CONFLICT SNAPSHOT
Tanzania

Introduction

Tanzania is one of the most stable countries in East Africa. However, it still faces important political, religious, and social challenges, including the marginalisation of youth and women, and high levels of poverty. Politics, criminality and land use are viewed as the major sources of localized conflicts in Tanzania. Moreover, across many regions, localised conflicts often lead to regular outbreaks of violence, destruction of property, and a general sense of insecurity. The country has also seen an increase of violent extremism attacks over the past years, a phenomenon spreading from neighbouring countries Kenya and Mozambique. The semiautonomous archipelago of Zanzibar has a history of contentious and often violent elections. 2020 was an important election year in Tanzania which saw the President reelected for another 5 year term, but amid allegations of shrinking democratic and civil society space.

Data collection and analysis

Data for this first conflict snapshot report for Tanzania was gathered from 18 to 29 September 2020, in Tandahimba and Mtwara Urban districts. This report was prepared by the Search for Common Ground (Search) Tanzania team, with support from Search’s COVID-19 Response Programming Team and Institutional Learning Team. For more information on the data collection methodology and tools used by Search for Common Ground for this research, click here.

To cite this report:

* This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Search for Common Ground and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Update: COVID-19 Measures and Impact on Conflict

On March 16th 2020, Tanzania reported the first case of COVID-19 in the Arusha region and later the pandemic spread wider to 17 Regions in Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar. The number of cases continued to rise to 509 cases and 21 deaths as of 21st May 2020, but since then no more official figures have been released. During this reporting period, the government put in place prevention measures, including complete closure of learning institutions, ban on public gatherings, and a fourteen days quarantine for people arriving from abroad. The government has kept the borders open and allowed the transport sector to transit goods and services within and across the country. The government also allowed religious worship gatherings to continue, albeit imposing prevention measures.

Like elsewhere, the COVID-19 measures have impacted the Tanzanian economy, particularly the informal sector. The prevention measures in Tanzania coupled with the restrictions imposed by neighbouring countries, such as limitations and bans on cross-border movement, has led to economic stagnation. The start of the pandemic in Tanzania was marked by fear and confusion among communities as public life in Tanzania continued with limited restrictions, while other countries went into lockdown. Parts of the population felt isolated and feared the government was not properly handling the situation. Information shared through social media, blogs, and other platforms on COVID-19 only exacerbated the situation and created greater mistrust in the government, including in the information shared on the pandemic by the government (i.e. statistics, data, etc.). Furthermore, the COVID-19 health services were limited to a few places, whereas the needs were felt throughout the country. Lastly, the handwashing measure imposed for public gatherings led to minor quarrels in areas where public services are provided, e.g. in hospitals handwashing is mandatory but some people refuse to do it causing quarrels with health personnel. This was mostly observed at the beginning of the crisis but for now most citizens comply with the health measures.

COVID-19’s Impact on Social Cohesion & Trust

Trust in media messaging on COVID-19 is average and marred by lack of official communication, whereas informal information sharing about COVID-19 is very high

More than half of respondents trust information shared on COVID-19 through the media, (very much or mostly)

32% have lower levels of trust (somewhat, rarely)

13% do not trust information

A large majority of respondents share information about COVID-19 heard on the media with family and friends

30% do not share information

This high level of information sharing among immediate networks – especially compared to our other research countries – could perhaps indicate that people have low trust in the (limited) information provided by the government, creating impetus for people to proactively share information with family and friends. For respondents who do not share information, they may be reluctant to do so given the prevailing environment of uncertainty around COVID-19 and the lack of updates from the government.

---

**Vertical cohesion remains high, but few Tanzanians rely on their government for COVID-19 assistance**

The data shows generally **high levels of trust in authorities and in COVID-19 responders**. However, few Tanzanians asked their government for COVID-19 support services and satisfaction with these services is somewhat low.

In the last three months, **only 31% of respondents asked for COVID-19 support services from the government**.

