



REPORT ON THE APRIL 2019 IPI PRESS FREEDOM MISSION TO TANZANIA

Background, Summary and
Recommendations

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July 2019

About IPI: Founded in 1950, the International Press Institute (IPI) is a global network of editors, journalists and media executives dedicated to furthering and safeguarding press freedom, promoting the free flow of news and information, and improving the practices of journalism.

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1. Introduction

The International Press Institute (IPI) organized a press freedom mission to Tanzania in collaboration with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung from April 1 to 5, 2019. The mission was led by Khadija Patel, a vice chair of IPI's Executive Board and editor-in-chief of the Mail & Guardian weekly in South Africa, and included Carsten von Nahmen, an IPI member and head of Deutsche Welle Akademie; IPI Deputy Director Scott Griffen; and IPI Director of Advocacy Ravi R. Prasad. The mission was accompanied by Matilda Jokinen, the current Helsingin Sanomat Foundation Journalism Fellow at IPI.

In partnership with the Tanzania Editors' Forum (TEF), represented by TEF Acting Chairperson Deodatus Balile and Acting Secretary General Neville Meena, the mission met with senior government officials, journalist organizations, the diplomatic community and civil society groups in both Dar es Salaam and the capital, Dodoma.

The objective of the mission was to conduct additional fact-finding into the press freedom situation in Tanzania as well as to engage directly with the Tanzanian government toward improving the legal, policy and professional environment for the press in the country.

2. Background

2.1. Introduction and legal environment

The current media situation in Tanzania is complex. On the one hand, the country has a relatively strong private media sector, boasting a large number of news organizations – print, web, television, radio – operating in Swahili and English, many of which are respected for their professional and, where necessary, critical coverage of power.

On the other hand, recent developments have greatly threatened the Tanzanian press's ability to fulfil its democratic role free from government interference. An [IPI analysis in August 2018](#) described an “unprecedented press freedom crisis”¹ in the country under President John Magufuli, who took office in late 2015. This crisis is exemplified by a series of new laws that disproportionately interfere with journalists' right to collect and disseminate information and that violate international standards on freedom of expression.

The measure that has justifiably attracted the greatest concern is the Media Services Act of 2016, which replaced the Newspaper Act of 1976. The Media Services Act was originally proposed under the government of President Jakaya Kikwete but withdrawn in 2015 [after an outcry](#) from IPI and other press freedom groups². However, it was re-tabled under President Magufuli and [ultimately passed](#)³.

On the one hand, the Media Services Act foresees a government-controlled regulatory system for the media in which it:

- Introduces licensing requirements for print media;
- Introduces a system of mandatory accreditation for the practice of journalism in Tanzania. Accreditation is to be granted by an accreditation board, all of whose members are appointed by the relevant government minister. Journalists who practice without accreditation risk a jail sentence of up to five years. A related legal act, the Media Services Regulation, spells out in more detail the requirements for accreditation, including that journalists must hold a degree in journalism; and
- Creates an “Independent Media Council”, which will hear complaints by persons allegedly aggrieved by media content, despite the fact that the self-regulatory Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) already exists. The members of the Council are every accredited journalist in Tanzania (as

¹ Sanna Pekkonen, “Tanzania press freedom plunges into unprecedented crisis”, IPI.media, Aug. 14, 2018, <https://ipi.media/tanzania-press-freedom-plunges-into-unprecedented-crisis/>

² Cora Henry, “IPI welcomes withdrawal of media bills in Tanzania”, IPI.media, July 2, 2015, <https://ipi.media/ipi-welcomes-withdrawal-of-media-bills-in-tanzania/>

³ “New media bill threatens press freedom in Tanzania”, IPI.media, Nov. 4, 2016, <https://ipi.media/new-media-bill-threatens-press-freedom-in-tanzania/>



decided by the accreditation Board). These members will elect officers from its membership. The links between the Accreditation Board and the Independent Media Council ultimately allow the government to establish a chain of control over the media landscape in Tanzania.

The Media Services Act also contains a number of provisions that effectively contribute to the criminalization of journalism in Tanzania, including:

- The sweeping criminalization of a range of content based on highly vague definitions, including any content that threatens public safety, public order, Tanzania's economic interests or is injurious to others' rights and reputations;
- The introduction of criminal defamation and seditious libel offences, which can result in heavy criminal penalties as well as the suspension of a publication for up to three years in the case of seditious libel;
- A provision allowing the minister to block importation of any publication contrary to the public interest; and
- A provision (Art. 59) allowing the ministers to "prohibit or otherwise sanction" the publication of any content that jeopardizes national security or public safety, terms that are not defined.

Although the law itself provides authorities with a number of possibilities to interfere with independent media, officials have in fact gone further, applying the law in an arbitrary fashion. Since the law took effect, Tanzania's information authorities have issued publication bans – in some cases up to two years – on several media, including the weeklies Tanzania Daima, Mseto and Mwanahalisi; the respected English-language daily The Citizen; and various radio stations.⁴ The suspension of The Citizen took place shortly before IPI's visit in 2019.

Tanzania lawyers and editors have said the Media Services Act provides no legal basis for the suspension of newspapers, as Art. 59 refers merely to the suspension only of "content". In response to that criticism, Tanzania's information minister has claimed that Art. 59, despite its clear wording, "vested" in him the authority to ban newspapers.⁵

It must additionally be noted that the government has failed to implement the Accreditation Board and the Independent Media Council as well as a third body, the Media Training Fund. Although this delay is

⁴ Newspapers suspended include Swahili-language daily Tanzania Daima for 90 days in 2017 over "false information" in reporting on HIV; the local newspaper Nipashe for its story "Magufuli refused to follow (Rwandan President Paul) Kagame's footsteps"; the weekly Mawio for 24 months in 2016 over stories on the political crisis in Zanzibar and again in June 2017 over articles linking two former Tanzanian presidents to alleged misconduct in mining deals; the weekly Mseto for three years in 2016 over a story implicating a minister in corruption; the weekly Mwanahalisi for 24 months in 2017; the radio stations Radio Five and Magic FM in 2016 over alleged "seditious content"; the English-language The Citizen on 2019 for alleged false information on exchange rates for the Tanzanian shilling.

⁵ "Editors fault decision to ban newspaper", The Citizen, June 21, 2017 (<https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/Editors-fault-decision-to-ban-newspaper/1840340-3980314-uwtl9pz/index.html>).

positive in the sense that these bodies threaten the exercise of independent media in Tanzania, journalists say that officials have used the non-existence of the Independent Media Council in particular to claim that aggressive administrative action against the press is necessary.

In March 2019, the East African Court of Justice ruled that numerous provisions of the Media Services Act violated the human rights provisions contained in the regional treaty of the East African Community. The case was a response to a suit brought by several civil society organizations in Tanzania.

However, the Media Services Act is only one of several troubling legal provisions. Others include:

- The Cyber Crime Act 2015, which was [passed under President Jakaya Kikwete in 2015](#) and foresees draconian fines and lengthy prison sentences for publishing false or “misleading information”⁶.
- The Online Content Regulations Act 2017, which regulates blogging and social media. The [measure took effect in early 2018](#). It requires bloggers, as well as online radio and television streaming services, to apply for a license and pay an annual fee of over \$900 (€750) before they can publish any content online. The government can revoke licenses if a site publishes content that “causes annoyance” or “leads to public disorder.” A blogger can also be fined up to \$2,200 for publishing such content or jailed for up to a year. Internet café operators are obligated to have surveillance cameras for recording and archiving activities of users. Online operators are also required to disclose the identity of their clients and block users who are anonymous.⁷
- Provisions in the Statistics Act that prohibited publishing statistics that “invalidate, distort, or discredit” official data of the National Bureau of Statistics.⁸

2.1. Attacks on journalists

Journalist safety is also a growing concern in Tanzania. In November 2017, journalist Azory Gwanda was reported missing by his wife in Kibiti district, south of Dar es Salaam. He has not been seen since, dead or alive. Before his disappearance, Gwanda had reported on the high murder rate in the district. He wrote primarily for the well-regarded independent newspapers Mwananchi and The Citizen, both owned by Mwananchi Communications, which belongs to the East African media conglomerate Nation Media Group. Tanzanian authorities have not announced any substantive progress in locating Gwanda or finding those responsible for his disappearance.

⁶ See note 2.

⁷ See note 1.

⁸ According to news reports, the Tanzania Parliament passed amendments to the Statistics Act in June 2019 repealing some of the more draconian aspects of the law. See “It is no longer a crime to publish statistics in Tanzania”, The Citizen, June 28, 2019 (<https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/news/It-is-no-longer-a-criminal-to-publish-statistics-in-Tanzania-/1840340-5174870-1c7xk3/index.html>).



There have been other violent incidents against journalists. In 2018, for example, two journalists were reportedly attacked and beaten by police officers in separate incidents. Sillas Mbise, a Wapo Radio sports journalist, was attacked at a football match in Dar es Salaam, while Tanzania Daima journalist Sitta Tuma was beaten after taking photographs at a political rally in Mara Region.

Harassment of journalists by the Tanzanian authorities is growing. One of the most prominent recent incidents came in March 2017, when Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner Paul Makonda entered the headquarters of Clouds Media with six armed men, reportedly to pressure the staff to air a video undermining a popular local pastor critical of the commissioner. A probe team by then-Minister of Information Nape Nnauye concluded that Makonda had broken the law. What followed was indicative: Nnauye was sacked by President Magufuli, and his replacement, incumbent Minister Harrison Mwakyembe, dismissed the probe team's recommendations, which included having the commissioner apologize to the media outlet.

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition has recorded numerous other examples of intimidation and harassment, including arbitrary arrests and detentions of journalists because of their reporting on politics, the police or demonstrations.⁹

2.1. Media environment

Despite its (now outdated) reputation as a relatively safe haven for journalists, ban on newspapers and problematic media laws are not completely new in Tanzania. The Newspaper Act 1976 allowed the police and legal inspectors to raid any newsroom or printing facility, and newspapers occasionally faced suspension under previous governments¹⁰. And, indeed, much of the legislation now used to target

⁹ Examples include:

- In January 2016, Jabir Idrissa and Simon Mkina, two of Mawio's editors were briefly detained, following a story published by their paper on Zanzibar political crisis. They were later taken to court charged for sedition and threatening national security.
- In November 2016, the police arrested and remanded two journalists of Clouds FM and Star TV reporting on miners who were evicted in Mazigamba area for four hours.
- July 2016, two journalists of Mwananchi daily were summoned and questioned by the police after writing about the way police officers conduct their duties.
- In December 2016, a cofounder of the popular whistle blowing website JamiiForums faced charges under the Cybercrimes Act for refusing to share the forum's user data and for operating a website that is not registered in Tanzania.
- In March 2017, it was reported that Arumeru District Commissioner, in Arusha region had threatened journalists for seeking stories during district council meetings, telling them that he would order the police to beat them.

¹⁰ April Reino, "Tanzanian authorities suspend newspaper, citing formality", IPI.media, Jan. 28, 2015, <https://ipi.media/tanzanian-authorities-suspend-newspaper-citing-formality/>
"Ban on Tanzanian newspapers continues", IPI.media, Oct. 3, 2013,



journalists was introduced under previous governments. The Magufuli administration, however, has not only made full use of this legislation to punish the press, it has also adopted a much more aggressive attitude toward the critical press overall, complete with anti-media rhetoric frequently cloaked in nationalistic language. Officials have justified actions taken against the press by arguing that the journalists have acted against the national interest or endangered national security.

While Magufuli was initially praised for his anti-corruption measures, his “authoritarian populism” governing style has since prompted global concern about the state of democracy and the rule of law in Tanzania.¹¹ Magufuli has demonstrated little tolerance for criticism and scrutiny, in the press and elsewhere. Last autumn, the European Union was forced to recall its ambassador in Tanzania, Roeland van de Geer, after de Greer’s criticism of Tanzania’s LGBT policies had angered the Magufuli administration. In 2017, Tanzania expelled the local head of the U.N. Development Programme, Awa Dabo, reportedly in part due to her criticism of a controversial election re-run in the autonomous region of Zanzibar.¹²

In November 2017, after sacking former Information Minister Nnauye over the latter’s response to the Cloud Media raid, Magufuli [issued a warning](#) to a group of journalists at a ceremony to swear in new ministers, condemning them for sensationalizing news and for failing to report positive stories about the country. “Media owners, let me tell you, be careful, watch it,” he said. “If you think you have that kind of freedom, it is not to that extent.”¹³

<https://ipi.media/ban-on-tanzanian-newspapers-continues/>

¹¹ See, e.g., “Tanzania’s rogue president”, The Economist, Mar 15, 2018 (<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/03/15/tanzanias-rogue-president>).

¹² See, e.g., “Tanzania expels UNDP head Awa Dabo”, BBC, Apr 25, 2017 (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39710372>).

¹³ Nicholas Wong/IPI staff, “Tanzania leader’s aside on ‘limits’ of freedom raises fears”, IPI.media, Apr. 19, 2017, <https://ipi.media/tanzania-leaders-aside-on-limits-of-freedom-raises-fears/>



3. Mission Summary

IPI's visit to Tanzania came at an opportune time, as it closely followed a ruling of the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) on March 28 (noted above) holding that several provisions in the Media Services Act violated fundamental rights. The ruling offered the mission an opportunity to underscore the concerns of journalists about the provisions in the Act that allow the government to suspend newspapers, news websites, radio and television channels, and impose other restrictions on media houses.

Deliberations with different stakeholders before meeting with government officials in Dodoma were extremely informative, as the mission visited Tanzania at a time when the government was reluctant to engage in any conversation on media freedom and safety of journalists with organizations based abroad. The current administration is perceived to harbour mistrust toward the diplomatic community and international organizations and has viewed efforts by these groups to engage on press freedom issues with suspicion and construed them as unacceptable interference in domestic policy.

Stakeholders and civil society

In Dar es Salaam, the mission held meetings with then chairperson of the Media Owners Association of Tanzania (MOAT), the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT, an IPI institutional member) and members of the Coalition on the Right to Information (CORI), an umbrella group of civil society organizations focused on free expression issues.

These meetings provided the mission with an insight into the situation of press freedom and media independence in the country, as well as the concerns of these organizations about various laws and actions of the government to silence critical journalists and media houses.

The chair of MOAT, Reginald Mengi, who sadly passed away shortly after the mission, expressed concerns in particular over the government's move to impose educational qualification requirements for journalists as part of the implementation of the Media Services Act. For their part, CORI members expressed great concern over aspects of the Media Services Act that concentrated power over the media in the hands of the government. The EACJ case was brought by several members of the coalition.

The media community expressed apprehension that the move by the government to create an Independent Media Council would weaken the MCT, which is a body set up by the media stakeholders in the country.

Citing examples, CORI members also underscored that the government was using additional laws, including the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations and the Cyber Crimes Act, to suppress freedom of expression and independent journalism in the country. Some CORI members

were of the view that media owners in the country were indifferent towards the situation and had left it to the journalists to fight their battle for freedom and independence.

The diplomatic community

In its meeting with the mission, representatives of the diplomatic community in Tanzania expressed concerns over deteriorating press freedom, the closure of media houses and punitive measures taken against media organizations by the government. They also cited instances in which the government refused to engage with the diplomatic community and noted the incident that led to the withdrawal of the EU's head of delegation the previous year. In general, the diplomatic community expressed the view that the government was not favourably disposed to discussing press freedom issues with outside groups.

The diplomats also emphasized the need for capacity-building activities for journalists in the country and were willing to support such initiatives.

The government

The mission travelled to Dodoma to meet with the Minister of Information Dr. Harrison G. Mwakyembe; Speaker of the Parliament Mr. Job Yustino Ndugai; Mr. Rashid Shangazi, an MP and chair of the ruling party; and other senior government officials. In Dar es Salaam, the mission also met with Director of Information Services Dr. Hassan Abbas.

The main issues discussed with the minister of information, speaker of the parliament and MPs included the Media Services Act, accreditation of journalists, quality journalism, providing international support to journalists in capacity building and journalist safety.

The mission also met with Prime Minister Mr. Kassim Majaliwa at the parliament and had a brief discussion about the purpose of the visit. Mr. Majaliwa assured the mission that the government would support all efforts to improve the quality of journalism in the country.

The minister of information had two meetings with the mission on consecutive days. During a meeting with the IPI mission and TEF on April 2, Mwakyembe agreed on the importance of dialogue with media representatives to achieve the common goal of strengthening quality journalism in Tanzania. Significantly, Mwakyembe also said he was open to reviewing the Media Services Act.

The minister requested the Tanzania Editors' Forum to start a dialogue with the government so that the media community could provide its inputs in the process of reviewing the Act. He said he regretted that, in his view, there had been no communication between the government and the media community for the past several years and said that journalists' organizations had not provided feedback to the government on the Act and other related issues.

