

#SpeakUp

Using social media to promote police accountability in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda

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Little research has been conducted to assess the impact and potential of social media on the public's engagement in police accountability in Africa. This report explores whether social media can promote more effective police accountability in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The content of the public's engagement with the police on social media platforms in these countries is analysed over a two-month period and the impact of this engagement is then examined.

Key findings

- ▶ Social media engagement alone can achieve limited results in promoting public accountability for police misconduct in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda but can and has served as a valuable tool in this endeavour.
- ▶ The percentage of the population in Africa that engages in discussions on social media platforms about the actions and behaviour of the police is currently small. This number has the potential to grow exponentially over the next decade with advances in mobile connectivity and as the public realise the power of harnessing social media as a tool to promote good governance and demand accountability from government.
- ▶ Social media engagement can facilitate communication between police agencies and the public, allowing for information to flow between these groups.
- ▶ Well-coordinated, strategic social media campaigns by civil society in the countries reviewed can mobilise the public, energise large groups of people and achieve tangible results.
- ▶ Civil society can develop systematic strategies to engage with the police in different ways. These strategies include using positive interactions to build trust and open the lines of communication, and using photographs and videos of specific events and incidents of police misconduct gathered through social media to demand accountability.
- ▶ Social media platforms can be a useful tool in multiplying and improving the pathways available to the public to hold the police accountable for misconduct, human rights abuses and non-action, particularly at the local level.

Recommendations

- ▶ The police should consider appointing dedicated social media liaison or communication officers whose job it is to keep track of social media accounts and respond to queries, concerns and even criticisms.
- ▶ The police should consider sharing positive news stories about police achievements and contributions with the mainstream media to increase positive perceptions as well as the reach and impact of these stories.
- ▶ The police should invest in building relationships and rapport with social justice organisations to repair trust with the public.
- ▶ The public needs strong social media protections in place. These should include affirmations from the government and the police of the public's right to freedom of expression (including filming and photographing the police carrying out their duties and the right to publicise such material on social media). The public should also have guarantees that witnesses to police misconduct will be safe from retaliation or targeting.
- ▶ The public needs to be educated and made aware of where to direct their reports or posts of police misconduct and brutality on social media. This is in order to ensure their posts are seen by the right people and that they reinforce other members of the public's accounts of the same event.

Introduction

The rapid development, expansion and accessibility of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) over the last decade have revolutionised the way in which the public can engage with government officials and institutions in the promotion of accountability and good governance.

Specifically, smartphones, internet access and social media platforms have opened up new pathways for communication on matters of governance. Policing is a key matter that is likely to benefit from social media. Social media will enable the public to engage in discussions about policing, including demanding accountability for the actions – or inaction – of the police.

Traditionally, the police controlled the facts and narrative provided to the public around their ability to protect public safety and their behaviour in doing so. However, the nature of the relationship between the public and the police has been irrevocably altered by the public now having the ability to document and disseminate information on the activities of the police – from the mundane to the abusive. The public can document these activities through text, photographs or video and distribute the information through a range of social media platforms. This gives the public access to a crucial mechanism through which they can potentially directly engage in holding the police accountable.¹

Little research has been conducted to assess the impact and potential of social media on the public's engagement in police accountability in Africa. The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) sought to fill this knowledge gap in East Africa by exploring whether social media might offer a tool for promoting more effective police accountability in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. This was done through an analysis of the social media engagement between the public and the police in these countries and the impact of this engagement.

This study sought to:

- Examine to what extent the public and civil society organisations (CSOs) in these countries are engaging in discussions about the actions and behaviour of the police on social media platforms
- Gain a better understanding of the sentiments of social media users towards the police

- Analyse the impact of the engagement between the public and the police on social media platforms.

The study aimed to ascertain whether the public is positive towards and supportive of the actions and conduct of the police, are neutral about the police or express mistrust and condemnation of police behaviour.

Social media enables the public to engage in discussions about policing

The report outlines the methodology applied in the study before giving an overview of the role of social media in holding the police accountable. The findings of the research for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are presented, followed by a brief comparative analysis and discussion. The report concludes by providing recommendations for how the public might productively engage in police accountability through social media platforms.

Methodology

This study utilised three different methodologies:

1. Contextualising public engagement in police accountability:

Contextual and background information was accessed through desktop research as well as discussions with organisations working on public engagement in police accountability in a global context. These organisations were the Policing Project of New York University, the National Initiative for Trust and Justice at John Jay University, Witness and the New York branch of the American Civil Liberties Union. An initial report was produced to provide background context for this issue.²

2. Social media study:

The ISS contracted BrandsEye, a leading opinion-mining company, to conduct a sentiment analysis on the public's engagement with the police on social media platforms in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda using their combination of artificial and human intelligence.

Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda were chosen as case studies because:

- They have relatively high levels of internet penetration and social media use in Africa (see country findings below)
- They have active CSOs involved in issues of police accountability
- They have had a similar trajectory in terms of policing and police reform
- They have all faced challenges in developing and implementing robust police accountability mechanisms.

The study was conducted over a two-month period, from 1 July 2019 to 30 August 2019. The short timeframe was due to the costs associated with conducting a study of this nature and scope.

In order to collect this data, BrandsEye worked with the ISS to develop a list of search phrases to match the relevant online conversation. Search phrases were in English and Swahili and included appropriate local colloquial terms and phrases and terms collected from ISS content experts and partners relating to policing.

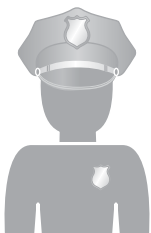
Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms were used only to perform certain pre-processing tasks. This limitation is necessary because, without human assistance, algorithms struggle to accurately evaluate the nuances of textual human conversation with its tonal subtleties, sarcasm, slang, emoticons and mixed sentiment and therefore typically produce an accuracy level of around 50%.

The BrandsEye “Crowd” of human contributors is a proprietary crowd-sourcing platform comprised of a network of trained and vetted local language contributors from around the world who understand the nuances of local culture and language. The Crowd conducted the evaluation of sentiment by reviewing and verifying the sentiment contained in individual social media posts. With 100% of the data processed through the Crowd, the data achieved 100% accuracy.

BrandsEye only collects geographical metrics where Twitter users have opted to provide their location when creating a Twitter profile or where people have mentioned a location in the body of their message that can be identified through simple phrase matching.

BrandsEye audits daily samples of Crowd-verified data during the data collection process. This data is reviewed and analysed by an experienced team of Crowd reviewers, who specialise in the rating and structuring of sentiment and topic data. This data is also reviewed at an executive level on a monthly basis.

The raw social media data that BrandsEye feeds to their Crowd is public data that is available online for anyone to access, such as a public Tweet. However, the structured and enriched data that was processed by the Crowd and made available to the ISS is confidential and only accessible to the ISS through a private BrandsEye account.



POLICE HAVE THE POTENTIAL
TO EITHER UNDERMINE OR
STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY

BrandsEye is fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Protection of Personal Information Act and takes data privacy very seriously. BrandsEye ensures that they are always up to date with the latest privacy terms and conditions of social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.³ Twitter has strict policies around privacy and surveillance tracking and BrandsEye and the ISS underwent a stringent compliance application that was approved by Twitter.

3. Validation and peer review workshop:

After the social media study was completed, a validation workshop was held with policing specialists and activists from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to peer review the findings of the study. Participants provided detailed insights from their experiences in engaging in police accountability and governance in their countries, including how social media has been and could be utilised for advocacy and good governance. The two-month period under review was specifically discussed during the workshop to assess the validity of the data collected and to interpret the findings. The workshop discussions are integrated into this report.

Democratic policing relies on trust between the public and the police

This study was limited by the two-month time period of the social media study, which means that it provides a snapshot of the public's social media engagement about the police rather than trends over time and is restricted to July and August 2019. However, this study intended to understand the accuracy and validity of social media analysis in gauging sentiment expressed by the public and how social media can (and may) be utilised by the public to influence police accountability. This was achieved by the social media analysis together with the workshop discussed above. In addition, although a wide range of keywords and phrases in both English and Swahili were gathered, this list was not exhaustive and therefore will have overlooked social media conversation in other local languages. Privacy regulations on social

media platforms also mean that only publicly accessible data could be gathered and analysed.

The role of social media in holding the police accountable

Police accountability

In any society, the police have the potential to either undermine or strengthen democracy. The police can protect, answer to and act in the interests of the ruling elites, control rather than protect communities and even operate as an instrument of oppression. Or the police can 'maintain public tranquillity and law and order; protect and respect the individual's fundamental rights and freedoms; prevent and combat crime; and provide assistance and services to the public.'⁴ This form of policing has become known as democratic policing.

Democratic policing relies on a relationship of trust between the public and the police. Amongst other functions, the public needs the police to uphold and implement the law, maintain public order and respect human rights. The police, on the other hand, need the public to report crime or other local concerns and enable rights-based law enforcement. This reciprocal relationship legitimises the police and enables them to operate on the principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality; it also gives the public space to voice their concerns, seek accountability and engage in how their communities are policed.

In democracies, the police are mandated to use force and curtail individual rights only where necessary to achieve legitimate policing ends. This requires 'constant and complex democratic oversight'⁵ through various and multilevel mechanisms of accountability:

- Internal mechanisms such as professional standards, standing orders, disciplinary procedures, leadership, training, reporting and information management
- State mechanisms such as legislation, the judiciary, parliament, relevant government ministries and ombuds services
- Social mechanisms such as independent complaints boards, research and policy institutes, human rights commissions, external auditors, neighbourhood safety councils, CSOs and the media (including social media).

The third level of accountability – known as social control, public accountability or accountability from below – is the means by which the voices of individual members of the public and organised civil society can be channelled into engaging with the police and holding them to account.

This report focuses on one aspect of social control – the role that new forms of media and technology are playing in relation to the public's engagement in police accountability.

Impact of the growth of technology

According to the World Bank, there are four conditions that increase the effectiveness of public accountability:

- Generating information or making information available
- Organising groups of individuals or coalitions of CSOs to enhance bargaining power
- Making the available information public and targeting it towards the intended audience and relevant actors
- Responsiveness of the state or state institutions once the information has been received.⁶

All of these conditions are supported by ICTs such as mobile and smartphones, the Internet, social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.), blogging and vlogging. In other words, any individual or group can use whatever form of technology they have access to, to generate information and disseminate it on a variety of social media platforms in order to encourage public engagement, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Seth et al. explain that ICTs promote the public's engagement in accountability. They do this by enabling downward flows of information (from government institutions to the public), creating the likelihood of upward flows of information (from the public to elected

or appointed officials and government institutions) and enabling horizontal flows of communication (between government institutions and between different groups within the public).⁷

The role of technology and social media in the public's engagement with police accountability

Technology has enabled increasing numbers of people across the world to record evidence of police misconduct, or simply monitor routine interactions between the public and the police. Handheld devices and mobile connectivity allow such information to be gathered and disseminated quickly and easily via social media platforms. In this way, social media can be used by the public as a tool to inspire action or advocate for policy change in the demand for police accountability.⁸

However, the rapid opening up of this new platform for public engagement in police accountability comes with a complex mix of opportunities and risks, outlined in Table 1.

