



# Are we safe?

## Citizens report on the country's state of security



### 1. Introduction

Open the newspaper on any given day, and you will find stories related to violence and theft. For example, *The Citizen* newspaper's headlines on 7 January 2014 included "Police hunt for robbers who killed 2 'bodaboda' operators", "Chadema supporters clash in Dar" and "One dead, police move in as mob goes on rampage and loots mine". However, newspapers are said to prefer sensationalism, seeking out incidents with high headline value rather than the balanced truth. So how likely is any such headline event to affect the life of the average Tanzanian? How often have people actually been victims or witnesses of crime? And what is their recourse when crimes are committed? Do people believe that they can rely on the justice system?

*Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative mobile phone survey, seeks answers to these and other questions around security in Mainland Tanzania. This brief presents nine facts on security in Tanzania using the most recent data available. The findings are based on the eighth round of *Sauti za Wananchi* ([www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti)). Calls were made between 3 and 17 October 2013; data include responses from 1662 households. This brief also presents findings from the Afrobarometer surveys and the *Sauti za Wananchi* baseline survey which was implemented between October and December 2012.

The key findings, based on respondent reports, are:

- 49% of Tanzanians have never had anything stolen, but 20% had something stolen in the last six months
- 46% of Tanzanians recently observed violence in public
- In more than half of all villages (or streets) in Tanzania, no police officer is posted
- Tanzanians are not aware of the police and fire emergency numbers
- Corruption and slow response are the main barriers to reporting crime to the police
- 45% of Tanzanians felt unsafe walking in their neighbourhood at least once in the last year

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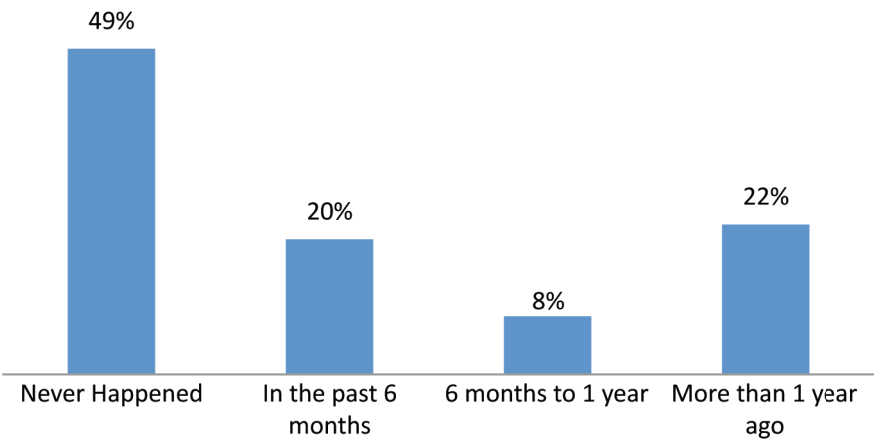


## 2. Nine facts about security in Tanzania

### Fact 1: 20% of Tanzanians report cases of theft in the last six months

For sustainable economic growth the security of a person's or a community's money and property is crucial: the better the security, the lower the costs of protection and the more attractive it is to invest. As Figure 1 illustrates, one in two Tanzanians have never had anything stolen. However, one out of five had something of value stolen in the last six months.

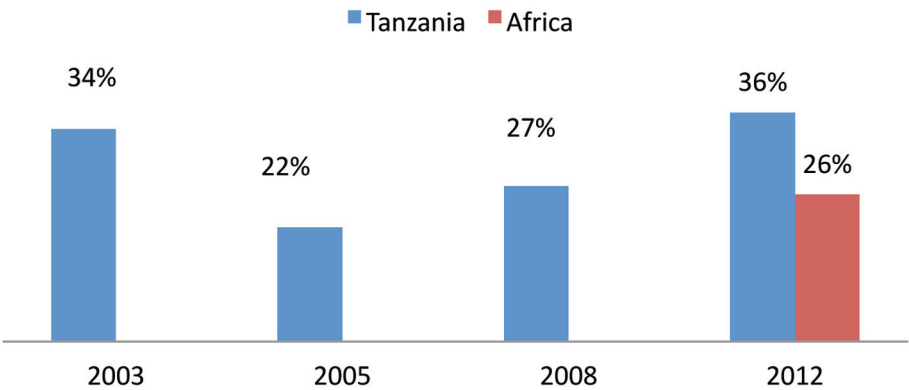
Figure 1: When was the last time money or anything of value was stolen from you?



Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

The Afrobarometer survey ([www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)) can be used to put these numbers in long-term perspective, see Figure 2. Afrobarometer asks whether anyone in the respondent's family had anything stolen from their home during the past year. The data suggest an upward trend in theft in Tanzania since 2005. The Afrobarometer data also show that theft in Tanzania is currently higher than the average for Africa as a whole (36% versus 26%).

Figure 2: Experienced theft in the home

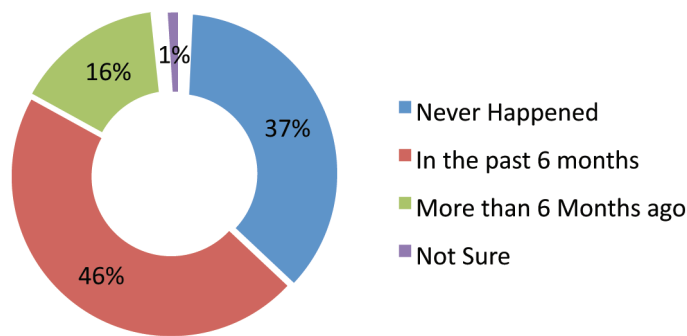


Source: Afrobarometer surveys

**Fact 2: 46% of Tanzanians recently observed violence in public**

Almost half of Tanzanians (46%) report having observed violence in public within the past six months.

**Figure 3: When was the last time you or your household member observed violence in public?**



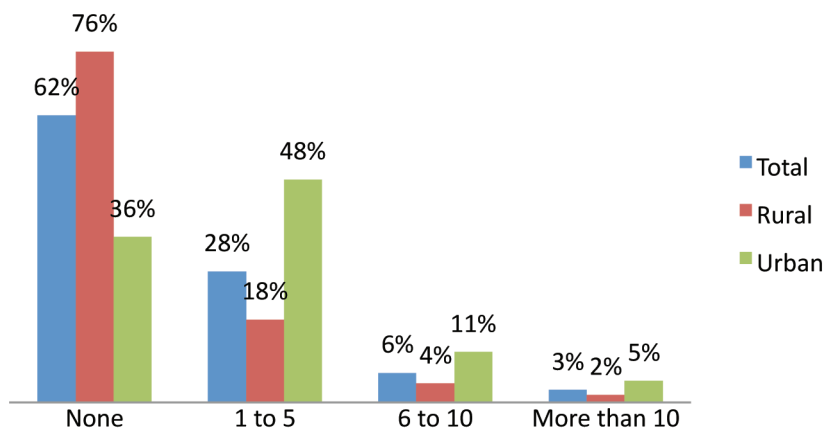
**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

Only small minorities are also aware of security incidents across the country reported in the media. Respondents reported to be aware of the following incidents: Arusha church bombings (May 2013 17%); Mtwara gas riots (June 2013, 13%); Chadema rally bombings in Arusha (June 2013, 11%) and Zanzibar acid attacks on British volunteers (August 2013, 8%).

**Fact 3: More than half of communities in Tanzania don’t have police officers**

According to interviews with the village executive officers and urban neighborhood (‘street’) chairpersons, 62% of communities in Tanzania do not have a designated police officer. The situation is worse in rural areas where 76% of the villages report not having a police officer posted there.

**Figure 4: Number of police officers in a village / street**

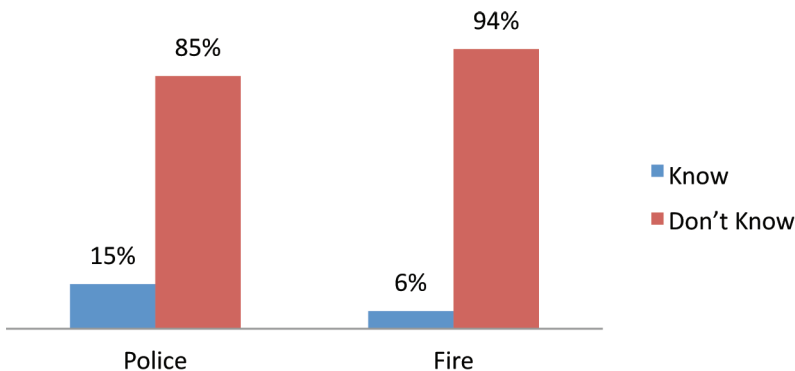


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Baseline Survey - Community, October - December 2012.