The information minister also agreed to review the diploma requirement for all journalists and to consider two years of training and mentorship as equivalent to the qualification stipulated in regulations foreseen by the Media Services Act.

However, on the issue of the Independent Media Council, which is yet to be set up, the government argued that the Independent Media Council and the MCT could complement each other. The minister assured that the Independent Media Council would not take over the functions of the already existing MCT, and that the MCT could work in conjunction with the new body.

In their conversations with the information minister, mission delegates also expressed serious concern over the lack of progress in the investigation into the disappearance of Azory Gwanda and urged the government to take all necessary steps to end impunity in the case.

The speaker of the parliament underscored the need for improved parliamentary reporting and suggested that IPI should engage in capacity building of journalists in Tanzania to enhance the standards of reporting about parliamentary debates.

During the meetings, MPs informed the mission that they were in favour of press freedom but had reservations about the way in which media reported on various issues in the country, especially on politics and corruption. They were of the view that the media industry in the country needed capacity building to meet international standards.

In conversations with political leaders, including Parliament Speaker Ndugai and several parliamentarians, IPI observed that quality, independent journalism can be a crucial ally in supporting Tanzania's progress in top national agenda items such as promoting economic growth and fighting corruption. However, IPI stress that building a strong media sector involves not only raising professional capacities but also creating an environment in which journalists are able to fully exercise their national role as the fourth estate alongside the executive, legislative and judicial branches.

4. Findings

In general, Tanzanian journalists interviewed by IPI during the mission described an environment in which the current government has grown increasingly intolerant of scrutiny of its actions and policies and has adopted aggressive and high-handed tactics to clamp down on critical media. Worryingly, the current government's anti-media attitude is frequently cloaked in nationalistic language and officials have justified actions taken against the press by arguing that the media or journalists in question have acted against the national interest or endangered national security.

This clampdown is exemplified by a series of forcible suspensions of media outlets since 2016, despite the fact that Tanzanian law does not provide a legal basis for such suspensions. In conversations with IPI, Tanzanian government officials responded to these concerns in various terms. On the one hand, officials suggested a very welcome openness to listening to the concerns of media stakeholders and to revising some of the most problematic pieces of legislation, including the Media Services Act. On the other hand, some officials suggested, directly or indirectly, that the government should have the power to police journalistic content. These officials described and justified a system in which their role is to reprimand media outlets – through phone calls and warnings – and punish them, including via suspension, for failure to adhere to “ethical journalism”. This approach is highly problematic in view of press freedom, the rule of law and separation of powers.

Restrictive media policy environment

There is no doubt that the Media Services Act has created an oppressive policy environment for the media industry in the country. The Act concentrates power over the media in the hands of the government and contains numerous provisions that do not meet international standards on press freedom and freedom of expression and provide authorities with convenient weapons to silence critical media. Indeed, as noted elsewhere, the current government has used the law – as well as alleged “residual powers” – to suspend media outlets for allegedly violating national security or the national interests, terms that are clearly open to interpretation and abuse.

The impact of the EACJ ruling on the Media Services Act is significant. The ruling, which found a number of the Act's provisions in violation of the treaty on the East African Community, took issue with the potential for arbitrary application of the law. In response to the government's contention that the exercise of powers granted to the relevant minister to suspend or sanction media was subject to “pre-conditions” such as public safety and national security, the Court rightly responded:

“With respect, the Respondent's submission does not answer the question of subjectivity of the Minister's judgment in deciding when to exercise the powers, and more importantly, that this

subjectivity denies persons the precision and certainty that would enable them to plan their actions. Further, what the Respondent calls pre-conditions are themselves subjective judgments of the Minister.”¹⁴

Officials told the mission that the government was preparing to challenge the ruling. However, the minister of information also said that the government was willing to review the law in consultation with the media community and was looking forward to inputs from stakeholders. Still, the government does not have a specific plan or a mechanism to engage with media stakeholders and is unlikely to take the initiative unless the media community mounts pressure on it.

Following assurances by the information minister, the mission is cautiously optimistic regarding the possibility of improving the Act in line with the EACJ’s ruling. Notably, the information minister also expressed willingness to waive the educational qualification requirement in lieu of experience as a journalist, a move that does not require changing the Media Services Act itself.

