



Press Release | 5 July 2018

**6 out of 10 citizens say freedom for opposition parties, civil society and the media has declined over the past three years**  
***9 out of 10 citizens still prefer multiparty democracy***

**5 July 2018, Dar es Salaam:** Across a range of indicators of democracy, the majority of citizens say there is less freedom now than there was three years ago. Citizens feel that freedom has diminished for: opposition parties to hold rallies and speak their mind (64%), the media to criticize or report government mistakes (62%), and for independent groups to voice their views, hold meetings (58%). Half of citizens also feel they personally have less freedom to voice their own political views (54%). But support for multiparty democracy remains strong, with 9 out of 10 citizens (84%) preferring to have many political parties.

These findings were released by Twaweza in two research briefs titled *Captains of their own ship? Citizens' thoughts on participation and demonstrations* and *Speaking truth to power: Citizens' views on politics in Tanzania*. The briefs are 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 1,241 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (excluding Zanzibar) in April 2018.

Citizens also want more transparent accountability: most citizens (59%) want the President to explain government spending of taxpayer money to Parliament, and an even larger proportion (78%) want the President to always obey the law and abide by court decisions.

Citizen support for the rights of political opposition is also increasing. More citizens (37%) now think opposition parties should criticize and monitor the government to hold it to account in-between elections than was the case in 2016 (20%), and more citizens think opposition parties should be allowed to hold meetings this year (64%) compared to 2016 (51%). In terms of the existing ban on opposition rallies and meetings, 5 out of 10 citizens oppose (48%) while 4 out of 10 support (40%) it.

Citizens themselves say they are willing to take action to hold government to account including by joining together with others to raise an issue (97% are willing) and talk to the media (89% express willingness) but in the past year far few citizens actually did these things (44% acted together, 5% contacted the media). However, 7 out of 10 citizens (71%) did attend government meetings in the past year. Citizens see attendance at decision-making meetings as the best way they can be part of government (53%).

When it comes to stronger actions, very few citizens express willingness to take these on. One out of four (27%) say they would be willing to participate in a demonstration on an issue that does not please them while 65% say they are not, this is higher than in 2016 when 50% were unwilling to participate in demonstrations. This does not vary much by age, gender or location but opposition party supporters are twice as likely (45%) to be willing to demonstrate than other groups. The main reason given for not wanting to participate in demonstrations is fear of violence or disrupting the peace (44%).

Despite this general lack of willingness to participate in demonstrations, citizens were more open to the demonstrations planned for 26 April 2018. This can be highlighted by comparing data collected around the planned UKUTA protests in 2016. Fewer than three out of ten citizens (25%) were aware of the demonstrations planned for 26 April, while 2 out of 10 were aware of UKUTA (19%). After the demonstrations were explained, close to half (42%) supported the 26 April demonstrations compared to 19% who supported the UKUTA demonstrations. And finally, 2 out of 10 said they were willing to participate in the 26 April demonstrations compared to 1 out of 10 for UKUTA (19%).

Despite being less willing to take strong actions like demonstrations and tax evasion, citizens are clearly unhappy with the status quo. Since 2016, approval ratings for all elected representatives have been declining. When comparing 2016 to 2018, 78% approve of village leaders then compared to 56% now; ward councilors have the support of 74% of people in 2016 compared to 45% in 2018, and MPs' approval ratings have fallen from 68% to 44%.

When it comes to the President the drop is steeper; starting from 96% in 2016, the highest recorded rating for the country, to 55% in 2018, the lowest rating in history for the country. Despite this, citizens largely continue to support CCM candidates. More than half would vote for CCM candidates for Councilor (51%), MP (51%), and President (55%).

Support for CCM as a party has remained relatively stable in recent years with 63% of citizens saying they felt closest to CCM in 2017 compared to 58% in 2018. However, support for CCM has dropped more in rural areas meaning the party now enjoys similar levels of support in both rural (59%) and urban (56%) areas. Support for Chadema has also decreased, from 25% in 2015, down to 16% in 2018. A growing number of people do not actually feel close to any political party (17% in 2017, 24% in 2018).

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, said: *"Citizens strongly support democratic values but they feel that these are now under threat. Across a range of measures citizens have spoken clearly: they are looking for accountability but they feel their demands are not being met. As a result and because of the economic uncertainty they are experiencing, they are expressing growing levels of disapproval of their elected representatives."*

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#### **Notes to Editors**

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at [www.twaweza.org/](http://www.twaweza.org/) [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti), Twaweza Tanzania (Facebook) @Twaweza\_NiSisi (Twitter)
- 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 (OGP) and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD).