

World Press Freedom Day 2021

Ugandan citizens' experiences and opinions on the media

This data packet presents citizens' experiences and opinions on the media in Uganda. The data comes from Twaweza's *Sauti za Wananchi* survey, a nationally-representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey of public opinion and citizens' experiences. Further details are available from www.twaweza.org/sauti.

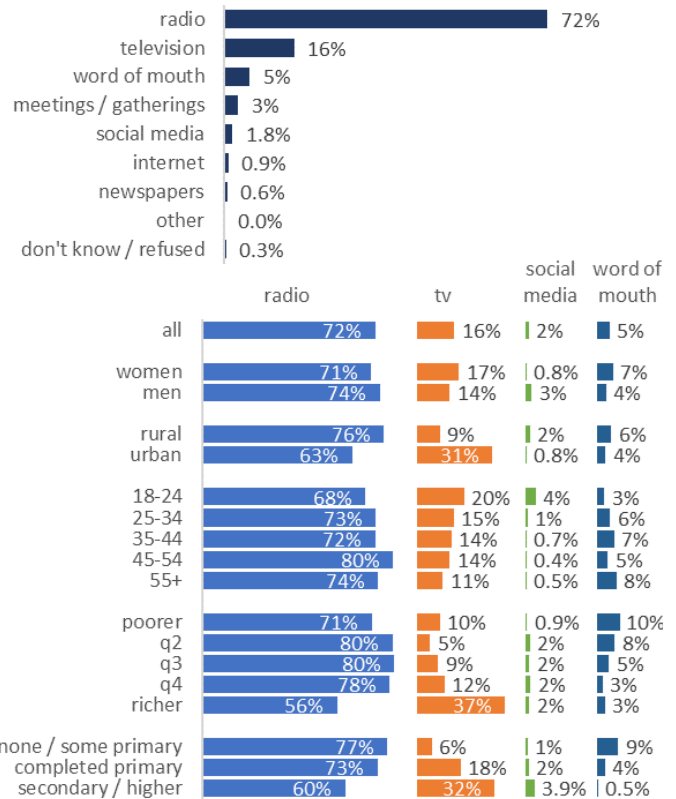
Insight 1. Most citizens point to radio as their main source of information, though a growing number point to TV

Seven out of ten citizens (72%) cite radio as their main source of information. This is well ahead of any other media, though has declined a little since 2017 (79%). The second-most widely cited source is TV, nearly doubling since 2017 (16% in 2020, 9% in 2017). Other sources of information remain very low in comparison.

Residents of urban areas, wealthier citizens and those with higher levels of education are more likely than other citizens to cite TV as their main source of information, and less likely to cite radio.

Social media is the main source of information for one out of twenty 18-24-year-olds (4.3%), and a similar number of those with higher levels of education (3.9%), but very low for everyone else. Word of mouth remains the main source of information for a significant number of poorer citizens (10%) those with no more than primary education (9%) and older citizens (8%).

Which media is your main source of information?



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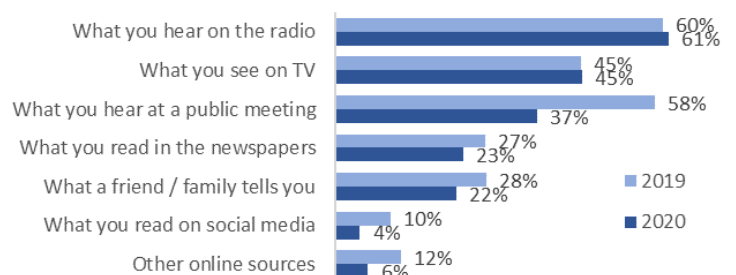
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi*, round 18 (Oct-Dec 2020), r12 (Sep-Oct 2019) and r2 (Nov 2017)

Insight 2. Citizens have more trust in what they hear on radio than information from other sources

