



Press Release  
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## Half of citizens feel security in their area has improved over the last year

*Yet 4 out of 10 have witnessed violence in public in the past year*

**27 July 2017, Dar es Salaam:** One out of two citizens (53%) say the security situation in their neighbourhood has improved over the past year, 37% say it has stayed the same while 10% think it has gotten worse.

In line with people's own sense that security is improving, Sauti za Wananchi data show that in 2015, 57% of citizens had never felt unsafe walking in their neighbourhood, by 2017 this had risen to 71%. More generally in the past year, 3 out of 10 citizens have felt unsafe walking in their neighbourhood (29%) or feared crime in their home (26%). One in six (16%) have even stayed home due to fear of violence.

Despite some positive indications around security, levels of violence appear to be high. Four out of ten citizens (41%) have observed violence in public in the past year.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Safety first? Security, policing and justice in Tanzania*. 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 1,805 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar is not covered in these results) in April 2017.

When citizens are victims of crime, they are unlikely to turn to the police for help; one in four (26%) would do so. However these numbers vary by different groups: the wealthy (42%) and urban dwellers (41%) are most likely to turn to the police for assistance. Two out of three citizens (66%) would first turn to the village/street chairperson in the event that a crime was committed against them. At the same time, a substantial portion of citizens would not report the crimes at all: one out of five (21%) say they would never report crimes in their household and one out of ten (8%) say crime in their community is never reported.

Citizens may choose not to report crimes to the police specifically due to accessibility issues. One out of five citizens (17%) in urban areas would spend 30 minutes or more to get to their nearest police post while one out of four (27%) have no police post at all in their ward. The situation is worse in rural areas where half of citizens (50%) report having no police post in their ward and 27% spend more than 30 minutes getting to the nearest post.

Despite potential difficulties in access, one in two citizens (47%) are satisfied with the service offered by the police and one in four (26%) are dissatisfied. There appears to be no link between how close to a police post citizens are and how satisfied they are with police service.

When police are not present, aside from village/street chairs, citizens may also have access to protection from local militias known as sungusungu. Four in ten citizens (41%) report having one of

these groups in their neighbourhood. These groups are more common in rural (42%) than urban areas (32%). Among those who have sungusungu in their neighbourhood, a significant majority (78%) are satisfied with the services provided and say that the security situation in their area has improved since the introduction of the militia.

When it comes to the justice system, citizens are less confident. Three out of four citizens (74%) think that rich people would rarely or never be punished according to the law for committing crimes. Citizens are similarly pessimistic about justice being served for many different groups of powerful members of society. At least two out of three think that the following people would rarely or never be punished for committing a crime: senior government officials (72%), police officers (69%), religious leaders (68%) and public servants (68%). In fact, the only people that most citizens think will always or often be punished according to the law are ordinary people (65%). However the number of citizens who think anyone, from ordinary citizens all the way to the wealthy, has impunity for crimes have dropped in all cases since 2015. In 2017 citizens are much more likely generally to believe that people will be punished for crimes they commit no matter who they are.

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, said: *“Underneath the headlines, security seems to be improving for most citizens. However this does not mean we should rest. The low levels of confidence expressed in the police as the first port of call for reporting crimes and the relatively high number of citizens who are dissatisfied with police services are worrying. Though sungusungu groups may be a stop-gap measure, this should not be used as an excuse for the police to abdicate their responsibilities. The police can make a deliberate effort to get closer to citizens – both physically, by establishing more police posts, and psychologically, by building trust and confidence.”*

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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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