



Press Release

16 February 2024

Half of Tanzanian journalists have been threatened or harassed while working They point as well to financial and political factors that make it hard to cover certain stories

Friday 16 February 2024, Dar es Salaam: Half (50%) of journalists in Tanzania report that they have been threatened, harassed or assaulted at some time. Two out of ten (22%) have been arrested or detained by the authorities, and similar numbers have experienced sexual harassment or abuse (20%) or have had equipment or materials seized from them (20%).

Twaweza released these findings in research brief titled *Sauti za Waandishi: A survey of Tanzanian media practitioners*, based on data from a unique survey of 1,202 practicing journalists, editors and bloggers in Tanzania. The panel was formed from the membership databases of various media societies, primarily the Union of Tanzanian Press Clubs (UTPC), together with the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), the Media Institute of Southern Africa Tanzania Chapter (MISA-Tan), and Jamii Forums. Interviews were conducted by telephone between September 23 and November 7, 2023.

Most journalists have less permanent, less dependable forms of employment. Two out of ten (20%) describe their employment status as permanent, compared to six out of ten (60%) who say it is temporary and two out of ten (18%) who say it is occasional / as required. Half (50%) have a signed contract in place. Most journalists (63%) say it is hard to make a decent living from journalism, while very few (5%) say it is easy. One out of three journalists (36%) take on other paid work besides working in the media, and just two out of ten (19%) would want their son or daughter to become a journalist.

Journalists' experiences of risk are widespread. Half (50%) report that they have been threatened, harassed or assaulted at some time. They overwhelmingly point the finger at government officials as the main source of threats to their work: over half (56%) say government officials are the main source of threats, well ahead of any other group.

Almost all journalists (86%) say corruption exists in the sector to more than a small extent, including 36% who say it is widespread. The most common forms are payments for publishing (55%) or for not publishing (53%) certain stories. Almost all (95%) say accepting money from the people or institutions that are the subject of a story happens always (23%) or sometimes (72%). One out of ten (10%) report having "always" received gifts and money to influence content, and a further half (53%) say they have done so sometimes.

Most journalists feel that the media in Tanzania has limited freedom to operate independently, without censorship or interference by media owners, the government, powerful individuals and private companies. They see particular topics as being off limits: six out of ten journalists say they do not feel free to report on corruption (60%) or issues related to the armed forces (61%). They see economic challenges as a significant

constraint on the freedom of the media: half (52%) say that media outlets sometimes have to adapt their content in return for state advertising.

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, said: *“The media has a vital role to play in society – keeping us informed and holding those in power to account – and journalists are at the heart of this. And yet the environment in which they are working is far from ideal. They face threats and harassment just for doing their job, and they don’t earn a high level of income or have secure employment contracts. Are they perfect? Of course not! But we should recognise and value the important work they do, and we should all do whatever we can to make it easier for them to ask awkward questions and speak truth to power.”*

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Notes to Editors

- The briefs and relevant data can be accessed at www.twaweza.org
- Twaweza works through research, evidence and action to demonstrate how citizens can come together to collectively address their problems and make government work better for them; enable citizens' voices, interests and experiences to be heard and taken seriously in decision-making; and to promote enabling conditions for citizen engagement and government response in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. We have programs, staff and offices across all three countries and a globally respected learning, monitoring, and evaluation practice. Our flagship programs include *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement through powerful media partnerships and global leadership initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership. Follow us at Twaweza Tanzania (Facebook), @Twaweza_NiSisi (Twitter), and @Twaweza_EastAfrica (Instagram).