



Press Release  
5 July 2016

## **Half of Mainland citizens do not know what has happened in Zanzibar since the last election 4 out of 10 think the re-elected President should be accepted as legitimate**

**5 July 2016, Dar es Salaam:** Zanzibar was a hotbed of activity during and after the October 2015 general election. Election results were annulled, with the Chairman of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission citing “violations of electoral law.” A re-election was set for March 2016. These decisions outraged the opposition and raised very serious concerns among members of the international community. Opposition leaders and supporters boycotted the re-election in protest. The result was the Chama Cha Mapinduzi incumbent, President Ali Mohamed Shein, winning the re-election easily.

Despite these dramatic twists and turns, more than half of citizens on the Mainland (53%) report that they do not know what has happened in Zanzibar since the October elections. On the other hand 4 out of 10 citizens are aware that a re-election took place on 20 March 2016 (43%) and that the October election results were annulled (39%). The main message is that some Mainland citizens have some ideas about the events that took place (annulment and re-election) but most are not clear on what has been happening in the islands.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Union Affairs: citizens’ views on recent developments in Zanzibar*. 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.

Despite uncertainty about the unfolding events, Mainland citizens nonetheless have strong opinions on what should happen to resolve the crisis. Close to a majority (42%) think that the President elected on 20 March 2016 should be recognized as legitimate. A further 20% think that the 20 March 2016 re-election was the right step to resolve the crisis. It is interesting that these are both positions held by the ruling party and Union Government. There is far less support among Mainland citizens for more conciliatory or opposition focused solutions such as declaring the CUF presidential candidate, Seif Shariff Hamad, the winner of the original October election (14%), entering into another coalition government (13%) or even just holding talks to find a peaceful resolution (8%).

Mainland citizens’ overall assessment of events also reflects the ruling party’s position on the matter. A significant majority of 6 out of 10 adults agree with the cancelling of the original results (59%) and having a re-election (60%). However, Mainland citizens are somewhat sympathetic to the opposition position: a full 39% agree with the opposition’s boycott of the re-election.

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, said “*In every dispute there are two sides to the story. Sauti za Wananchi data clearly show that Mainland Tanzanians have largely absorbed the official line on the events that unfolded in Zanzibar. Yet they are aware that they are missing some of the story and*

*many of them are supportive of the opposition's actions in response to the annulment of the original vote and re-election. The Union government, and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar face a huge task: to unite citizens and drive progress forward together. A majority of mainland Tanzanians said they knew nothing of what happened in Zanzibar in October 2015. This is a worrying sign of weakness in our Union. If we want to protect and to strengthen it, we all have a duty to stay vigilant about developments in Zanzibar.*

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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)
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