Digital connectivity in Africa

Public engagement in police accountability through technology, the Internet and social media obviously presumes a certain level of access. Despite the rapid growth of internet and smartphone penetration in Africa over the last 15 years, access across this very diverse continent still remains relatively limited with significant variation from country to country. The World Bank estimates that only 27% of the African population had access to the Internet in 2018.⁹

However, an ongoing shift from fixed to mobile connectivity is increasing access to the Internet at a faster rate.¹⁰ The Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GMSA) reports an 11% increase in the number of people in sub-Saharan Africa actively using internet services on a mobile device over the last four years (see Figure 2).¹¹

Figure 1: Using technology to promote public engagement

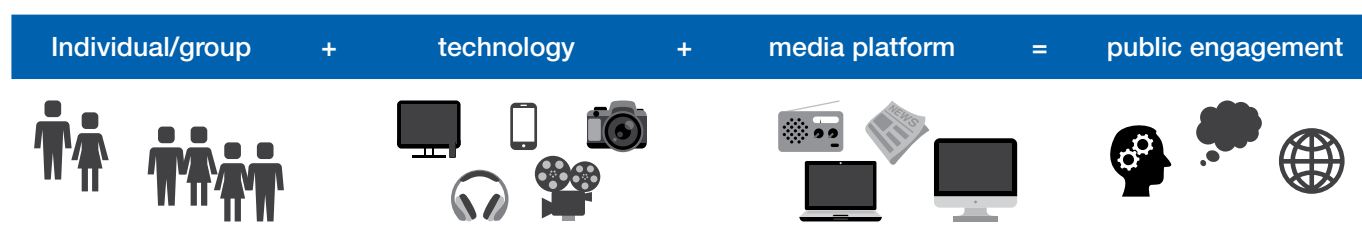
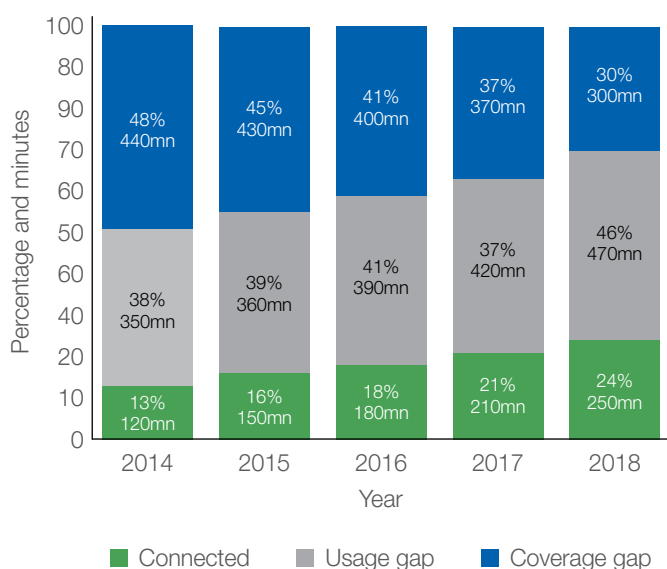


Table 1: The opportunities and risks of the public engaging in police accountability through social media

Opportunities	
Increased number of participants	Creates crowd effect by exponentially increasing the number of people reached or impacted by information
Plurality of independent voices	Ordinary people and organised groups can express their views and organise around issues, problems and concerns
Reduces temporal and spatial constraints	Communication of news, information and analysis happens in real-time, unrestricted by borders or geography
Allows for effective collective action	Members of the public can be mobilised to put pressure on government institutions to respond to issues
Efficient and cost-effective	Enables the dissemination of powerful images while reducing the cost of participating in or coordinating collective action
Wider reach than mainstream media	Circumvents the economic, legal and regulatory constraints often imposed on traditional and mainstream media
Strength of collective	Numerous individual digital witnesses and stories create a volume of evidence hard to gather through traditional methods
Incorporation of metadata for verification	Metadata, which proves where and when something happened, improves the trustworthiness of images and video recordings
Risks	
Exposure to risk and danger	Such as state surveillance, identification and tracking of individuals, legal action, violence and intimidation
Government control	Through legislation or illicit actions, governments limit or close off the space for communication via social media
Legitimate versus fake news	Given the fake news industry as well as individual actors with interests to promote, it is crucial to establish the credibility of information on social media platforms
Digital divide	Inequalities in accessing social media platforms (e.g. Internet access, digital skills, socio-economic barriers)
Disconnection from local populations	Digital access to a global audience may disconnect activists from the realities facing local communities, who may themselves be victims of the digital divide
Lack of context	Images and footage of police brutality may be misleading, providing a limited snapshot rather than the holistic context of an event (such as what is occurring outside the frame of the image/video or the inherent complexities, e.g. the history between the actors involved)
Slacktivism	The cacophony of voices, information overload and quick turnover of news generated by the Internet may reduce the political potential or impact of an image or video
Evidence doesn't find the right platform or people	Many videos and images uploaded to social media platforms never find their way to the people who can act on them

Source: Author compilation from literature review¹²

Figure 2: Percentage of the sub-Saharan African population connected to mobile internet over time



Source: GSMA, Mobile internet connectivity 2019: Sub-Saharan Africa Factsheet, July 2019, <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Mobile-Internet-Connectivity-SSA-Factsheet.pdf>

Significant challenges to mobile internet access still remain to varying degrees across the continent. These include a lack of digital skills and literacy, a large gender gap regarding device ownership and access, and the high costs associated with mobile devices and access to mobile data.¹³

It is not surprising that social media usage is not high relative to the population – at 11% of the population, the use of social media networks in Africa is below that of all other regions in the world except for South Asia.¹⁴

All of these factors play a role in the ability of the public to engage in matters of governance, including police accountability, through social media. However, there is little doubt that, over time, more and more of the population in Africa will be able to use social media as a tool to engage directly in promoting good governance and holding state institutions accountable.

Findings

This section presents the findings of how the public in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda engaged with police accountability on social media platforms in July and August 2019. These three countries present interesting case studies with their relatively high levels of access to mobile connectivity, active civil society and challenges with governance and police accountability.

Kenya: #speakup because #yoursilencekills

Context

The constitution of Kenya (2010) stipulates that the principles of national security – including the newly reconstituted National Police Service (NPS) – ‘shall be pursued in compliance with the law and with the utmost respect for the rule of law, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.’¹⁵

The conduct of the NPS is governed by three main police accountability mechanisms:

- The Internal Affairs Unit, which receives and investigates complaints about police misconduct
- The National Police Service Commission, which is responsible for internal discipline
- The Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), a civilian oversight board mandated to investigate police misconduct (among other things), oversee investigations and actions by the Internal Affairs Unit and review the functioning of the internal disciplinary process.¹⁶

Despite the constitutional reform of the police service, allegations of police abuses continue to plague the NPS. Since its establishment in 2012, the IPOA has received over 10 000 complaints of police misconduct and brutality.¹⁷ These include:

- Unlawful arrest and detention
- Injuries and deaths from police shooting
- Death in police custody
- Enforced disappearance
- Physical assault
- Abuse of power or misuse of authority
- Sexual assault and rape
- Bribery and extortion
- Police harassment
- Destruction of or failure to return property.¹⁸

For the most serious of these allegations – extrajudicial police killings – the most recent estimates are that 141 people were killed by the police in 2015, 204 in 2016, 152 in 2017 and 243 in 2018.¹⁹

Although the IPOA has increased scrutiny of the police, many challenges have slowed progress towards holding police officers to account for their misconduct.²⁰ Of the 5 085 cases sent to the Investigations Directorate by the end of April 2018,²¹ 4 333 were under initial or active investigation and 752 investigations were completed.²² Only four cases had led to convictions.²³

Within this context of impunity, several studies have found that there are high levels of mistrust between the public and the police, with 65% of the Kenyan public trusting the police 'just a little' or 'not at all.'²⁴ The public reportedly view 'the policing system as tolerant of police abuse of power'²⁵ and describe the police as 'unanswerable to anyone in the community.'²⁶

Kenya's constitution guarantees the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly and the country benefits from a vibrant, diverse and robust civil society. However, there has been increasing tension between government and civil society over the last decade as the government attempts to clamp down on independent and/or dissenting voices.²⁷

Legislation adopted in 2013 to regulate civil society has been at the centre of this hostility, with the government making six successive attempts to amend the Public Benefit Organisations Act in order to shrink the spaces and opportunities for civil society to operate effectively.²⁸

The independent media has also seen a slow erosion of their freedoms. Numerous laws enacted over the last five years are designed to restrict, gag, impose penalties on or criminalise the media.²⁹ Journalists and human rights activists 'reporting on sensitive topics (including counter-terrorism, corruption, and accountability for the 2007/8 post-election violence) have been subject to harassment, intimidation, prosecution and extra-judicial killings.'³⁰

Public freedom of expression and assembly is also under threat. The Kenya Film Classification Board issued a notice in May 2018 that Kenyans would require licences before posting videos intended for public exhibition or distribution on their social media accounts.³¹ A proposed new law seeks to introduce a social media tax and compel the administrators of Facebook and WhatsApp groups to obtain a special licence from the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK).³² In addition, the police routinely deny requests for meetings or protests and use excessive – sometimes lethal – force to disperse demonstrators.³³

Kenya has an internet penetration of 85% according to the Kenyan Ministry of Information, Communications and Technology.³⁴ The CAK reports that 'Kenya's mobile industry is among the most developed mobile eco-systems in Sub-Saharan Africa'³⁵ with mobile networks covering at least 96% of the population and relatively affordable mobile services and data costs.

These factors have led to an increase in the number of people using social media in Kenya. It is currently estimated that 8.2 million (16% of the population) use social media,³⁶ with the majority of Kenyans using WhatsApp and Facebook as their main social media platforms, followed by YouTube, Google, Instagram and Twitter.³⁷

Volume, location and engagement

Over the period July 2019 to August 2019, the police were mentioned up to 173 740 times by 43 175 unique authors. Twitter accounted for the majority of mentions at 92.8%, followed by Facebook at 3.5%. Most mentions of the police were reshares of, or replies to, other posts as opposed to original posts (see Table 2). This finding suggests that authors from Kenya are primarily reacting to content they see online rather than driving the conversation.

Table 2: Social media engagement on police

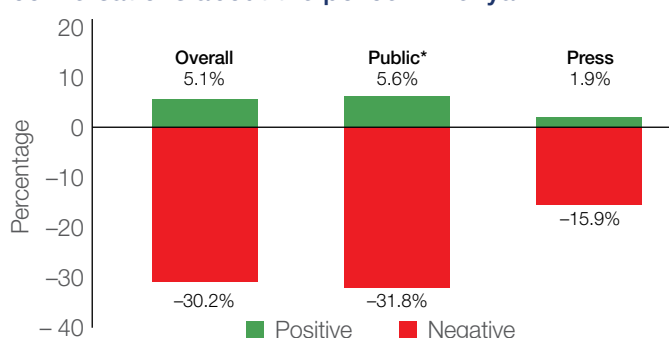
	Public		Media		Police	
Number of mentions	150 048		12 317		656	
Unprompted conversation	13 924	9.3%	10 350	84%	300	45.8%
Reply	44 417	29.6%	767	6.2%	207	31.5%
Reshare	91 707	61.1%	1 200	9.8%	149	22.7%

Of the total conversation on the police, 72.3% came from Kenya itself. The next biggest contributors were the United States (US) (1.7%), followed by Nigeria, the United Kingdom and South Africa (all at 0.4%). Within Kenya, 83% of the conversation came from Nairobi, followed by Mombasa (4.9%), Nakuru (1.9%), Kisumu (1.5%) and Eldoret (1.3%).

Sentiment towards the police

During the period under review, 5.1% of the conversation about the police consisted of positive mentions whereas 30.2% was negative (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Sentiment analysis of social media conversations about the police in Kenya



* Filtered for location Kenya and 'unknown' only; official police handles have been removed from the overall sentiment analysis

During this period, positive public sentiment was driven by a single story about two police officers rescuing an abandoned newborn baby.

Negative public sentiment was driven by individual stories about police brutality as well as four specific events related to police misconduct during this period. These events were: the arrest of 12 human rights activists in Huruma; the arrest of social activist Atty Owiso; the Saba Saba March for our Lives (a public protest against extrajudicial police killings); and the death of Abdullahi Kassim Yusuf (a community activist allegedly killed outside a military camp in Garissa). Examples of negative-sentiment Tweets from the public included:

👊 This is so scary to watch @ODDP_KE how can police just enter ones house, do a search and arrest without any paperwork, is this the Kenya of today? This is @atty_owiso early this morning at the house, taken to Buru Buru Police station #FreeAtty #KOT #CorruptionFightingBack t.co/66MwyC77BN

19th Aug 12:40 835

👊 So this lady is assaulted at her place of work by another female. After reporting at Kihara AP post in Gachie, she is beaten and locked up for reporting the lady that beat her because she was the wife to one of the cops?? Over to you @IPOA_KE @matundura78 @NPSOfficial_KE t.co/RKkgYzU9W

18th Jul 22:27 375

The media focused on different stories to those circulated by the public. Positive media sentiment was driven by the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs' Cooperation Organisation games, where the Kenyan police emerged as winners in the shooting competition.

