



## Press Release

### **Violence in public is much more frequent than theft But citizens often do not get the police assistance they need**

**19 February 2014, Dar es Salaam:** Almost half (46%) of all Tanzanians report having witnessed violence in public in the last six months as compared with one out of five (20%) who report having had something stolen from them. But half (49%) of the population has never had something stolen from them where as 4 out of 10 (37%) have never witnessed violence in public.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Are we safe? Citizens report on the country's state of security*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, a nationally representative mobile phone survey of households across Mainland Tanzania.

Citizens report that most cases that they have heard of when a person is threatened, beaten, stoned or killed are carried out by a mob or individual rather than the police or the army. For example, one out of five (19%) of citizens have heard of someone being killed by a mob while only two out of fifty (4%) have heard of someone being killed by the police. However, citizens also report that community police are most often responsible when someone is threatened, beaten or stoned.

When they experience crime, citizens are most likely to turn to the police, although only half (47%) of them would do so. This is higher in urban areas where 6 out of 10 (59%) people report that they would turn to the police as compared to rural areas, where 4 out of 10 (39%) would. This could be attributable to the presence of police in communities; nationally, according to village executive officers and urban neighbourhood chairpersons, 6 out of 10 (62%) communities have no police presence. Urban areas fare better with 4 out of 10 (36%) streets lacking police while in rural areas this is closer to 8 out of 10 (76%) villages that report having no police officers.

When asked why people might not report crime to the police, Tanzanians blame corruption or lack of care. One out of five (22%) report that the issue is that they would be asked for money and the same number say that the police would not listen or care.

*Sauti za Wananchi* also investigated people's perceptions about the justice system. When people report crime to the police, it is fair for them to expect that the police will attempt to catch the criminal and then try and sentence them according to the law. Overall, Tanzanians have little faith that this is the case. Half of them (52%) believe that if an ordinary citizen committed a crime, they would not be punished according to the law. Worryingly, citizens also perceive inequality in the eyes of the law: 7 out of 10 (67%) believe that a rich person would not be punished for a crime and 6 out of 10 believe that religious leaders, police officers, senior government officials and public officials will not be penalized for their crimes.

Rakesh Rajani, Head of Twaweza, said *"With confidence in the justice system at a low point and non-formal means such as mob justice being open to abuse, the country faces a serious challenge to ensure*

*public security. While expanding formal means of security and resourcing the sector adequately may be part of the solution, the situation may need more creative, out-of-the-box thinking. These issues deserve greater public debate, including in the constitutional assembly process.”*

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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 is a ten year citizen-centered initiative, focusing on large-scale change in East Africa. Twaweza believes that lasting change requires bottom-up action, and seeks to foster conditions and expand opportunities through which millions of people can get information and make change happen in their own communities directly and by holding government to account.
- You can follow Twaweza’s work

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