

# World Press Freedom Day 2023

## East African citizens' experiences and opinions of media and freedom of expression

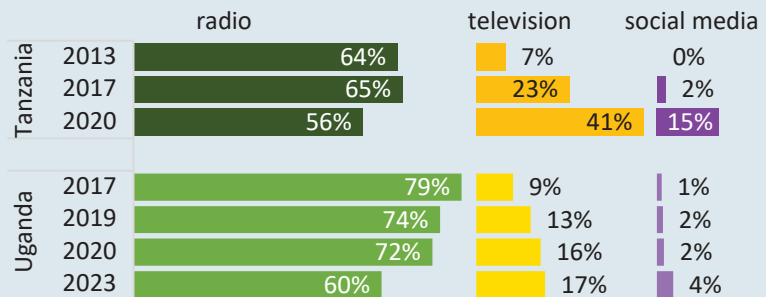
This data packet presents the experiences and opinions of East African citizens on freedom of expression and the media. The data come from two sources: i) Twaweza's Sauti za Wananchi survey, a nationally-representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey of public opinion and citizens' experiences; and ii) The Afrobarometer surveys of public opinion across the continent.

### Insight 1. Radio is citizens' main source of news, but TV and social media are growing rapidly

Patterns of media use have changed dramatically in the past few years. Radio leads, though its dominance is declining. In Uganda, for example, eight out of ten citizens (79%) said radio was their main source of information in 2017; but by 2023 this has dropped to six out of ten (60%).

Over the same period, TV and social media use has risen sharply, most particularly in Tanzania.

### What is your main source of information / news?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi, 2013-2023

### Insight 2. Media access varies considerably across different demographic groups

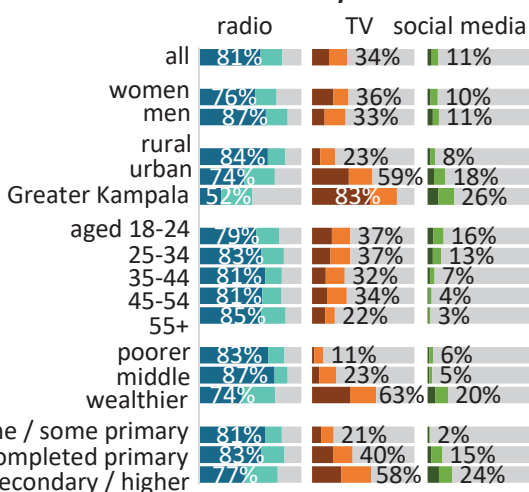
There is wide variation between different demographic groups when it comes to accessing different types of media, particularly TV and social media

In Uganda, for example, wealthier citizens are over five times as likely as poorer citizens to access news on TV. Similarly, TV and social media access is much higher in urban areas, and among better-educated citizens.

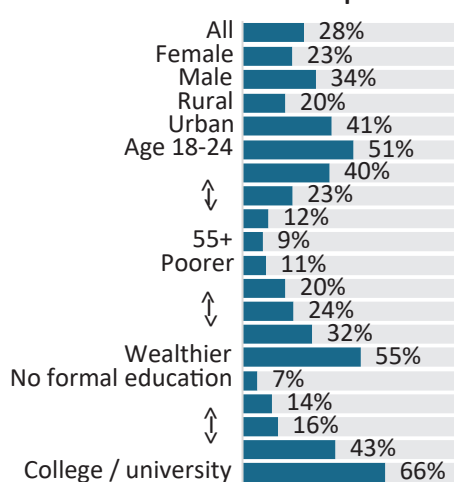
In Kenya and Tanzania, younger citizens, those in urban areas, wealthier citizens, those with higher levels of education and those in formal employment are all far more likely than other citizens to use the internet or social media.

In effect, TV, the internet and social media are almost exclusively used by a small minority of citizens: younger, wealthier and better-educated residents of urban areas.

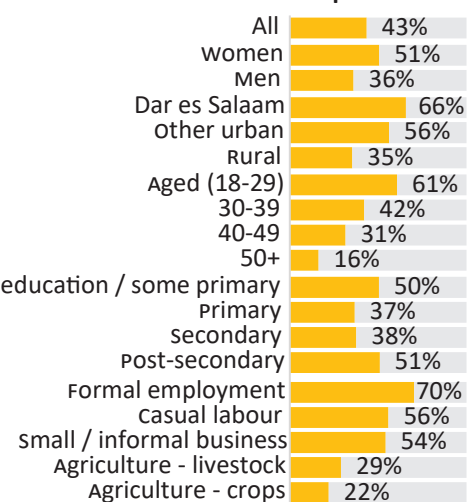
#### Uganda: Which media do you use to get information? Which is your main source?



