

## CONTEXT

The fifth phase government of Tanzania has demonstrated praise-worthy commitment to a number of critical national issues including:

- cutting down on corruption
- improving domestic revenue collection
- increasing accountability among civil servants
- cutting down on government waste

At the same time, there has been a growing trend of diminished freedoms, particularly politically. Some of the more worrying indicators include:

- laws enacted that restrict fundamental rights, criminalising opinion and endowing officials with arbitrary powers
- ban on political party activity
- violations of media freedom and personal free expression
- circumvention of national laws, oral directives from high ranking government officials
- banning, closure of newspapers and radio stations

Open conversations on these issues are rare and people speak from emotion rather than evidence.

On 25 August, Twaweza and Making All Voices Count held an [open discussion](#) on the 2015 Cybercrimes Act. Both the police and the regulatory authority attended and a measured and reasonably open conversation was held. Although conversation alone is not enough to bring change, it can create shared understandings and common ground. Bringing together groups of people who have limited opportunity to engage with each other can help to seed new ideas.

With this in mind, Twaweza is convening DemocrasiaYetu – an open dialogue on democracy and civic space in Tanzania. Differing perspectives will be deliberately brought together to challenge each other and try to create more cohesion. The event will also serve as a celebration of democratic spaces and freedoms in Tanzania including performances from comedians, an exhibition of artwork, theatre and more.

## CONTENT

### Opening up

*Presenting data on citizens' views on open information, research on levels of openness among local government offices, details of government transparency initiatives, legal frameworks.*

*Discussion question:* How can we close the gap between the strong commitment to transparency and inclusion shown by the government, particularly through the anti-corruption agenda, and the prevailing reality of a culture of secrecy, propaganda and politics?

*Format:* Panel discussion

*Moderator:* Aidan Eyakuze

### Acting together

*Presenting data on political perspectives among citizens – views on parties and politicians, political actions, exertions of authority case studies and legal frameworks.*

*Discussion question:* How can we move the relationships between people and authorities from confrontational to more collaborative exchanges?

*Format:* Panel discussion

*Moderator (tbc):* Jenerali Ulimwengu

### Free exchange

*Presenting data on citizens' views on democracy, freedoms, case studies of the benefits and experiences of free expression in Tanzania and legal frameworks.*

*Discussion question:* Is there fear of a free exchange of ideas and information among some government officials? Does this fear subvert our freedom?

*Format:* Moderated conversation

*Moderator (tbc):* Maria Sarungi

### Creative space

Competitive exhibition featuring Tanzanian artists in celebration of democracy, freedom and public space in Tanzania.

Comedians and musicians

Theatre

### Proposed Panelists

Dr Hassan Abbas, Department of Information Services

Professor Bashiru Ali, University of Dar es Salaam

Advocate Benedict Ishabakaki, Hivos Tanzania

Zitto Kabwe, MP - Kigoma Urban, ACT-Wazalendo

Dr Nderakindo Kessey, NCCR-Mageuzi

Gwamaka Kifukwe, Uongozi Institute

Engineer James Mbatia, MP-Vunjo, NCCR-Mageuzi

Halima Mdee, MP-Kawe, Chadema

Maxence Melo, Jamii Forums

Gratian Mukoba, Tanzania Teachers' Union

Job Ndugai, Speaker of the National Assembly

Humphrey Polepole, Chama cha Mapinduzi

Ado Shaibu, ACT-Wazalendo

John Shibuda, Political Parties' Forum

Ernest Sungura, Tanzania Media Foundation

## REFERENCES

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- <http://www.twaweza.org/uploads/files/Analysis%20-%20Media%20Services%20Bill%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

### **The Cybercrimes Act and social media**

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- <http://www.africanews.com/2017/09/29/another-tanzanian-newspaper-banned-for-criticizing-the-government/>

### **Ban on political party rallies and meetings**

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### **Leaders' statements against human rights**

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- <http://www.mwananchi.co.tz/habari/Makonda-awashtua-haki-za-binadamu/1597578-3359424-5269hq/index.html>
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