Zanzibar was a hotbed of activity during the October 2015 general election. Election results were annulled, with the Zanzibar Electoral Commission citing “violations of electoral law,” and a new election was set for March 2016. These decisions caused outrage among opposition leaders and supporters, who boycotted the new election in protest. As a result, the Chama Cha Mapinduzi incumbent, President Ali Mohamed Shein, won the March 2016 election.

So, what do citizens on the Mainland think about these developments? How much do they know about events in Zanzibar? And what is their opinion on the actions of the Government and the Zanzibari opposition?

Data for this brief come from Twaweza’s flagship Sauti za Wananchi survey. Sauti za Wananchi is a nationally-representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey. It is representative for Mainland Tanzania. Information on the overall methodology is available at www.twaweza.org/sauti. For this brief data were collected from 1,815 respondents from the second Sauti za Wananchi panel. This was the ninth round of calls to the new panel, conducted between 29 March and 12 April 2016.

Half of all citizens (53%) don’t know about events in Zanzibar

**Figure 1: Can you tell me what has happened in Zanzibar since the last general election?**

- Don’t know: 53%
- New election on 20 March 2016: 20%
- October election results annulled: 18%
- Opposition boycotted new election: 8%
- Many disturbances: 0.5%

6 out of 10 citizens agree with the canceling of the general election result (59%) and the decision to have a re-election (60%)

**Figure 2: Overall what is your opinion on:**

- Cancelling general election result: 59% (Agree), 40% (Disagree)
- Zanzibar having a new election: 60% (Agree), 39% (Disagree)
- Opposition boycott of new election: 39% (Agree), 60% (Disagree)

4 out of 10 citizens think that the winner of the re-election should be recognized as legitimate

**Figure 3: In your opinion which is the best way to handle the Zanzibar political crisis?**

- Recognize re-elected president as legitimate: 42%
- New election, as announced, on 20 March: 20%
- Declare Hamad winner of October election: 14%
- Form a coalition government: 13%
- Talk out differences to find peace: 8%
- Don’t know: 5%
- Boycott: 3%