*The top requested services requested were:

- Health: 70%
- Freedom of movement: 39%*

Several factors may account for low levels of service requests, including limited availability of information about the pandemic in general, and about available services in particular; low levels of trust in the government and its pandemic response; and/or reluctance to request COVID-19 services in a context where public life continued largely as normal.

**Satisfaction with COVID-19 services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of satisfaction with services received</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly satisfied and satisfied</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never received a response</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Levels of satisfaction are lower among women and youth:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Levels of satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18–34 years</td>
<td>46% Highly satisfied and satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35+ years</td>
<td>53% Highly satisfied and satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lower satisfaction levels among youth align with findings from focus group discussions and key informant interviews, where participants reported that the disease causes worries among youth as many have lost their jobs during the pandemic. Additionally, KIs and FGDs revealed that COVID-19 services are difficult to access (e.g. food and health), due to financial difficulties.

**Respondents’ Trust in Government**

Most respondents agree (strongly agree or agree) that the government is doing its best to consider the needs of everyone equally when making decisions about COVID-19 services:

- *Trust*: 79%
- *Do not trust*: 9%
- *No opinion*: 11%

The high expressed degree of support for the government may be linked to the sensitivity of the topic, particularly given the political context in which this survey took place (electoral period).

**More men than women believe the government is doing its best** to consider the needs of everyone equally when making decisions about COVID-19 services. This difference might be due to the unique experiences and needs of women and men. For instance, women make up the majority of workers at markets, small businesses, and schools in Tanzania, and the closure of these public spaces may have impacted women’s livelihoods more directly.
Trust in COVID-19 responders

Trust in non-governmental COVID-19 responders is even higher than in the government. Overall, 87% of respondents agree (strongly agree or agree) that people working on COVID-19 have their best interest in mind:

- 87% Trust
- 3% Do not trust
- 10% No opinion

Horizontal cohesion is at average levels and two-thirds of Tanzanians still interact with other groups during the pandemic

General trends about collaboration and interaction across groups can act as indicators of emerging, worsening, or contracting conflict. However, the most important trends to pay attention to are often the outliers: who values this type of collaboration, who does not, and what influences willingness to collaborate across different dividing lines.

- 64% of respondents see the value of interaction across dividing lines to address the COVID-19 crisis (strongly agree or agree)
- 17% do not see value in such collaboration
- 18% have no opinion

We also measured whether people interacted (in-person or virtually) across dividing lines throughout the COVID-19 crisis. If respondents report regularly interacting with someone from another group in the past three months:

- 68%
- 31% report no interaction at all

Next Steps For COVID-19 Response Efforts

Access to timely, accurate, and reliable information remains critical, especially to strengthen overall trust in the government and its response efforts.

- If access to official information about COVID-19 does not improve in the short term, the potential for dangerous and harmful rumours, misinformation, and disinformation will increase over time. Our data shows that respondents, despite lacking access to information from the government, are spreading information about COVID-19 on their own to fill information gaps. This not only demonstrates a need and desire for access to information but creates greater risks for inaccurate or harmful information dissemination. As the COVID-19 response continues, and ahead of any vaccination programme, citizens require the right information to make informed decisions about their own and their family's health, safety, and wellbeing. In particular, the government and public health responders should partner with trusted information providers who have credibility among citizens (i.e. local media outlets, community and religious leaders/networks, CSOs and CBOs, etc.).

Advocate with government authorities to ensure a more gender-sensitive COVID-19 response, to consider the specific needs of women and girls during this pandemic period.

- As demonstrated above, our data indicates lower levels of trust among women in the government compared to men (77% vs 81%, respectively). This is because women in Tanzania tend to be more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 than men, as women are the ones who are doing more livelihood activities in areas with high congestion of people like markets. Therefore they may be more exposed to risks of contracting COVID-19, as well as standing to lose their livelihood. The specific impacts of the pandemic on women and girls in Tanzania have to be monitored closely and local and national authorities should be sensitised to better consider gender differences in their decision making.

6. The question was asked on a daily, weekly, monthly, or on a quarterly basis.