It became abundantly clear during the meetings that the government was unaware of self-regulatory mechanisms of the media industry in other countries. Owing to the restrictions on travel of ministers and government officials out of the country, it is difficult for government officials to have a first-hand experience of how these mechanisms, e.g., the Press Council of South Africa, function as self-regulatory bodies without government interference.

Self-censorship

Owing to the restrictive policy environment, both owners and editors of media houses are relying on self-censorship to avoid the wrath of the government. Numerous editors who met the mission said that they had increased self-censorship to avoid ban and fines on their organizations. They contended that the government took punitive action against news organizations that criticized the president and the government in general.

It also emerged in the meetings that while the government takes action against media organizations critical of its performance, it is also willing to act on media reports exposing corruption cases involving specific officials. Journalists cited some cases in which exposés led to sacking of government officials.

For their part, journalists in particular expressed fear that rather than fiercely opposing the government’s efforts to restrict press freedom, media owners were relying on self-censorship. In the view of many journalists, there appears to be little willingness amongst media owners to take on the current government

¹⁴ *Media Council of Tanzania, Legal and Human Rights Centre Tanzania and Human Rights Defenders Coalition v. The Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania*, Ref. No. 2 of 2017, East Africa Court of Justice, Mar 28, 2019. See full decision at: <http://eacj.eac.int/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Referene-No.2-of-2017.pdf>.



owing to the latter's vindictive nature. Most media organizations are part of large business groups with other interests, and media owners fear that challenging the government could hurt their wider businesses.

Government's reluctance to engage on press freedom issues

Besides enacting new laws to reign in independent media in the country, the government has also demonstrated reluctance to engage with journalists, civil society and the diplomatic community on the issue of press freedom.

Most stakeholders were of the opinion that the crackdown on the media started after the ruling party did not perform well in the 2015 parliamentary elections. They feel that the government believes critical reports in the media could further erode its electoral base.

Efforts by the diplomatic community to intervene have failed so far, as the government sees this as an act of interference. The information minister has refused to engage in conversations with heads of diplomatic missions, who approached him over bans on newspapers.

Breakdown of communications and mistrust between government and media

In general, both the government and media stakeholders informed the mission that there was no communication between them and that neither side had made efforts to engage in a dialogue over contentious issues. In the last two years since Mwakyembe took over as the information minister there was no communication between the ministry and media organizations.

The minister said that the government had invited the media community to provide feedback on the drafts of the Media Services Act, but that the ministry did not receive any comments or suggestions, which was confirmed by the stakeholders.

During the discussions it became apparent that there was deep mistrust between the government, especially the bureaucracy, and the media community. While the minister and the bureaucrats in the information ministry blamed journalists for the breakdown of communications, the media community expressed lack of trust in the government. However, the minister consented to engage with journalists and invited the TEF to take the lead in starting a dialogue with the government.

While the civil society organizations and journalists primarily hold the government responsible for failing to communicate with the media and highlight the government's vindictive actions against media houses, they, too, expressed willingness to engage with the government to improve the policy environment.

Quality journalism

The alleged lack of quality journalism in Tanzania was frequently cited by Tanzanian government officials as a justification for its actions toward the media. Many journalists met by the mission expressed concern that Tanzanian government officials used the pretext of irresponsible journalism to justify its crackdown on the critical press under the motto: "Give a dog a bad name to kill it". "Irresponsible journalism is anything that criticizes them, they are just trying to control the narrative", one said. Journalists also pushed back against the idea that the government was truly committed to promoting good journalism, stating that the government also provided advertisement revenue to friendly "gutter press".

Still, journalists were also willing to engage in self-reflection on the state of the country's media and agreed that there was room for improvement in journalistic practices, especially when it comes to investigative journalism. In this sense, both the government and the media community agreed that capacity building of journalists should be a priority. IPI was requested by all stakeholders that it should look into programmes for enhancing the capacity of journalists by organizing trainings, knowledge exchange platforms and opportunities to improve all facets of journalism.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Press freedom in Tanzania is under pressure from a legal and regulatory environment that does not meet international standards; arbitrary sanctions against the media; harassment of critical media; and impunity for crimes against journalists, all of which have created an environment of self-censorship, which in turn is depriving the Tanzanian public of the information needed to fully participate in democratic society.

At the same time, the IPI mission welcomed the openness expressed by government officials and political leaders in the country to engage in constructive dialogue with national stakeholders aimed at improving the environment for quality, independent journalism.