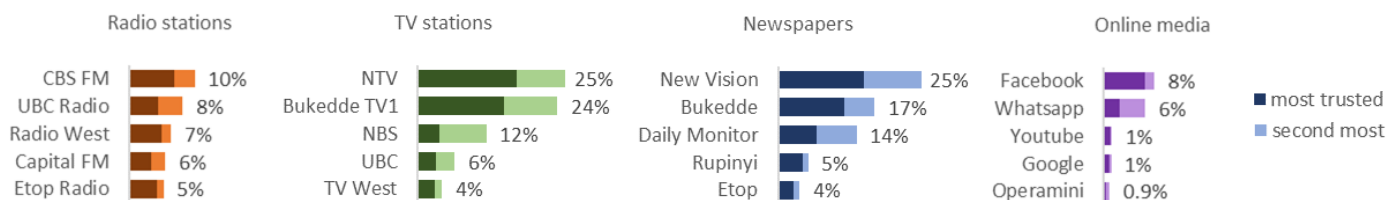
Six out of ten citizens (61%) report that they trust completely information heard on the radio. This is more than information from any other type of source, and consistent with 2019. This is followed by information seen on TV, trusted by close to half (45%). The number of citizens who trust completely information obtained from other sources has fallen.

The most trusted TV stations in Uganda are NTV (rated as the most- or second-most-trusted station by 25%) and Bukedde TV1 (24%). The most trusted newspapers are New Vision (25%), Bukedde (17%) and Daily Monitor (14%). With radio, a large range of stations are rated as the most trusted by different citizens. The most widely trusted is CBS FM (10%), though it is worth noting that between 1,500 respondents, 226 different radio stations were named as most trusted.

% who trust completely the following information:



What are your two most trusted media houses for each type? (top five shown in each case)



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi*, round 18 (Oct-Dec 2020) and r12 (Sep-Oct 2019)

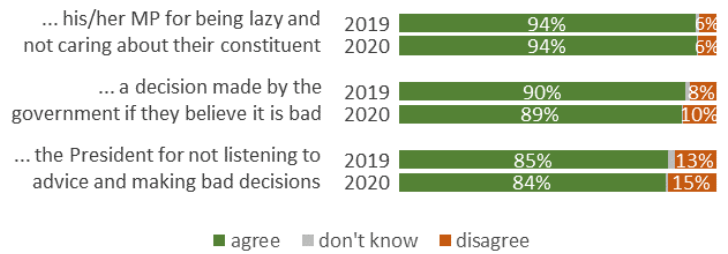
Insight 3. Most citizens say people should be free to criticise leaders, but a growing number say they are not free to do so in practice

Large majorities of citizens say people should be free to criticise their MP (94%), government (89%) and the President (84%). These figures are largely unchanged since 2019.

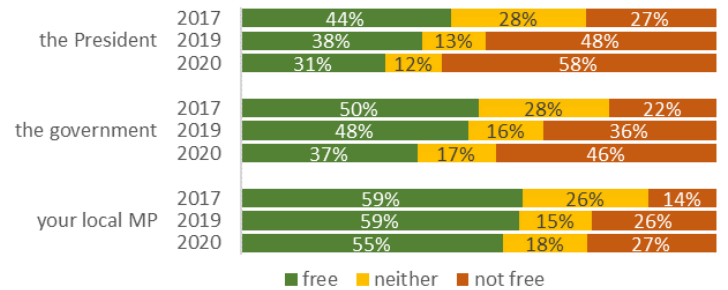
However, a growing number say that in practice they are not free to criticise leaders. Six out of ten citizens (58%) say they are not free in practice to criticise the President, up from three out of ten (27%) in 2017. Similarly, fewer citizens now say they are free to criticise the government in general than in previous years.

The number of citizens who feel able to criticise their MP is more stable, remaining at just over half (55%) down very slightly from 2017 and 2019 (59%).

A citizen should be free to criticise ...?