**Fact 4: Tanzanians are not aware of the police and fire emergency numbers**

Crime and fires occur unexpectedly, but once they occur the police and fire fighters respectively are often better placed to control the situation than ordinary citizens. Mobile telephony has grown over time so many Tanzanians should have access to the means to contact the police and fire services. However, only 15% of citizens know the police emergency number while only 6% know the fire emergency number. Our survey did not interrogate the functionality of these emergency numbers.

**Figure 5: Do you know the police and fire emergency numbers?**

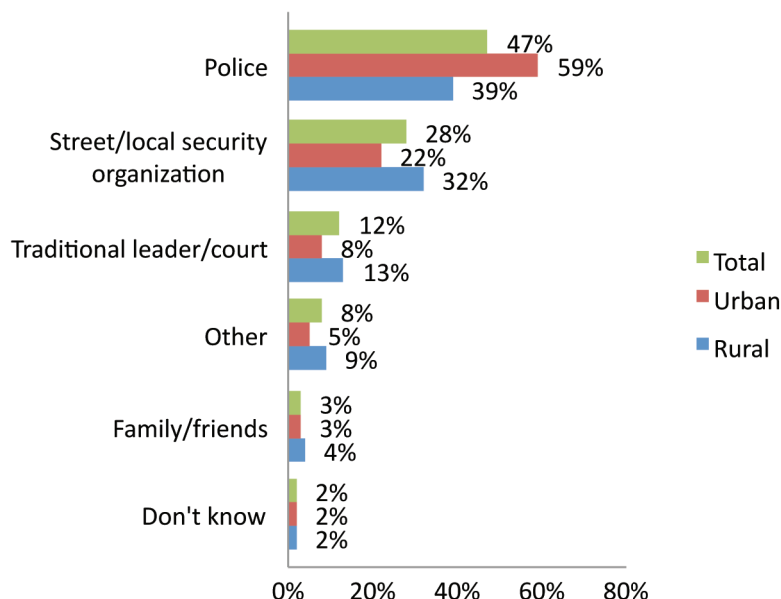


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

**Fact 5: In case of crime 47% of Tanzanians turn to police first**

Asked who they would turn to in case they were victim of a crime, most Tanzanians indicate the police and local security organizations. A majority of urban residents mention the police. Although rural citizens also largely turn to the police, similar numbers report turning to local security organisations. Very few indicate not knowing who to turn to.

**Figure 6: if you were a victim of crime in this country who, if anyone, would you go to first for assistance?**

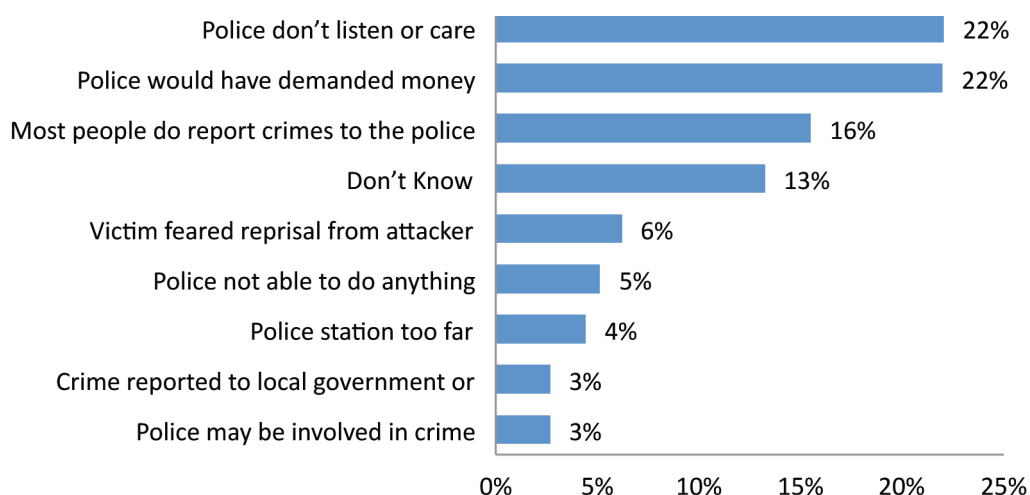


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

## **Fact 6: Corruption and slow-response are barriers to reporting crime**

*Sauti za Wananchi* respondents were asked to indicate what barriers, if any, they think citizens might encounter when considering reporting crimes to the police.

