strongly disapprove of the government's decision to ban live television and radio coverage of Parliament. Almost all citizens (92%) do think that it is important that Parliament be aired live. Just 10% of citizens have not heard of the ban on live broadcasts from Parliament.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *#BungeLive*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 1,815 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar is not covered in these results) between 29 March and 12 April 2016.

A majority of citizens used to watch and listen to the sessions; 42% say they have watched Parliament live on TV while 60% have listened to parliamentary proceedings on the radio. Among these, 59% had watched Parliament on TV two months or less before the survey, while 57% had listened to Parliament on radio in the same time period. These data show that citizens were deeply engaged with the live coverage of parliamentary sessions.

When asked to cite why they think live coverage of Parliament is important, citizens provided a number of different reasons.

- 46% want to monitor their MPs to know if they are truly representing citizens and doing their jobs
- 44% think it is their right to know what is happening in Parliament
- 29% feel that they can trust the information because they can see and hear it personally

When asked to choose between the costs of the live broadcast of Parliament and having that money used to improve social services, citizens were again emphatic that broadcasting Parliament is 'worth the cost'.

- A super-majority of 88% stated that sessions should be aired live irrespective of the cost, compared to just 12% who feel it is important to think of the budgetary implications.
- Similarly, 80% think that live broadcasts from parliament are just as important as other issues, and just 20% feel the money should be spent on public services instead.
- Finally, there is strong support for allowing non-government media to broadcast from parliament (75%) if the government feels it cannot justify the cost while 25% think that only the state broadcaster should broadcast the sessions live

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, said *"The question of BungeLive has been the subject of heated public and parliamentary debate. Through Sauti za Wananchi, we can see clearly that citizens are unwavering and uncompromising in their desire to witness their representatives at work with their own eyes and ears. In light of such strong public support, the government would do well to accept the wishes*

*of an overwhelming majority of Tanzanians by reversing its decision to stop the live broadcast of one of the pillars of our democracy - Bunge.”*

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**For more information:**

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**Notes to Editors**

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org), or [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti)
- Twaweza works on enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. We have programs, staff and offices across all three countries, and a globally respected practice of learning, monitoring and evaluation. Our flagship programs include *Uwezo*, Africa’s largest annual citizen assessment to assess children’s learning levels across hundreds of thousands of households, and *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa’s first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement, through powerful media partnerships and global leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership
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