



Press Release  
25 January 2018

**4 out of 5 citizens do not think senior government officials, the wealthy or politicians will be punished according to the law for committing crime  
But 9 out of 10 think that ordinary citizens will be**

**25 January 2018, Nairobi:** When asked if the certain types of people would be punished according to the law for committing a crime, most citizen believe there are parallel justice systems in operation in Kenya. One out of five think senior government officials (21%), the wealthy (21%), or politicians (22%) would be punished by law while nine out of ten (88%) think ordinary citizens would face the law if they committed a crime.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Are we safer? Kenyans' views on security, policing and extremism*. 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 1,705 respondents across Kenya between September and October 2017.

In addition to doubts about the equity of the justice system, citizens are split on their levels of satisfaction with the police. Half of Kenyans (48%) are satisfied with the service provided by the police force while one out of three (33%) are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with police services does not appear to be linked to proximity to the nearest police post. Residents of urban areas (45%) are more likely to report having a police post within 30 minutes of their house compared to rural dwellers (30%) but more rural residents are satisfied with police services compared to their urban compatriots (53% vs. 41%). Poor citizens and women are also more likely to be satisfied with the police than richer citizens and men (51% of women vs. 45% of men and 53% of poorer Kenyans compared to 37% of wealthier citizens).

Nonetheless two out of three citizens (66%) would turn to the police if a crime was committed. The next most popular source of help is the street or village chair (21%).

And overall, Kenyans are slightly more optimistic about the security situation compared to last year. Four out of ten (42%) say the security situation in their area has improved over the past three months, compared to 38% who said the same in 2016. At the same time, more Kenyans said security had deteriorated in their area in the past three months in 2017 than in 2016 (22% compared to 18%).

In addition, from 2016 to 2017, more Kenyans report never being afraid of crime in their home (2016: 59%, 2017: 64%) or feeling unsafe in their neighbourhood (2016: 56%, 2017: 62%). In both years a significant one in three citizens (34%) report staying home due to fear of violence outside.

Nonetheless, the largest grouping of Kenyans reports that there is no major threat to security in their community (37%). The most mentioned threat is theft which was cited by one out of four citizens (24%). Interestingly, the next most mentioned issue was youth unemployment (9%).

When it comes to theft, citizens have different experiences. One out of four (26%) have had something stolen from them in the past six months, and one out of three (33%) in the last year. Younger citizens are twice as likely to experience theft than older Kenyans (32% of 18-24 years olds, 16% of 55+ year olds had something of value stolen in the past six months).

Despite more Kenyans referring to theft as the major threat to security in their community, four out of ten (40%) report observing violence in public and one out of ten (9%) have been victims of violence in the past six months.

Only one out of fifty Kenyans (2%) mention terrorism as a major security threat in their community but when asked directly, eight out of ten (78%) think al-Shabaab is a major threat to the country. In addition, there is increasing support for Kenyan troops to remain in Somalia (2016: 26% thought they should, 2017: 30% do). Yet Kenyans continue to think that radical groups grow due to the lack of employment in the country (50%) and the solution to combatting their popularity is to provide employment opportunities (56%).

Victor Rateng of *Sauti za Wananchi* at Twaweza, said: *“The data provide reasons for both celebration and reflection. Citizens see improvements in the general security situation. However the high incidence of theft, significant levels of dissatisfaction with police services and the perceived inequality of the law remain major concerns. Citizens need to feel that the law is enforced fairly and honestly. Opening up feedback channels, reporting on responses to or actions taken on complaints and educating the public on how to access the mechanisms of justice may be important places to start.”*

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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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