How free are you to criticise information or statements provided by the following individuals or institutions?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi, round 18 (Oct-Dec 2020), r12 (Sep-Oct 2019) and r2 (Nov 2017)

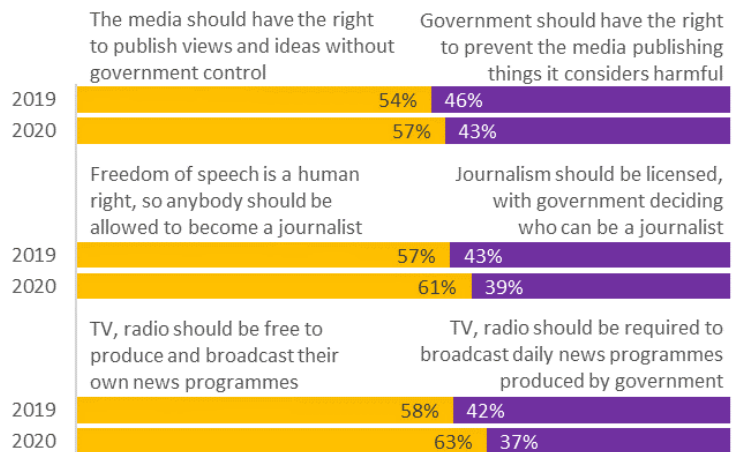
Insight 4. Support for freedom of the press has grown a little over the past year

A majority of citizens (57%) say the media should be able to publish without government control, preferring this statement over the alternative, that the government should have the right to control what the media can publish.

Similarly, a majority (61%) say that anybody should be allowed to become a journalist, rather than this being a licenced profession under government control. A majority (63%) also say that TV and radio should be able to broadcast their own news programmes, rather than being required to broadcast news produced by government.

In all these cases, support for freedom of the press has grown a little over the past year.

Which statement do you agree with more?



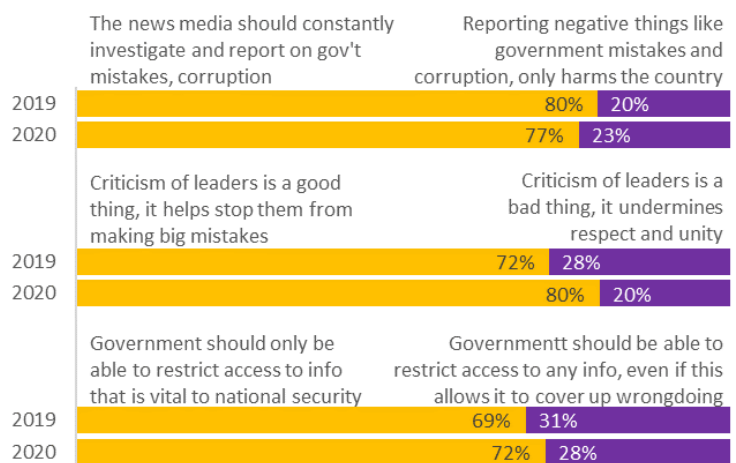
Source: Sauti za Wananchi, round 18 (Oct-Dec 2020) and r12 (Sep-Oct 2019)

Insight 5. Public support for freedom of expression is strong, and growing

Large majorities of citizens prefer statements in support of freedom of expression over statements that favour restrictions. Eight out of ten citizens (77%) say the media should constantly report on government mistakes and corruption (77%), preferring this to the view that negative reporting is harmful. Similarly, most (80%) say that citizens should be allowed to criticise national leaders since it helps prevent mistakes, leaving two out of ten (20%) who prefer the alternative: that freedom to criticise leaders is harmful. Most also believe that government should be able to restrict access to information only on national security matters (72%).

On balance, across these cases, support for freedom of expression has increased since 2019.

Which statement do you agree with more?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi, round 18 (Oct-Dec 2020) and r12 (Sep-Oct 2019)