**Figure 7: What do you think is the main reason that many people do not report crimes like thefts or attacks to the police when they occur?**

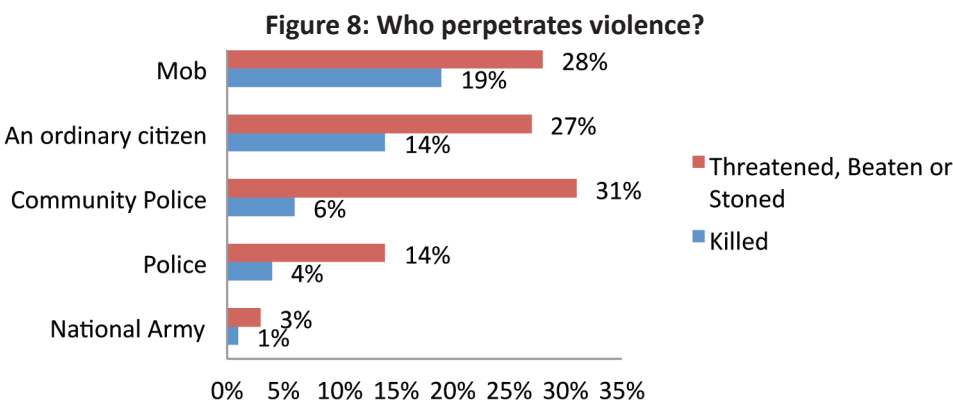


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

The respondents outlined the following as the two main issues: police ask for bribes (22%) and police don't listen or care (22%). On the other hand 16% of respondents mentioned that people do report crimes to the police. We note that these numbers differ somewhat from the Afrobarometer 2012 results, where distance to a police station is mentioned as the main obstacle.

**Fact 7: Killings most frequently attributed to mobs**

When asked whether they have ever heard of anyone in their neighborhood being threatened, beaten, or stoned by either community police, an ordinary citizen, a mob, the police or the army, 54% say yes. In addition 31% report having heard that someone in their neighborhood was killed by one of these groups. In case someone was killed, this was reportedly most often (19%) done by a mob. When someone was threatened, beaten or stoned, this was reportedly done by community police in most cases (31%).



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

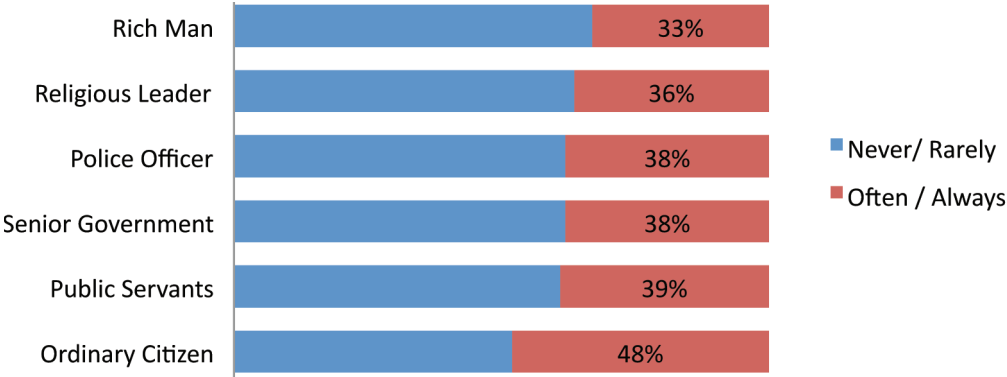
Note again that these numbers are not based on first-hand observations but are incidents that were “ever heard” of by respondents. Taken at face value, these data mean that a Tanzanian on average is much more likely to be threatened, beaten or killed by a fellow citizen or group of citizens than by the police or army.

Citizens were also asked to provide their understanding of the context in which these events took place. When considering killings by a mob and by an individual citizen, the reported underlying issue in most cases was stealing (in 74% of the mob cases, 47% of the individual cases).

**Fact 8: Most Tanzanians don't believe in the justice system**

Do Tanzanians believe that a person who has committed a crime will be punished according to the law? Figure 9 shows first that respondents have little faith that any person will be punished according to the law. Secondly, there is a view that rich and powerful people are more likely to escape punishment than ordinary citizens.