#### Kenya: Percentage who used the internet in the past week



#### Tanzania: Percentage who used social media in the past month

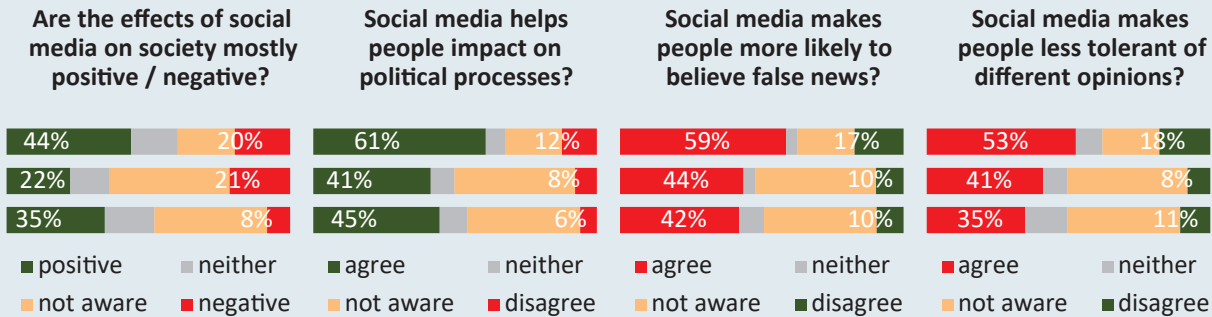


Source: Sauti za Wananchi, Uganda 2023, Kenya 2018, Tanzania 2020

**Insight 3. Citizens see social media overall as a good thing, but also have some significant concerns**

Overall, citizens see social media as having a positive effect on society, including helping people engage in political processes.

However, citizens also have concerns about the effect of social media on fake news and intolerance. These views and concerns are largely consistent across the region, though confidence in social media is lower in Tanzania.



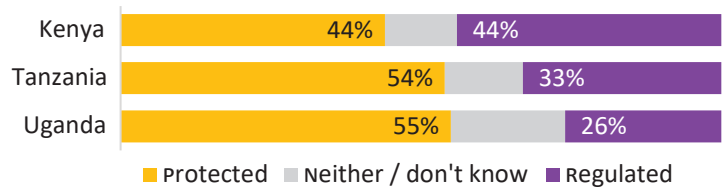
Source: Afrobarometer round 8 (2019-2021)

**Insight 4. Most citizens think unrestricted access to the internet and social media should be protected, less so in Kenya**

In Tanzania and Uganda, a clear majority of citizens feel that access to the internet and social media should be unrestricted.

In Kenya, however, citizens are very evenly divided on whether any regulation or restrictions on the internet and social media are needed.

**Should unrestricted access to the internet and social media be protected, or should this be regulated?**



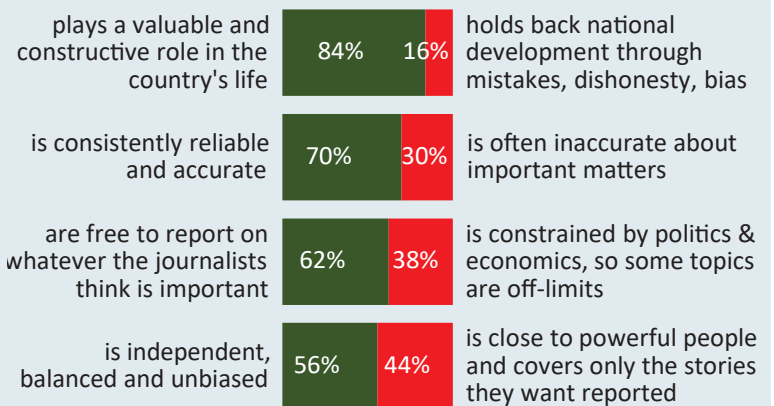
Source: Afrobarometer round 8 (2019-2021)

**Insight 5. Ugandan citizens believe the media play a valuable and constructive role in national life**

A clear majority of citizens (84%) say the Ugandan media plays a valuable and constructive role in national life, compared to just 16% who say the media holds the country back.

Most citizens also say the media are consistently reliable and accurate (70%), are sufficiently independent that they can freely report on whatever they think is important (62%), and are balanced and unbiased (56%).

**In practice, the Ugandan media ...**

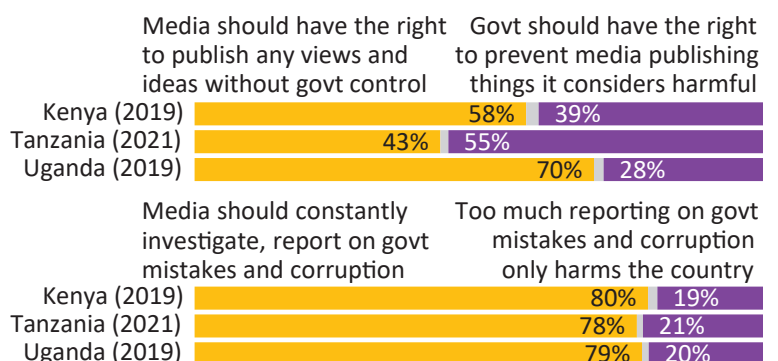


Source: Sauti za Wananchi, Uganda 2023

**Insight 6. Overall, most citizens in East Africa support freedom of the press**

In Kenya and Uganda, compared to Tanzania, more citizens show clear support for media independence, free from government control. Nevertheless, across all three countries, a large majority of citizens say the media should constantly investigate and report on government mistakes and corruption.

**Which statement do you agree with more?**



Source: Afrobarometer (2008-2021)