Negative sentiment focussed on police corruption, such as their involvement in the drug trade and extortion of money from pub operators, as well as police officers involved in murder (including of their colleagues). Examples of negative-sentiment Tweets from the media included:



BreakingNews
@NationBreaking



👊 OCS IN Lamu arrested after release of drug haul from station in unclear circumstances, County police boss Koi says two more officers to be held. t.co/MLz1qJzEW

12th Aug 07:47 38



The Star, Kenya
@TheStarKenya

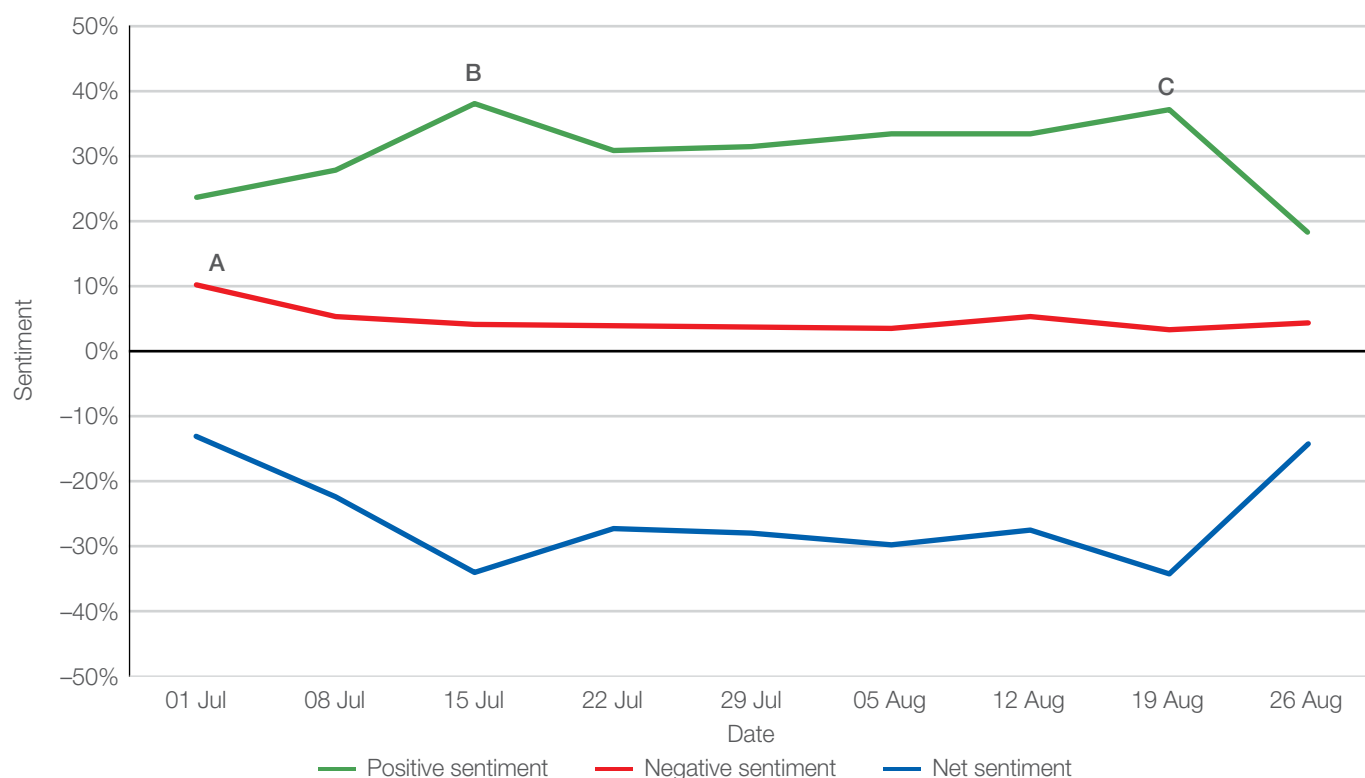


👊 In an unexpected turn of events, two top police chiefs in Mombasa are set to be moved after they were linked to ongoing war on drugs trade in Coast. -the-star.co.ke/news/2019-08-17-transfers-loom-as-coast-drug-war-implicates-senior-cops/

17th Aug 11:14 17

As can be seen in Figure 4, peaks in positive and negative sentiment correlated directly with specific events in time.

Figure 4: Sentiment towards the police over time



- A** Police officers Mohamed Noor and Charles Githinji rescued an abandoned new born baby. This positively impacted perceptions towards the police.
- B** The week of the 15th July saw a peak in negative sentiment which coincided with #FreeHuruma12 conversations.
- C** Negative sentiment peaks on the week of the 19th August, coinciding with the #FreeAtty protest.

Content and hashtags

Narratives around the primary themes in the conversation were driven by hashtags on Twitter. These hashtags raised awareness of the various incidents and/or events with which they were associated and resulted in spikes of specific hashtags used over time (see Figures 5 and 6).

The Social Justice Centres Working Group, @UhaiWetu, represents a network of the Social Justice Centres in Kenya. It was instrumental in driving the conversation involving the #SabaSabaMarch4OurLives, #FreeHuruma12, #SpeakOut and #YourSilenceKills movements. Workshop participants explained that this social justice coalition is strategic about collaboratively generating hashtags in response to specific events or incidents and deliberately pushes them from a group or organisational account.³⁸ The prevalence and traction of these hashtags on social media highlight how social media can be used to raise awareness and mobilise people around specific concerns, events or perspectives in Kenya.

In terms of the main themes around negative sentiment, the #StopTheBulletKE, #YourSilenceKills and #SpeakUp hashtags drove perspectives on the themes of *police brutality* and *rights violations*. #StopTheBulletKE is an online movement calling attention to police shootings and, during this period, members of the public encouraged each other to share stories about police shooting incidents.

Authors using these hashtags addressed how the youth in informal settlements are particularly vulnerable to police brutality, with stories involving the 'Nairobi ghettos' being particularly prevalent. #StopTheBulletKE was used in conjunction with #SabaSabaMarch4OurLives to raise awareness about and protest against the normalisation of extrajudicial killings in informal settlements.

The Saba Saba March for our Lives is an annual event organised by the Social Justice Centres' Working Group and is aimed at stopping extrajudicial killings and commemorating the victims of police brutality. The

Figure 5: Hashtag cloud by volume of mentions

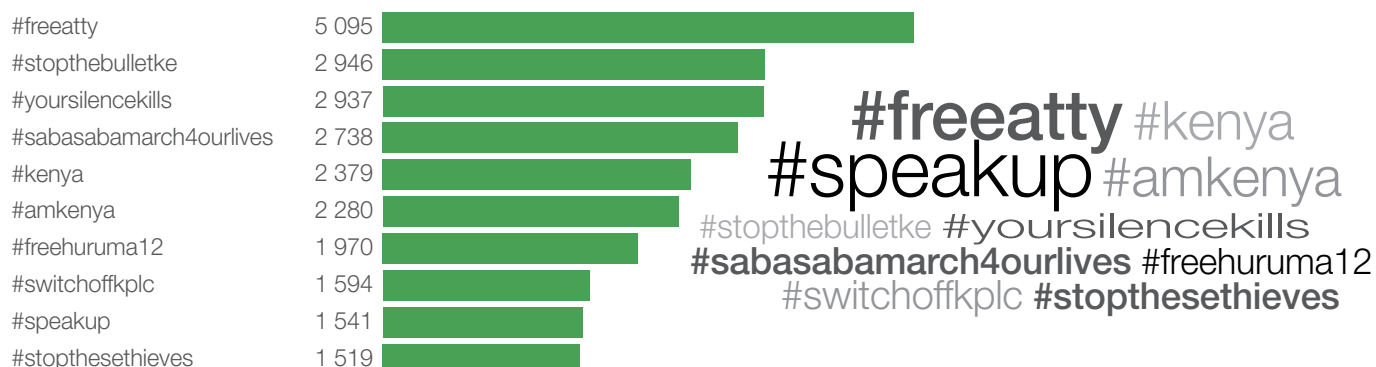
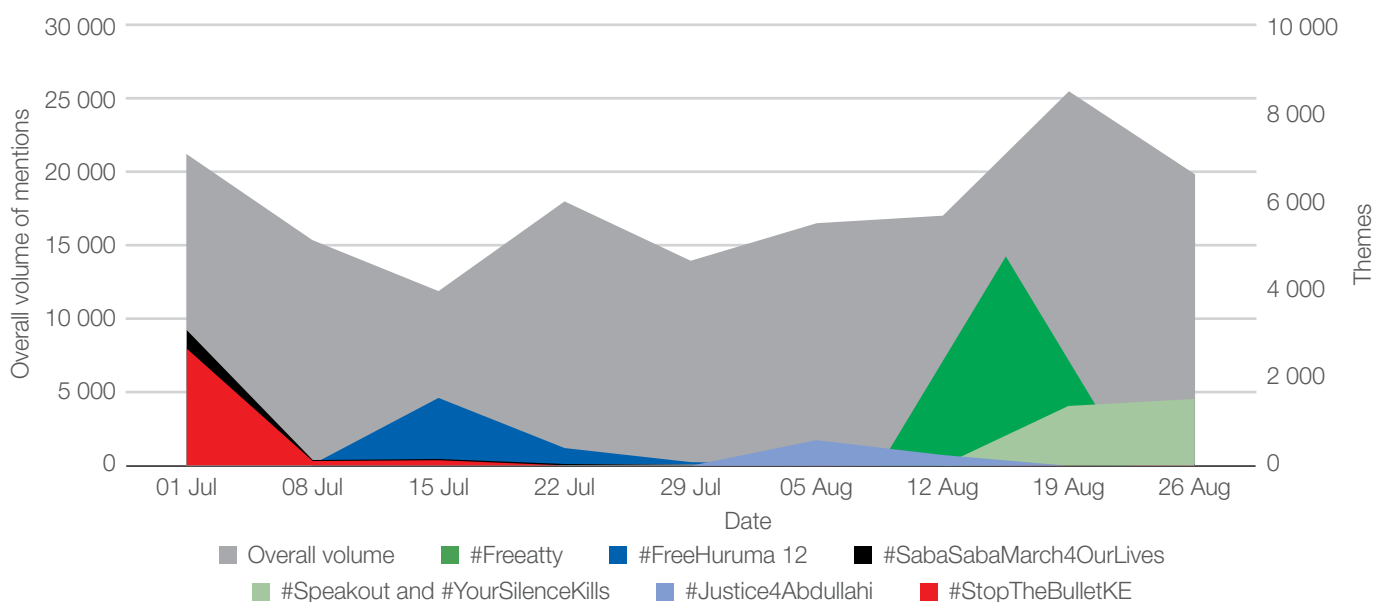


Figure 6: Hashtag volume over time



#SabaSabaMarch4OurLives hashtag was used during the first week of July, as the march happens annually on 7 July.

Examples of Tweets on police brutality and rights violations include:

My mother called me today to inform me three young men(all under 25yrs)from our neighbourhood were killed by police last night, one of them my childhood friend. #Speakup #YourSilenceKill @AmnestyKenya @MissingVoicesKE @ODPP_KE @HakiKNCHHR @thekhrc ADCI_Kenya

24th Aug 15:02 33

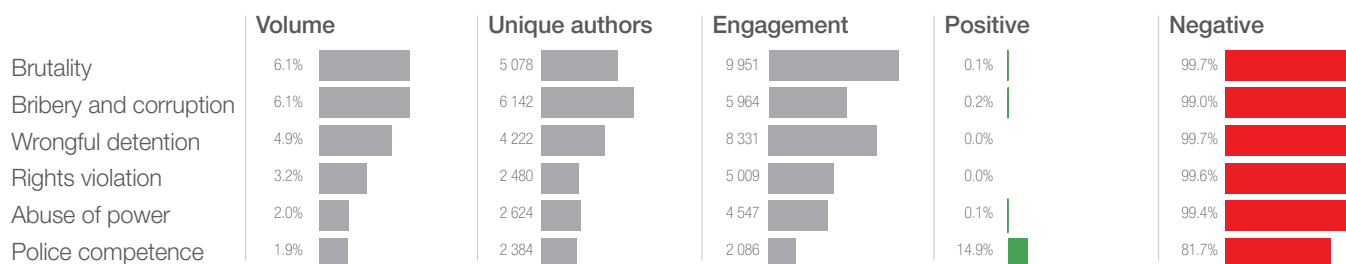
@shailjapatrel Human Rights for all Equally whether I come from the Ghetto or from High end society... I deserve to access clean and safe water. Security and not be insecure coz of killer cops. #sabasaba2019 #sabasabaMarch4ourlives t.co/S2PobFKdF4

7th Jul 14:53

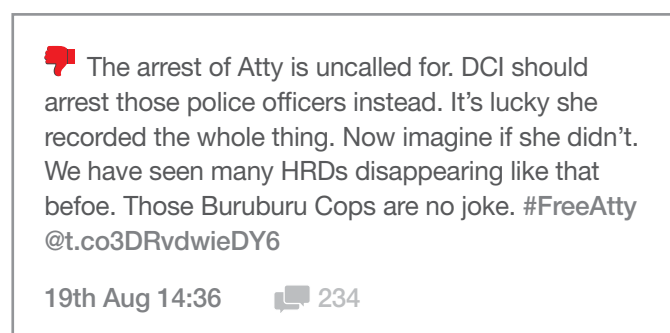
375

As shown in Figure 7, up to 6.9% of the conversation involved the themes of *abuse of power* and *wrongful detention*, linked to the arrest of Atty Owiso. Owiso, who prior to her arrest had published corruption allegations implicating the governor of Nairobi, was arrested on human trafficking charges.³⁹ The 'live streaming' of the

Figure 7: Content engagement and sentiment



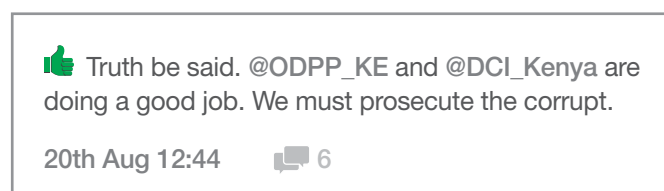
arrest on Facebook drew widespread online attention (see example Tweet below), with Owiso claiming that the police did not have the paperwork to support her arrest and that an officer drew his weapon during the arrest.



Up to 6.1% of the conversation involved the themes of *bribery and corruption*. Social media users reported that police take money during arrests and that traffic officers waive traffic indiscretions provided motorists pay a penalty at traffic stops.

Police competence was the only theme that elicited positive sentiment – up to 14.9% of the conversation around police competence was positive. In these mentions, the public praised the police for their ‘good

work’, the efficiency of police services and for reducing traffic jams in Mombasa. The following Tweet is an example of such mentions:



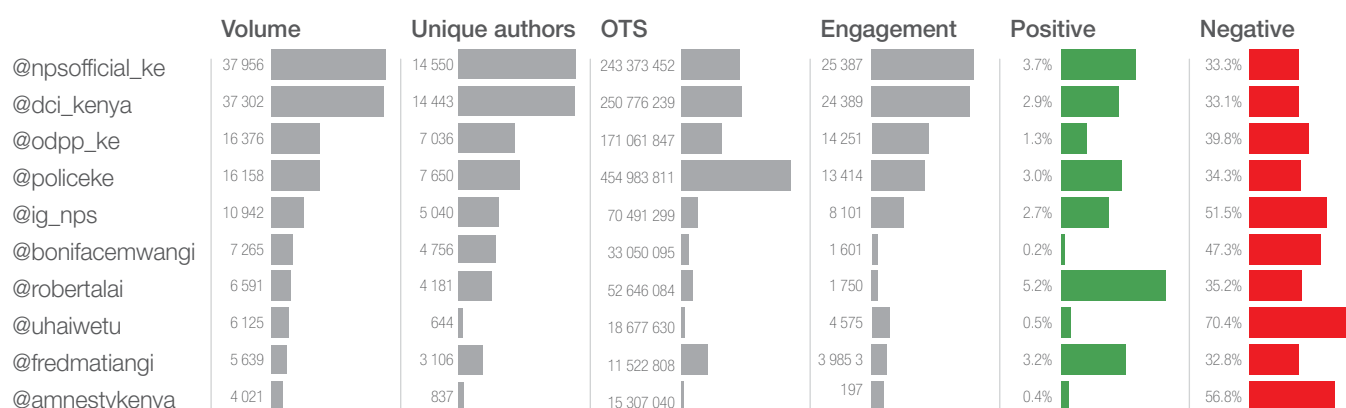
Direction of conversation, engagement and response

Figure 8 shows towards whom or what the public’s posts were directed. Handles or @ tags referencing a particular person or group signify that those people, institutions or organisations are being talked about or requested to respond to an issue or concern.⁴⁰

The official handles for the police services were the most mentioned profiles:

- @npsofficial_ke is the official Twitter account of the National Police Service of Kenya
- @dci_kenya is the official Twitter account of the Directorate of Criminal Investigations of Kenya

Figure 8: Tags used by members of the public in directing their social media posts



- @policeke is the Kenya Police Service
- @ig_nps is the Inspector General of Police in Kenya (Hillary N. Mutyambai)
- @odpp_ke is the National Prosecution Authority of Kenya.

Members of the public also tagged or reached out to the following individuals: Boniface Mwangi (a photojournalist, social activist and politician); Robert Alai (a Kenyan blogger, internet entrepreneur and activist); and Fred Matiang'i, the current Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Security in Kenya. The Social Justice Centres Working Group (@UhaiWetu) and Amnesty International Kenya (@amnestykenya) were also tagged.

Some members of the public tagged either individual political or civil society leaders at the same time as the police, while some tagged all three for maximum reach and impact. The Tweet below is an example of a social media user tagging multiple handles in order to ensure maximum reach:

 **#AmKenan** We cannot have people drunk with power harassing activists! Forcefully removing people from their homes is abuse of power by @MikeSonko. They also have no right to take @atty_kim phone! @DCI_Kenya @PoliceKE @NPSOfficial_KE #FreeAtty #STOPtheseTHIEVES t.co/UtNdjzizBd

19th Aug 12:14  805

Interestingly, posts from the handle @NPSOfficial_KE elicited a large volume of engagement from the public who reshared and replied to these posts. When @NPSOfficial_KE replied to the public, sentiment towards this profile appeared to improve, as shown in Figure 9.

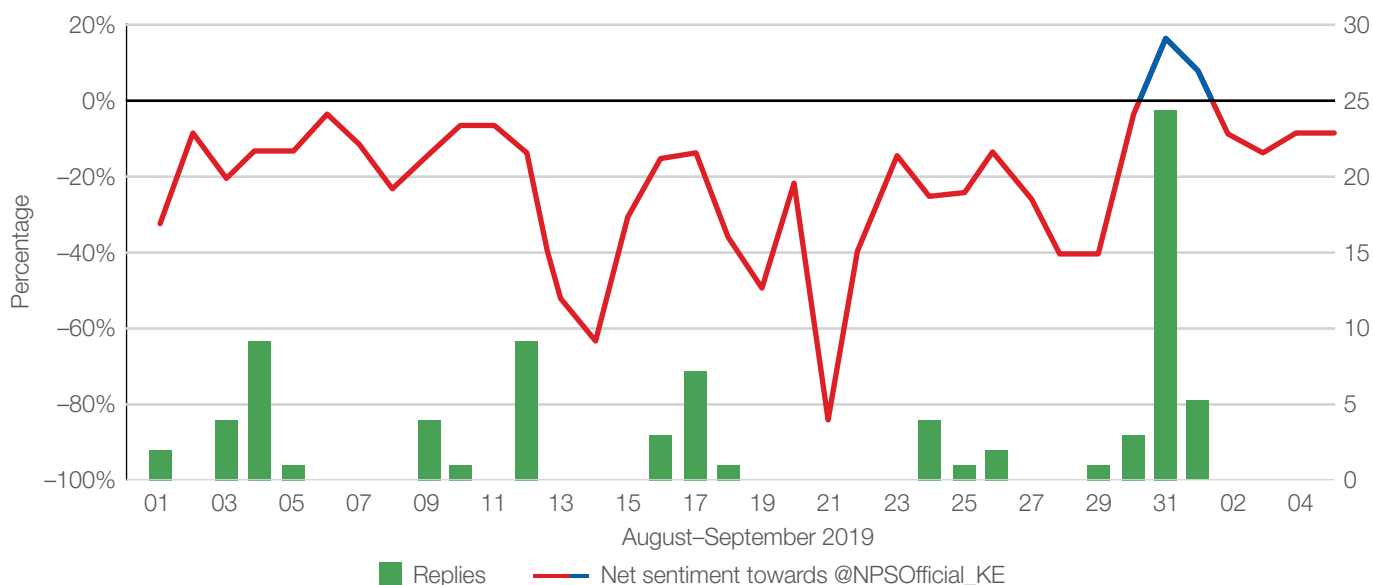
These findings suggest that although social justice activist groups initiated some of the hashtags and protests associated with the most-mentioned events and issues, activist profiles were not the first point of call for the public. The majority of members of the public on social media in Kenya are turning to, and eager to engage with, police officials and agencies directly to raise their concerns.

In their own words: The Social Justice Centres Working Group⁴¹

On 20th July 2019, members of the social justice movement network convened at Kiamaiiko ward to debrief after a successful Saba Saba March. All due process had been followed before calling for the gathering, including notifying the Commanding Officer of Huruma Police Station.

However, as the night wore on, we received the news that three of our comrades had been arrested and were being held at the Huruma Police Station. Together with other comrades, we walked to the police station to find out the reason for the arrest. We found some of our comrades, also members of the social justice movement, intervening with police on behalf of those arrested, asking to know the charges with which they were booked.

Figure 9: Net sentiment and replies from handle @NPSOfficial_KE



As news spread of the arrest, more members of the movement flocked to the station in solidarity with those seeking information on the arrest. Things quickly turned sour and we were bundled out of the police station and threatened with arrest if we did not comply. We still did not know the reason for the arrest as no charges had been placed and it soon dawned on us that this was a case of arbitrary arrest which had become the norm in Huruma area and informal settlements in Nairobi.

Criminalisation of the youth is a common practice and state-sanctioned violence is often meted out on the youth in the form of arbitrary arrest, extrajudicial execution and use of unnecessary firepower to contain peaceful protestors, as we witnessed that night.

We camped outside the police station singing freedom songs. Our nonviolent methods were met with teargas, arrests and police brutality. Our comrades were beaten, and police shot in the air. We had no choice but to disperse into the labyrinth of Kiamiko ward and wait for daylight.

As we continued to agitate online using #FreeHuruma12 the following day, we saw our efforts bear fruit with the release of 12 of our comrades on a free bond. We did not use bribes, but our collective force to bargain for the freedom of our wrongfully arrested comrades.

They appeared in court the following morning, where six of them were charged with being drunk and disorderly and the remaining six were charged with incitement to violence and malicious damage to property. The charges of the first six were dropped because they had no basis in court, while the charges of the remaining six were never presented in court.

The #FreeHuruma12 social media campaign was instrumental in putting pressure on the police. Some police officers were asking why we had to put the matter on social media because it was an embarrassment to the police and all attention was directed to the Huruma police station because they were trending on Twitter for the wrong reasons.

Our spontaneous protest did not emerge from blind courage, it was bolstered by knowledge of our constitutional rights and the awareness of human rights violations, all of which had been fostered through constant community dialogue and debate on local and national issues that affected us, documentation of human rights violations and regular interventions for social change on various platforms within the social justice movement network. There was unity and power in our numbers and, above all, a sound understanding and analysis of the social conditions that affected us.

Tanzania: #changetanzania

Context

The constitution of Tanzania (1977) established the Tanzania Police Force (TPF) as part of the armed forces of Tanzania but does not regulate the TPF in any way.⁴² A constitutional reform process begun in Tanzania in 2011, which included institutional police reform, has stalled. Legislatively, the TPF is guided by the Police Force and Auxiliary Services Act (2002), which 'emphasises the police role in preventing and controlling crime and maintaining security, rather than upholding rights and responding to community needs.'⁴³

Tanzania does not currently have an independent civilian oversight agency exclusively for the police

Internal oversight of the police is implemented through internal disciplinary action (such as tribunals) and other measures instituted by the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Police and the Inspector General of Police (IGP).⁴⁴ Members of the public and police officers can report police misconduct at station-level complaints desks or send a text message to the IGP to raise issues or submit complaints.⁴⁵ This internal police accountability system is seen as 'complicated, uncoordinated and inefficient.'⁴⁶

Tanzania does not currently have an independent civilian oversight or accountability agency exclusively for the police but options for external accountability include the Office of the Ombudsman or Permanent Commission of Enquiry, the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance, and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau.

There are some reports of police officers implicated in extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and the torture of suspects in police custody.⁴⁷ However, most allegations of abuse and misconduct within the last five years have occurred within the context of policing political protests and as part of a campaign of repression against opposition political parties. This has resulted in deaths, harassment, arbitrary arrests and the detention of prominent political opponents.⁴⁸

The Tanzania constitution enshrines the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. However, these rights have increasingly come under threat since 2015 when the current president came into power.

A media crackdown supported by a series of restrictive laws with harsh penalties has affected mainstream news media as well as social media.⁴⁹ Tanzania has dropped 37 places in the World Press Freedom Index in two years,⁵⁰ with journalists subjected to self-censorship for fear of being followed, intimidated and harassed.⁵¹ Workshop participants alleged that, in order to silence them, journalists and human rights defenders are arrested for economic crimes because there is no bail for such crimes in Tanzania.⁵²

The prohibitive annual registration fees for bloggers and owners of online discussion platforms required by the Online Content Regulations has silenced many independent online

voices. In addition, social media users who publish content that ‘causes annoyance’ or ‘leads to public disorder’ are liable for fines or imprisonment. The ‘ambiguous language of the new rules’ has stifled public criticism.⁵³

The recently enacted Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act (2019) jeopardises the autonomy of non-governmental organisations by imposing excessive regulations on the sector.⁵⁴

Within this context, there is restricted space for the public to engage online in any capacity, especially in relation to holding the government or government agencies (such as the police) to account.

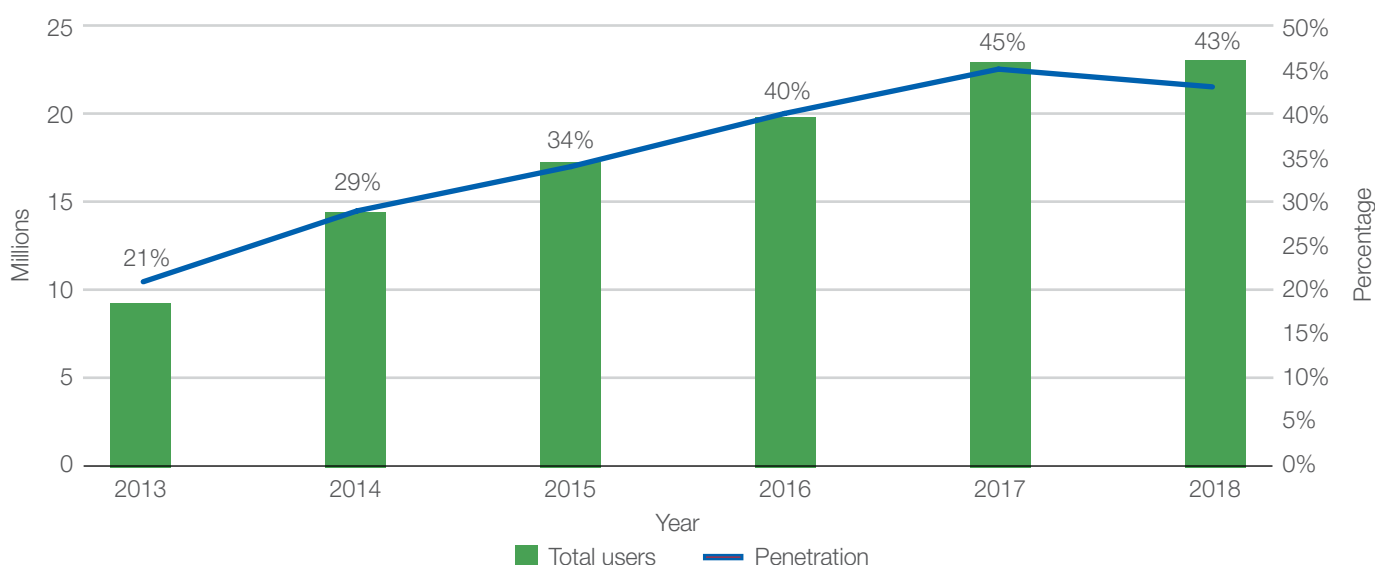
According to the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority, the number of internet users in Tanzania has doubled in 5 years, from 21% in 2013 to 43% in 2018 (see Table 3 and Figure 10).⁵⁵

Table 3: Estimated number of internet users in Tanzania by technology type

Type of service	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Fixed wireless	1 056 940	1 913 082	662 882	1 218 693	3 468 188	135 954
Mobile wireless	7 493 823	11 320 031	16 280 943	18 014 358	19 006 223	22 281 727
Fixed wired	761 508	984 198	319 698	629 474	520 698	725 279
Total users	9 312 272	14 217 311	17 263 523	19 862 525	22 995 109	23 142 960
Penetration	21 %	29 %	34 %	40 %	45 %	43 %

Source: TCRA, Quarterly Communications Statistics: April – June 2019, p. 14, https://www.tcra.go.tz/images/TelCom_Statistics_June_2019.xlsx.pdf

Figure 10: Estimated number of internet users in Tanzania



Source: TCRA, Quarterly Communications Statistics: April – June 2019, p. 14, https://www.tcra.go.tz/images/TelCom_Statistics_June_2019.xlsx.pdf

The GSMA estimates that mobile penetration in Tanzania reached 18.5% of the population in 2018.⁵⁶ However, 3G and 4G networks cover around 61% and 28% of Tanzania's population respectively meaning that 'more than half the population are unable to benefit from the social and economic benefits of mobile broadband connectivity.'⁵⁷

Approximately 8.2% of Tanzania's population are active social media users with almost 90% of those accessing social media platforms via mobile devices.⁵⁸ The most popular platform is Facebook, followed by Instagram and Twitter.⁵⁹

Volume, location and engagement

Over the period July 2019 to August 2019, the police were mentioned up to 65 112 times by 12 912 unique authors. Twitter accounted for the majority of mentions at 95.8%, followed by Facebook at 0.5%.

The majority of the conversation on the police in Tanzania was reactive, in the form of reshares (69.8%) and replies to mentions posted by influential authors or media sources (24.2%), as shown in Table 4.

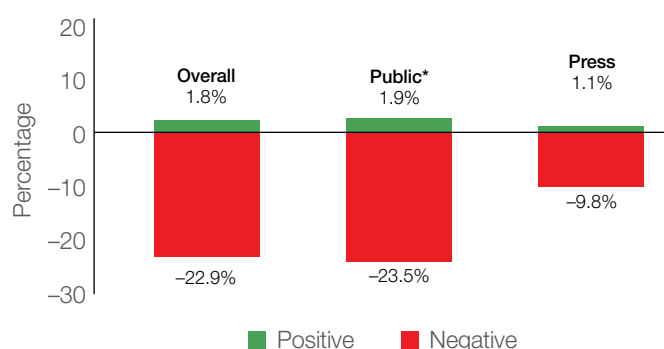
Just over half (57.3%) of the total conversation on the police was generated within Tanzania, followed by the US (3.7%), Kenya (3.1%), South Africa and Zambia (each around 1%). Within Tanzania, 37.4% of the conversation came from Dar es Salaam, followed by Arusha (5.5%), Dodoma (4.7%) and Mwanza (2.7%).

Sentiment towards the police

The public was more negative about the police than the media, but also slightly more positive (see Figure 11).

Unlike Kenya, members of the public and the media in Tanzania addressed similar positive and negative themes in their social media mentions about the police. Positive sentiment was driven by an incident in which a police officer refused to salute Tanzania's ruling political party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), for fear of violating

Figure 11: Sentiment analysis of social media posts about the police in Tanzania



* Filtered for location Tanzania and 'unknown' only; official police handles have been removed from the overall sentiment analysis

his work principles. The following are examples of Tweets from the media and the public on this topic:

Mwananchi Newspapers
@MwananchiNews

👍 Kaitu Mkuu wa CCM, Dk Bashiru Ally amampongeza askari polisi mkoani Pwani aliyegoma kutumia salamu za chama hicho tawala nchini kwa maelezo kuwa ni kinyume na maadili ya kazi yake. #MwananchiUdates t.co/K6wbfhRBod

27th Aug 17:43 24

Translation: The Secretary General of CCM party Dr Bashiru Ally has praised the police officer from coast region who refused to salute the ruling party (CCM) due to this being against his work ethics

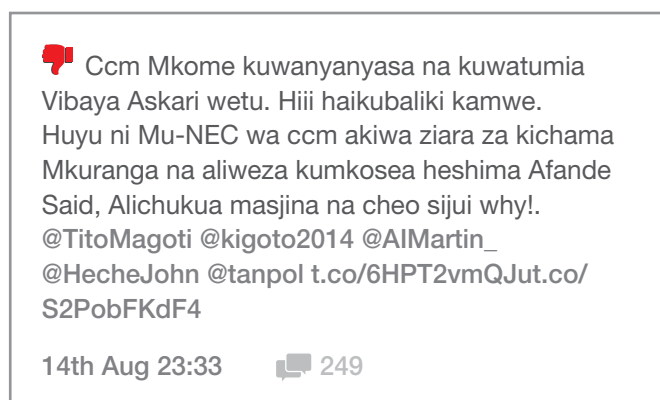
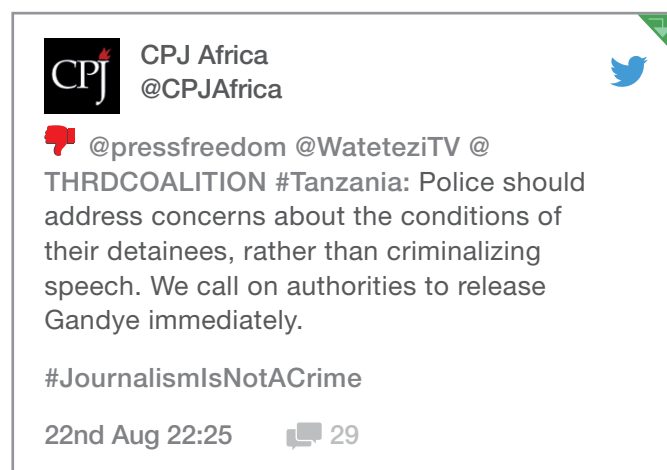
👍 Wakuu @tanpol, this is to inform you that we appreciate professionalism. CC for this askari. t.co/8fLQ9Oz8Sm

15th Aug 07:40 528

Table 4: Social media engagement on police

	Public		Media		Police	
Number of mentions	54 107		1 975		54	
Unprompted conversation	3 188	6%	1 836	93%	46	85%
Reply	13 125	24.2%	42	2%	7	13%
Reshare	37 794	69.8%	97	5%	1	2%

Negative sentiment about the police from members of the public was largely driven by criticism that the police are doing the bidding of the CCM and allegedly intimidating the opposition. The media focused their negative sentiment around missing Tanzanian journalist Erick Kabendera. Reports of the abduction and disappearance of human rights defenders, activists, journalists, businessmen, opposition politicians, artists and other individuals who were critical of the government drove negative perceptions towards the police, who were believed to be implicated in these disappearances. Below are two examples of such Tweets:



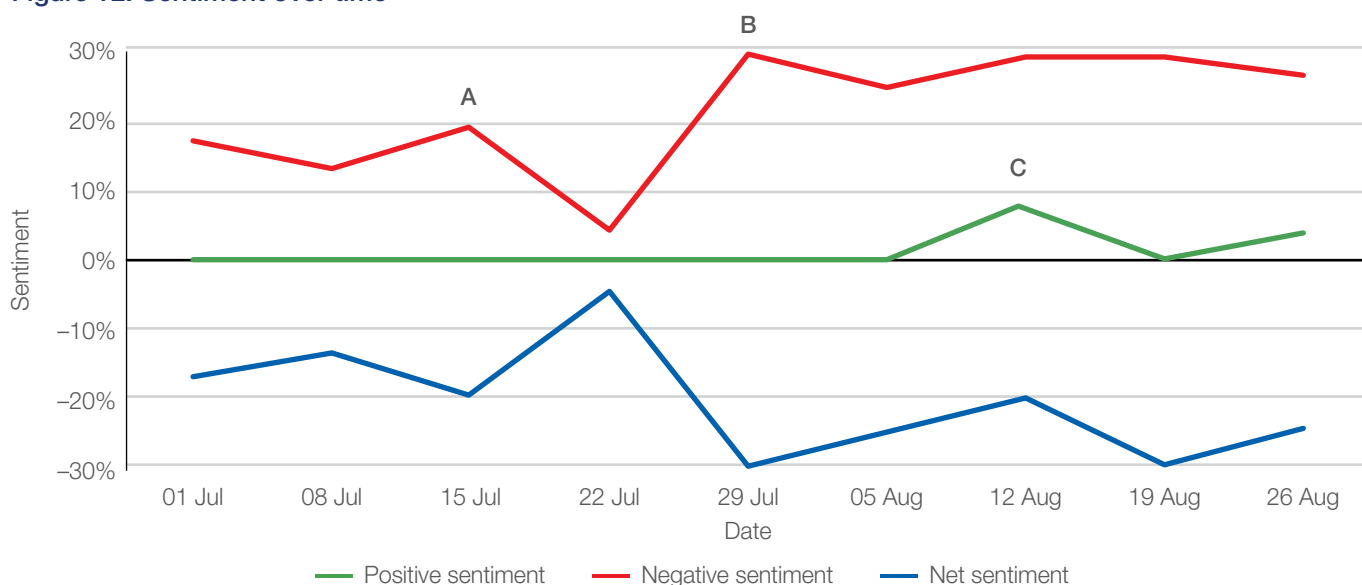
Translation: Shame CCM should stop oppressing our police officers! This is not acceptable at all. This (person) is a member of NEC and he was on a party related mission in Mkuranga and he has disrespected police officer Said, Granting himself a higher rank!

Figure 12 shows how peaks in sentiment over time intersected with specific online discussions.

Content and hashtags

Hashtags were widely used to raise awareness around specific issues, incidents and concerns, especially regarding specific journalists who had disappeared. Some of the most popular hashtags, as depicted in Figure 13, were the following:

Figure 12: Sentiment over time



A Author discussed police involvement with the CCM.

B The conversation around 'Uhuru wa kujieleza' or 'freedom of expression' peaks the negative sentiment on the week of the 29th June.

C A police officer refused to salute the CCM and the public praised this, claiming that the officer showed high levels of professionalism.

- **#ChangeTanzania:** This is a unifying hashtag for a social movement that started on social media with the aim of bringing positive, sustainable change to Tanzania across all sectors of society.⁶⁰ With a strong focus on strengthening good governance, up to 46.8% of mentions about the police agencies used this hashtag. #ChangeTanzania was key in driving the conversation when used in conjunction with the other hashtags on this list.
- **#freeerickkabendera:** Freelance investigative journalist, Erick Kabendera was arrested at his home in Dar es Salaam and charged with three counts of leading organised crime, failure to pay taxes and money laundering. The public believes that Kabendera was prosecuted for being a journalist, which led to the creation of the hashtag #JournalismIsNotACrime. Kabendera had published stories about infighting in the CCM and an alleged plot to block President Magufuli from running for a second term next year. His arrest raised questions around freedom of speech and the safety of journalists.
- **#justice4azory:** Azory Gwanda, a freelance journalist, disappeared in November 2017 after investigating a series of mysterious killings in his community.
- **#UhuruWaHabari:** This hashtag is a call on the government to repeal the controversial Media Services Act and promulgate a law that safeguards the freedom of the press through an inclusive reform process.

Figure 14 illustrates how effective hashtags were in driving conversation around certain themes and highlights how social media can mobilise and bring awareness around specific events or perspectives in Tanzania.

In terms of the themes, *wrongful detention* comprised 10.7% of the total volume of mentions about the police, related to a series of arrests of journalists including the arrest of Erick Kabendera. Public complaints about the police using excessive force, especially with protesters, resulted in 1.8% of the conversation being related to *police brutality*. *Abuse of power* comprised 1.6% of the conversation, with members of the public alleging that the police were politically biased and working with the ruling CCM to intimidate the main opposition party. *Rights violations* occupied 1.5% of the conversation, in relation to the curtailment of freedom of expression.

Figure 13: Most popular hashtags by mention

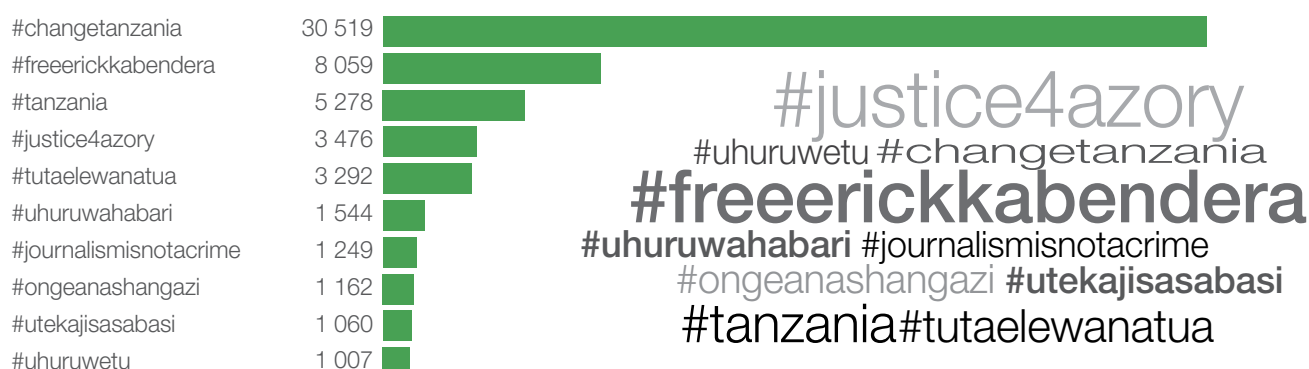
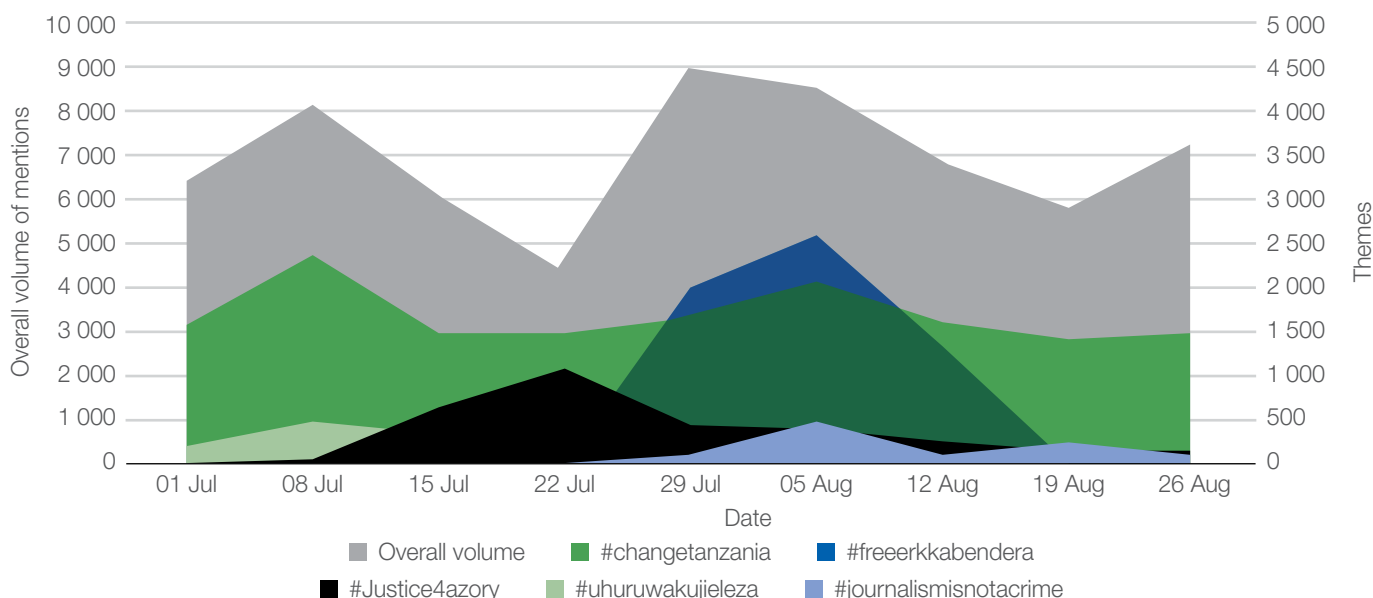


Figure 14: Hashtag volume over time



Direction of conversation, engagement and response

The engagement corridors in Tanzania are very different from those in Kenya, with a focus on social justice profiles (see Figure 15). Taken together, the majority of posts were directed towards the following activist/influencer profiles, most of which are linked to #ChangeTanzania:

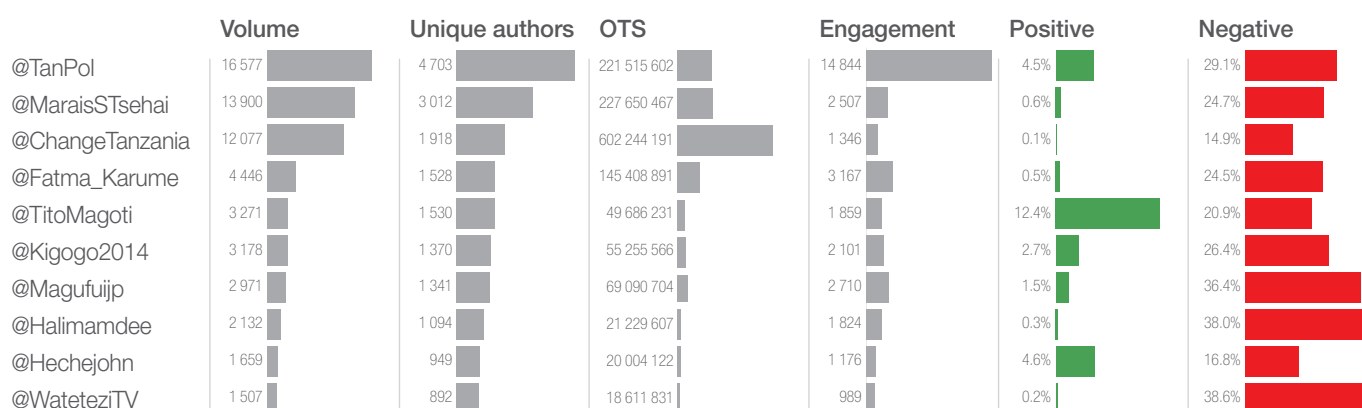
- @MariaSTsehai – a Tanzanian activist and founder of the @ChangeTanzania movement
- @Fatma_Karume – an advocate of the High Court of Tanzania and an activist for the rule of law and democracy in Tanzania
- @TitoMagoti – a human rights activist affiliated with the Legal and Human Rights Centre

- @Kigogo2014 – self-described as a ‘fearless whistleblower’ and believer in free speech
- @WateteziTV – a non-profit online television service established by the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition to air programmes related to human rights.

The official TFP Twitter account, @TanPol, was the single handle that received the most mentions in posts by members of the public, indicating that the public was keen to engage directly with the police on issues of importance to them.

Conversation was also directed towards various politicians, including the Tanzanian President

Figure 15: Most popular tags used by members of the public in directing their social media posts



(@Magufulijp) and opposition Chadema politicians (@Halimamdee and @Hechejohn).

A large number of users directed their posts to activists, politicians and the police simultaneously to maximise the reach and impact of their posts.

Out of 16 577 mentions, @TanPol only replied four times, indicating that the TPF has very little interest in engaging with the public online. The most responsive profiles were @ChangeTanzania, which replied 1 307 times and sometimes entered into a dialogue with followers, and @MariaSTsehai who replied 199 times. Of the politicians, the most responsive was @Fatma_Karume with 23 replies. Interestingly, the president's profile (@Magufulijp) did not post any responses.

In their own words: The Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC)⁶¹

Between 2016 and 2018, there have been repeated incidents of arbitrary arrests and denial of bail, abductions, enforced disappearances and attempted murder of people with varying profiles in Tanzania.

Several hashtags calling for the release of people who had been abducted, disappeared and threatened with their lives and those arbitrarily detained have gone viral on social media, especially Twitter. Hashtags like #BringBackMo, #JusticeForAzory, #JusticeForLissu, #BringBackAzory, #BringBackRoma and many more have been dominant. To call for police accountability, LHRC joined netizens who created a hashtag #MwiguluMustGo calling for the resignation of the then Minister for Home Affairs, Mwigulu Nchemba, who did not resign but was later fired by President Magufuli.

Social media has been very instrumental in reminding the law enforcers of their duty with no exclusion to police officers. Netizens in the country through social media have been proposing for swift actions from the top police officers and government leaders against prejudicial treatment by police officers against suspects.

Uganda: #2019yearofaction

Context

Established by the constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), the Uganda Police Force (UPF) is mandated to protect life and property, preserve law and order, prevent and detect crime and must 'observe

and respect human rights and freedoms in the performance of [its] functions.'⁶²

Internal accountability mechanisms in the UPF include the Professional Standards Unit (which handles complaints of police misconduct from members of the public),⁶³ the Department of Police Human Rights,⁶⁴ the Police Council (responsible for internal police discipline),⁶⁵ and the Police Authority (which hears and determines appeals from decisions made by the Police Council).⁶⁶

External accountability for the police is carried out by the Ugandan parliament, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) and the Inspector General of Government in relation to complaints about corruption.

Police brutality is often linked to the suppression of opposition politics

There are no official statistics of the number and nature of complaints laid against the UPF by members of the public. However, reports have linked the UPF to a range of human rights violations, including torture, detention in police custody beyond the constitutionally mandated period and 62 cases of extrajudicial killings between 2016 and 2018.⁶⁷ Police brutality is often linked to the suppression of opposition politics, including the violent control and dispersal of crowds (including the use of tear gas and live ammunition), the arrest of opposition candidates on fabricated charges and the killing of members of the public demonstrating against the arrest of politicians Bobi Wine and Kassiano Wadri.⁶⁸

There is an active civil society in Uganda, despite being restricted by various legal and registration requirements.

Over the last several years, a number of independent media houses have been raided, shut down or prevented from broadcasting, while journalists have been subjected to harassment, arrest and the destruction of their equipment.⁶⁹

Despite this, Freedom House reported that 'private speech is relatively unrestrained and Ugandans openly criticise the government on social media.'⁷⁰ However,

the Ugandan government implemented a social media tax in July 2018, which means that social media users are required to pay 200 shillings (\$0.05) per day to access popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.⁷¹

The Uganda Communications Commission reported that by June 2018 there were 18.5 million internet users in Uganda (47.4% of the population) – a figure that had dropped from 19.1 million in March 2018.⁷² GSMA reported that 19.8 million people in Uganda have mobile subscriptions in Uganda and nearly half of those access internet services through their mobile device – smartphone usage has quadrupled in Uganda over the last four years to approximately six million.⁷³ 3G and 4G mobile broadband networks cover four in five people in the country.⁷⁴

Uganda has an estimated 2.5 million active social media users (5.6% penetration).⁷⁵ The most popular social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.⁷⁶ Interestingly, the Uganda National Information Technology Authority reports that 98% of Uganda's government ministries, departments and agencies use social media as a tool to communicate with the public – primarily to respond to customer opinions, reviews and questions but also to publish institutional information.⁷⁷

Volume, location and engagement

Over the period July 2019 to August 2019, the police were mentioned up to 80 823 times by 21 186 unique authors. Twitter accounted for the majority of mentions at 82.9%, followed by Facebook at 12.9%. Social media users mostly engaged with each other, responding to each other or resharing posts, as seen in Table 5. Posts from the police received a high rate of engagement, which suggests that the public was highly responsive to content published by police agencies.

Just over half (54.8%) of the total conversation on the police was generated within Uganda, followed by the US (2.3%), Kenya (1.5%) and Nigeria (1.1%). Workshop participants explained that many social media conversations are generated from accounts outside of the country as a way to circumvent the Uganda internet tax.⁷⁸ Within Uganda, 70.5% of the conversation came from Kampala, followed by Wakiso (2.8%) and Mbarara (1.8%).

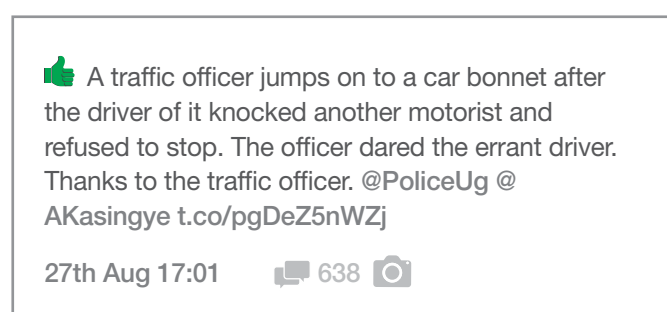
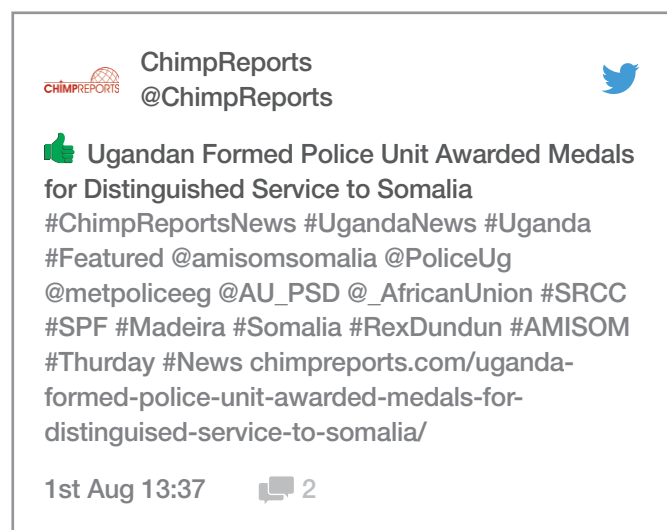
Table 5: Social media engagement on police

	Public		Media		Police	
Number of mentions	68 057		3 940		772	
Unprompted conversation	5 775	8.5%	3 600	91.4%	219	28.4%
Reply	31 312	46%	161	4.1%	506	65.5%
Reshare	30 970	45.5%	179	4.5%	47	6.1%

Sentiment towards the police

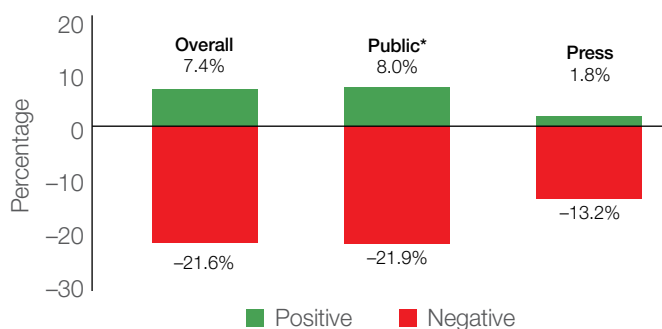
The public were significantly more positive about the police than the media but also markedly more negative, as shown in Figure 16.

Positive sentiment from the public was generated by resharing positive news stories involving police officers – for example, one police officer went to dangerous lengths to catch a criminal by jumping onto a car bonnet. Positive media coverage included the recognition of a police unit for exemplary service as peacekeepers in Somalia. Examples of these positive Tweets include:

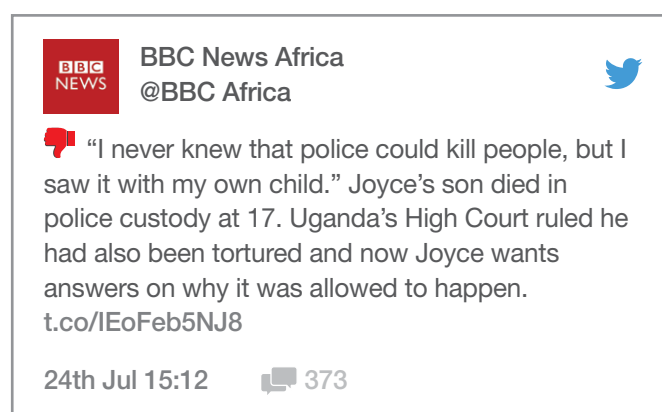


Negative sentiment from both the public and the media was focused around the death of Ziggy Wine, a local musician affiliated with the opposition politician Bobi Wine, who some believe died as a result of injuries sustained from a beating while in police custody. The police have denied these allegations, claiming that he died in a motorcycle accident. The public and media also engaged with the story of a 17-year-old who died while in police custody. Examples of these Tweets are:

Figure 16: Sentiment analysis of social media posts about the police in Uganda



* Filtered for location Uganda and 'unknown' only; official police handles have been removed from the overall sentiment analysis

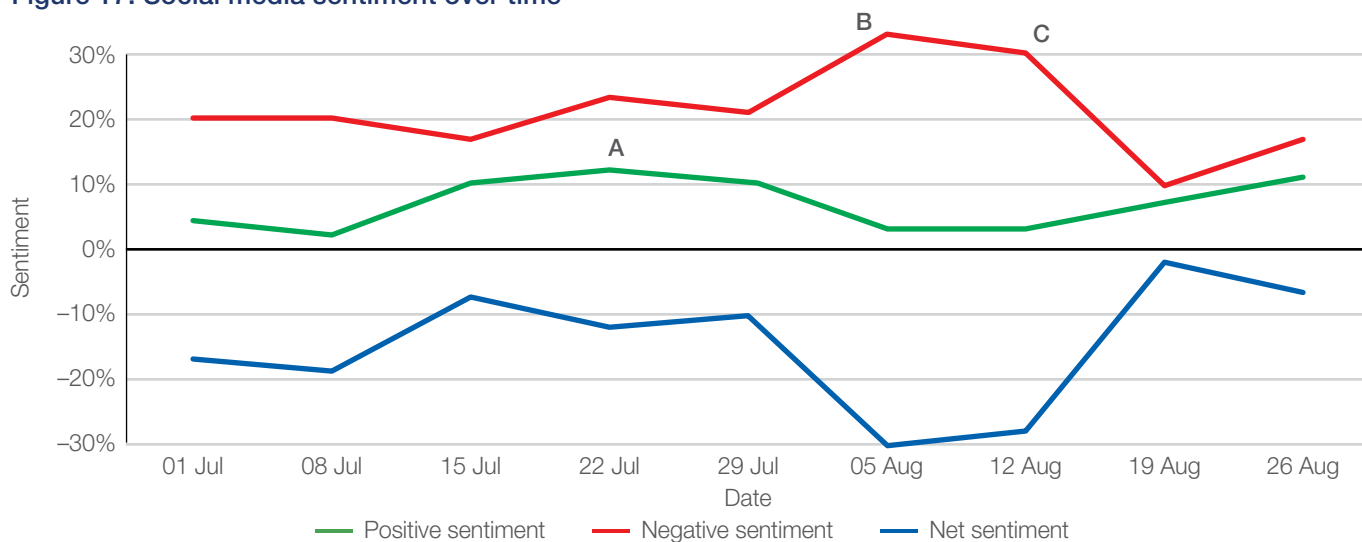


Over time, sentiment peaked in relation to three specific conversations, as shown in Figure 17.

Content and hashtags

Interestingly, unlike Kenya and Tanzania, Ugandans did not utilise hashtags to drive narratives, bring awareness to issues or influence conversation trends (as seen in Figure 18). The most used hashtag was #UOT (an acronym for Ugandans on Twitter), which is general and has no specific links to perceptions around police agencies. #UOT was followed by #UgandaVSNigeria,

Figure 17: Social media sentiment over time



- A** Uganda police officers protested in the street to raise awareness about violence against women. The protest occurred in March 2018 but continues to positively impact perceptions.
- B** Dissatisfied with police investigations around the death of local musician 'Ziggy Wine', authors criticised the police for possibly having an agenda and 'covering' up the truth of the artist's death.
- C** Authors revisited the death of Yasin Kauma who was allegedly killed during a security operation led by the police. Authors requested more information about this case.

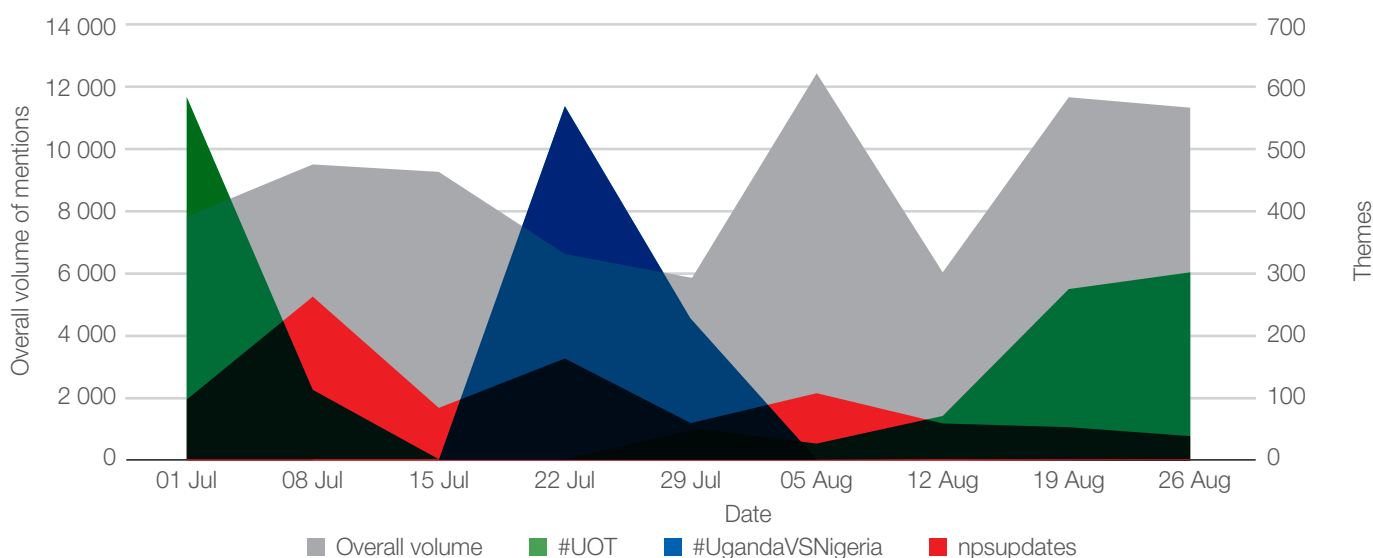
used to compare Ugandan and Nigerian police services, and #npsupdates, used to share news articles or direct conversation towards specific media sources.

In terms of the themes, *police brutality* comprised 3.4% of the conversation around the police in Uganda and *violation of rights* comprised 1.6%. Both of these were related to the alleged torture and death of Joyce Bikyahaga Namata's 17-year old son while in police custody. Conversation about *wrongful detention* (1%) involved the arrest of

Preacher Joseph Kabuleta, who was said to have offended the President with his controversial posts on social media. Joel Ssenyoni, the official spokesperson for the opposition People Power Movement, claimed that his supporters were arrested for their political beliefs, driving conversation around *abuse of power*.

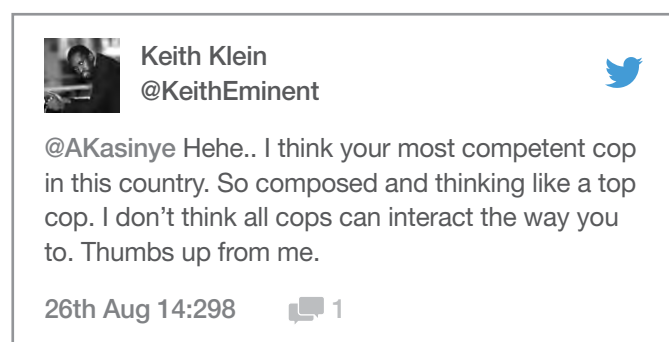
Negative conversation about *police competence* was driven by the police's handling of investigations into the death of Ziggy Wine, attacks on the Mobile money business and the

Figure 18: Hashtag volume over time



killing of several Muslim clerics in Uganda. While 68.4% of the conversation about *police competence* was negative, it was the only theme that also generated positive sentiment.

Describing himself on Twitter as an Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIGP), @AKasingye was instrumental in driving positive perceptions about the police, posting up to 573 times and driving up to 30.2% positive engagement from the general public. Kasingye also received positive feedback from the public for his communication, such as the following Tweet:



Direction of conversation, engagement and response

Members of the public directed the majority of their mentions to the official police handle, @PoliceUG, as well as to @AKasingye. Following police profiles, Ugandans directed their conversation towards media handles (@ntvuganda, @nbstv, @newvisionwire and @DailyMonitor) or politicians' handles (such as the President @KagutaMuseveni, opposition politician @HEBobiwine and government spokesman @OfwonoOpondo). This can be seen in Figure 19. This is a unique finding, as Kenyans and Tanzanians typically directed their conversation towards activist-type profiles.

In terms of responsiveness, @AKasingye had the highest rate of engagement, replying to Tweets directed at him 495 times (see the example Tweet below) and resharing Tweets 44 times. This was followed by the media – @nbstv replied 59 times and @ntvuganda replied 52 times. President Museveni did not reply to any mentions, while Bobi Wine only replied 4 times.