**Figure 9: If the following person steals or commits any other crime, will he or she be punished according to the law?**

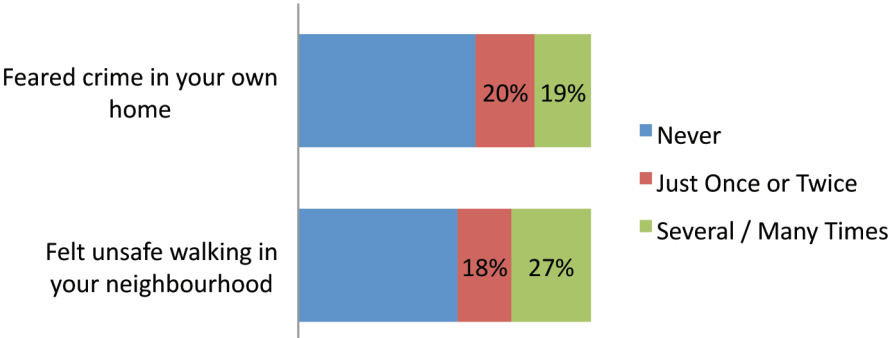


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

**Fact 9: Many Tanzanians are worried about safety in their communities**

Overall, 39% of the respondents reported fearing a crime in their home; 45% mention that they felt unsafe walking in their neighborhoods at least once. This resonates with Afrobarometer data which show that 43% of Tanzanians fear crime in their home at least once. The Afrobarometer data further show that this statistic for Tanzania is high compared to the average for Africa of 32%.

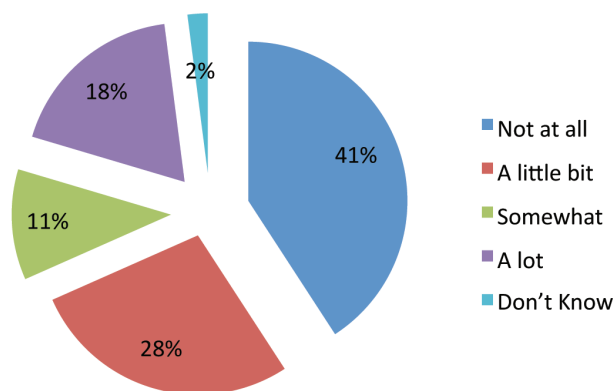
**Figure 10: Over the past year how often, if ever, have you been afraid or felt unsafe?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

It appears that citizens are more fearful during election time. More than half (57%) of the respondents expressed some fear of becoming a victim of political violence, for example compared with the 45% who felt unsafe walking in their neighborhoods at least once over the last year.

**Figure 11: During the last general election did you fear becoming a victim of political violence?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 8, October 2013.

### 3. Conclusion

This brief reports on security as experienced by citizens of Mainland Tanzania. The brief finds that – as in many other societies – Tanzanians experience crime and fear: money and other things of value are sometimes stolen from citizens and they observe and hear stories of violence in their neighborhoods.

Since the state has a monopoly on the use of force, citizens are supposed to report such incidents to the police who are charged with the responsibility of keeping peace, enforcing the law, protecting people and their property as well as investigating crimes. For justice according to the law to be done after a crime has been committed, the perpetrator needs to be correctly identified, apprehended and then convicted by a court of law.

Citizens in Tanzania look to the police for assistance but access to the formal security system is not easy, particularly in rural areas. In many villages there are no police officers. In general police officers are not always perceived as helpful and people typically do not know the police (or fire brigade) emergency phone number.

As a result, people often resort to using “non-formal” ways to deal with those identified as criminals. It is not uncommon for Tanzanians to have heard of someone in their neighborhood being killed by a mob. These incidents often follow a case of theft. Another side of this coin is the fact that many Tanzanians do not believe that criminals will be punished according to the law, particularly if they are wealthy or in a position of authority.

With confidence in the justice system at a low point and non-formal means of 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. This may include expanding community policing – which emphasizes closer collaboration between the police and citizens; better regulating traditional security groups; and promoting ways in which core structures of local governance (e.g. village councils, school committees) can be made more responsive to citizen voices and demands. These issues deserve greater public debate, including in the constitutional assembly process.