This spirit of openness offers an opportunity for government officials, legislators, journalists, media owners and civil society to collaborate on a positive media framework in Tanzania that further develops the profession while protecting journalists' rights.

In this spirit, IPI makes the following recommendations:

For the government

1. Create an enabling environment for media freedom

- Reform the Media Services Act in line with the ruling of the East African Court of Justice and with all international standards and principles related to press freedom and freedom of expression.
- Stop the practice of suspending, banning or otherwise sanctioning media outlets.
- Ensure that journalists are free to practice their profession – including producing critical coverage of the government – without fear of retaliation.
- Refrain from any actions that infringe upon the editorial independence of news outlets.
- Honour judicial rulings upholding press freedom, including rulings overturning government acts suspending media outlets.
- Reform legislation, including the Cyber Crime Act 2015, the Online Content Regulations Act 2017 and the Statistics Act 2015, that disproportionately restricts the right to freedom of expression.
- Drop plans to require journalists to have a diploma in journalism in order to work and ensure that any regulatory schemes related to the media meet international standards.
- Fully investigate all attacks against journalists, including physical attacks and incidents of harassment and intimidation, and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice. Urgently investigate the disappearance of journalist Azory Gwanda.
- Ensure that government officials refrain from using aggressive anti-media rhetoric, in particular rhetoric that depicts media outlets and journalists as being traitors or enemies of the state.

2. Engage in dialogue with the media community

The lack of trust between the government and the media community has contributed to a steep decline in press freedom in Tanzania. The government should take steps to build trust and bridge the divide between it and media organizations. It should take the initiative to bring all stakeholders to the negotiating table and start a conversation with the media industry to understand the latter's challenges as well as share the government's own concerns.

While the mission welcomes the government's openness to engage in constructive dialogue with national stakeholders, it urges the government to follow through on its promise and initiate the conversation as soon as possible with the aim to amend the Media Services Act and other laws that impact press freedom.

To enable that conversation, the government should set up a dialogue platform or mechanism that includes all stakeholders and that meets regularly.

3. Support capacity building

The government expressed concern over the quality of journalism in the country and cited it as one of the reasons for imposing education qualifications as a requirement to practice as a journalist. Any government investment in capacity building of journalists should be done in collaboration with professional associations representing the media industry and journalism. IPI has offered its support to the government and the media community in this regard.

For the media community

1. Engage in conversation

The media community should engage in dialogue with the government and seize the opportunity following the information minister's stated willingness to work with journalists on a review of the Media Services Act. The absence of a conversation between the stakeholders has led to mistrust between them, which can only be overcome through an honest and open dialogue. The World Press Freedom Day and other international occasions provide opportunities for holding events and conversations with the information minister and other government functionaries.

2. Identify capacity building needs for quality journalism

Associations and unions of editors, media owners and journalists should identify the capacity gaps and opportunities to enhance the knowledge of their members with the aim to attain international standards in journalism. Media owners should provide financial support for such knowledge development programmes.

3. Media owners should take a stand

Editors and journalists cannot fight their battle for press freedom unless they are supported by the media owners. So far, journalists feel that media owners have not taken a strong stand on the legal and ethical issues or protested against the legislations that impact press freedom.

Media owners have a responsibility to defend editors and journalists and stand up against actions by the government that undermine their duty and ability to report on issues of public interest.

For the diplomatic community and civil society

1. Continue to raise concern over attacks on press freedom

The diplomatic community has played a critical role in raising the issue of press freedom in Tanzania at the international level. While the government overtly refuses to engage with diplomatic missions on this issue, it remains concerned about its international image.

The diplomatic community should continue to engage with the government to uphold press freedom in the country. The government would be willing to listen to the diplomatic missions if they offer constructive advice and support to improve the quality of journalism in the country.

2. Support capacity building

Many diplomatic missions have expressed their willingness to support knowledge development and capacity building of journalists. The government and the media community do not have the resources to undertake capacity building alone. Therefore, the international community should invest in such endeavours as well as support organizations like the Media Council of Tanzania and the TEF in strengthening their organizational capacities.

3. International civil society and human rights organizations

In Tanzania, the international civil society organizations have provided unstinting support to the media community in its efforts to defend press freedom. They should continue to extend this support and also assist journalists in their knowledge development through exchange visits and capacity building training in collaboration with the diplomatic community and journalists' organizations.