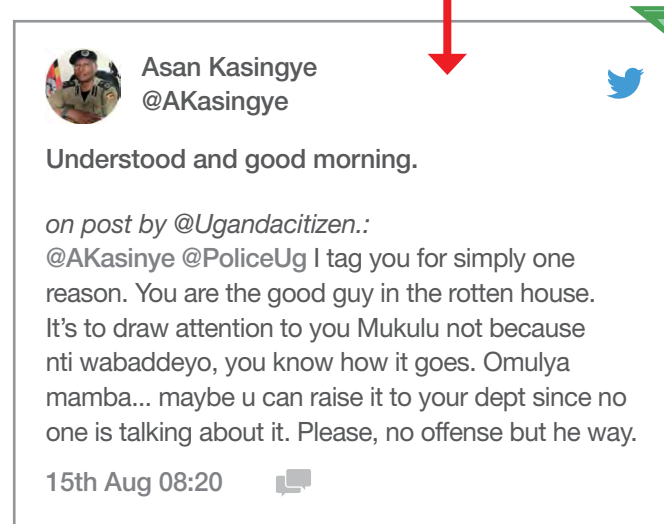
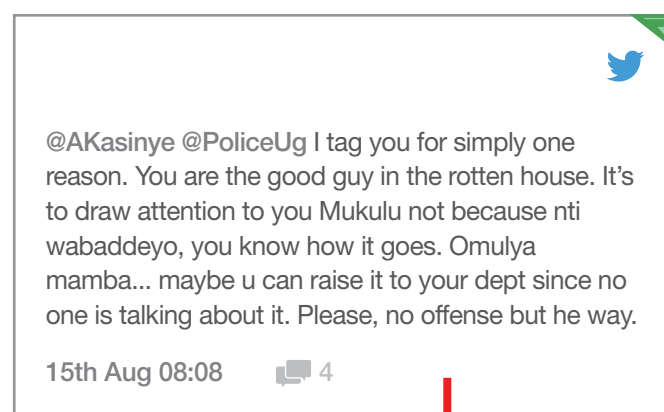
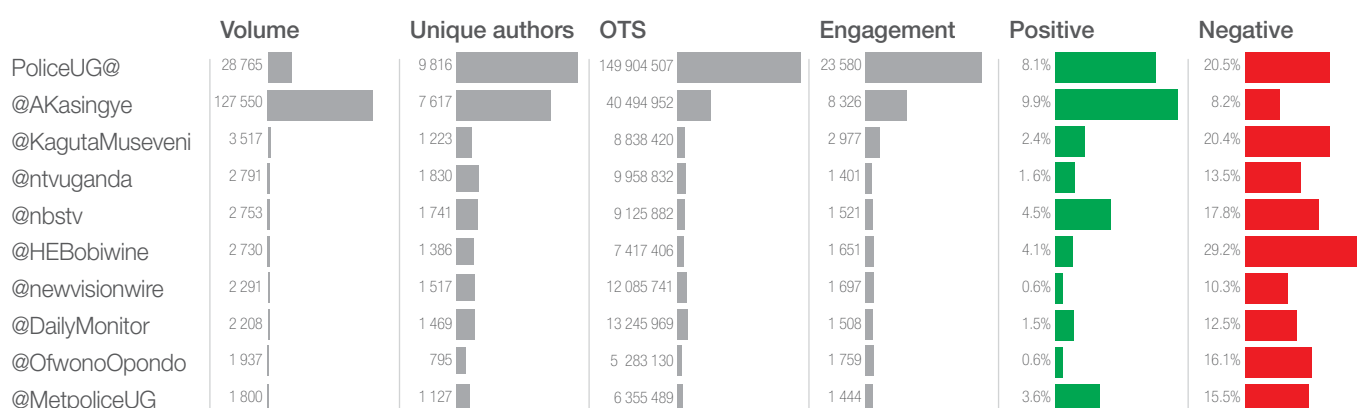
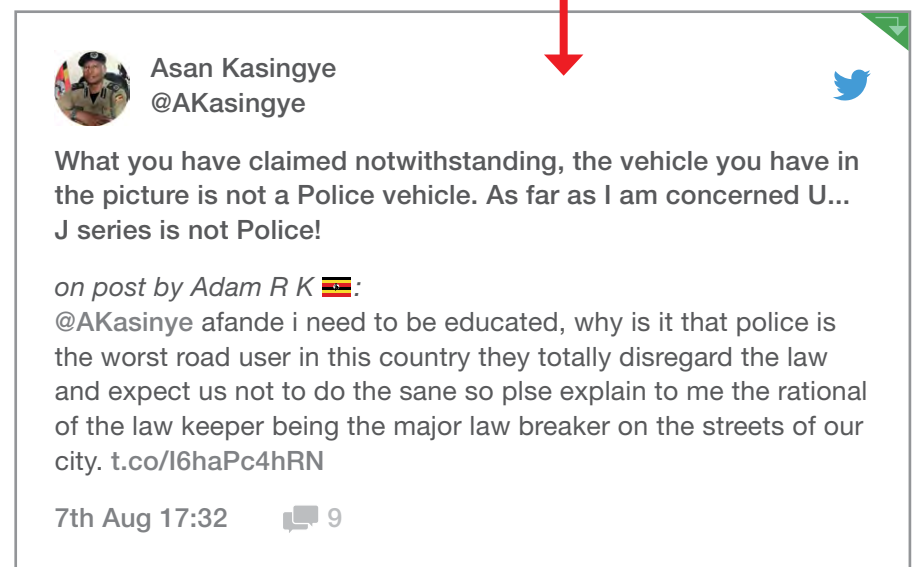
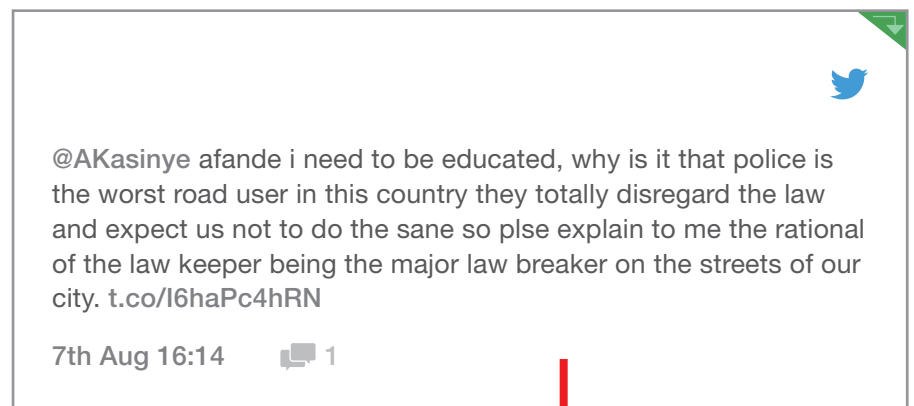


Figure 19: Top ten most mentioned profiles





Although @AKasingye uses a personal rather than official police Twitter account, his method of engaging with the public is a good example of how police communication on social media can mitigate risk. @AKasingye has over 63 822 followers on Twitter and publicly shares his contact number on his page. He frequently replies to members of the public with answers to their queries as well as giving feedback and information about cases. In the example below, @AKasingye responds in support of the police when one social media user criticised them:



WHEN USED RESPONSIBLY,
POLICE COMMUNICATION ON
SOCIAL MEDIA CAN MITIGATE RISK

In the Twitter conversation below, a member of the public posts a markedly negative and critical query about a police officer stopping cars and asking for driving permits. @AKasingye replies to the post with more information about this procedure and, by the end of the thread, the member of the public is engaging positively with @AKasingye. Notably, @AKasingye's second post was engaged with 32 times, suggesting that other authors are responding to the information he shared.

  Is a non traffic police officer allowed to ask for the Driver permit. If no why do they stop cars @AKasingye @Ugaman01 @PoliceUg t.co/kpofh3iA6X

22nd Aug 08:05  31 



Asan Kasingye
@AKasingye



Yes. Any Police Officer has powers to do so.

on post by Daria fashions:

Is a non traffic police officer allowed to ask for the Driver permit. If no why do they stop cars @ AKasingye @Ugaman01 @PoliceUg t.co/kpofh3iA6X

22nd Aug 08:10  32

@AKasingye Afande I think every department is trained to do a different work and how well do they know traffic rules and regulations. Many questions rise on this reply

22nd Aug 08:13  3



Asan Kasingye
@AKasingye



The law says a Police Officer ... Not a traffic officer. If you commit a traffic offence before me, I will arrest you there and then.

on post by Daria fashions:

@AKasingye Afande I think every department is trained to do a different work and how well do they know traffic rules and regulations. Many questions rise on this reply

22nd Aug 08:15  6

 @AKasingye OK thanks 🙌 I get it.

22nd Aug 08:16  16



THE BRUTALISATION OF
PHOTOJOURNALIST AKENA IN
UGANDA IS NOT A ONE-OFF INCIDENT

In their own words: The Human Rights Network – Uganda⁷⁹

It was a dark day for Akena, a photojournalist working with Associate Press. On 15 February 2019, like on any other normal day, he woke up to do his routine of covering events that were unfolding in Uganda, the people-powered public demonstrations for the release of their leader Kyagulanyi Bobi Wine.

The unsuspecting Akena was cornered by persons in military uniform and badly beaten in front of police officers who did not restrain the soldiers. Even though Akena tried to clearly identify himself as a journalist, the charged military personnel never bothered to understand that he was simply doing his job, neither did the police try to restrain the officers from the unprofessional acts.

The brutalisation of Akena is not a one-off incident. Prior to Akena, a number of journalists and citizens have found themselves faced with threats to life and limb at the hands of the security forces and Uganda police in particular. The militarisation of the police force (by both personnel and gear) has left many with more questions than answers.

Questions such as: Who is responsible for the command and control of the agencies and personnel of the military deployed along-side the Uganda police during especially protests? How are citizens supposed to distinguish the acts of the military from those of the police in the wake of brutality and who should be held accountable? The impact of these questions has been to create blurred lines around who should be holding the various security officers accountable to the citizenry whom they are supposed to serve.

In the wake of the brutality by the security forces on Akena, social media was awash with pictures of the security officers beating the journalist. Social media has been such an important tool that a cross-section of stakeholders has employed it to expose acts such as the one that happened to Akena even when perpetrators have worked hard to conceal their actions.

Following the gross misconduct by members of the UPDF and the failure of the UPF to pronounce itself on actions of their personnel, Ugandans of all walks of life have used social media to demand that police leadership take action against the individual police officers that were involved in harming Akena. At the same time, questions have continued to be raised on social media regarding the joint operations between the UPF and UPDF in regard to lines of accountability and the role of the military in public order management.

Today, Akena is still nursing injuries caused to him by the military. He is confined to a wheelchair and can no longer practise his profession. Whereas concerned authorities have resisted attending to the issues raised, it remains a fact that a huge number of Ugandans are now aware of the indifference that exists and the unwillingness of state authorities to bring justice to perpetrators of human rights violations.

Social media has played a major role in providing an alternative platform to demand the powers that be prevail over illegal actions of security agencies. To some extent, social media has become a source of information that acts as evidence of the unprofessional conduct of security agencies, most especially the police.

Discussion

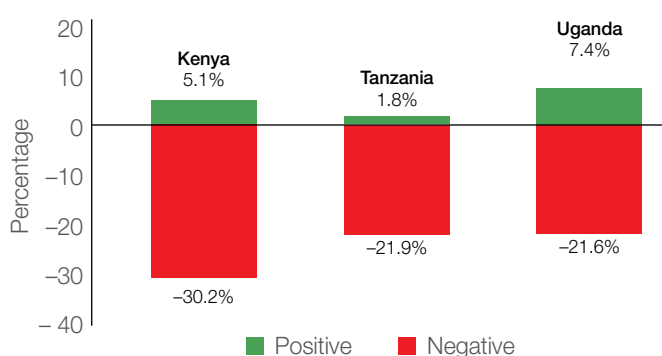
Figure 20 below shows the extent to which the public in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda is engaging in discussions on social media platforms about the actions and behaviour of the police in their countries. The percentage of the population that meets all the conditions to do this (that is, access to the Internet, active on social media and engaged on issues of police accountability) is currently small. It however has the potential to grow exponentially over the next decade as mobile connectivity advances and the public begin to realise the power of harnessing social media as a tool to promote good governance and demand accountability from government.

In terms of the sentiments of those members of the public who are active on social media towards the police, social media users in all three countries – Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – displayed a net negative sentiment towards the police during the period (see Figure 21). This signifies the lack of trust between the public and the police that is well supported by the literature (some of which is referenced above).

Despite this lack of trust, there was clear evidence that the public is trying to engage with the police through social media. In Kenya, the top five handles tagged by members of the public were official police handles. In Tanzania, the most tagged handle was the TPF. In Uganda, the top two handles tagged by the public were the UPF and Asan Kasingye, Assistant Inspector General of Police.

What is the current role that the public plays with regards to holding the police accountable via social media platforms and has this approach had any impact thus far? The four conditions outlined by the World Bank to increase the effectiveness of public accountability (see above) provide a useful framework to discuss the findings of this study.⁸⁰

Figure 21: Comparative sentiment analysis across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda



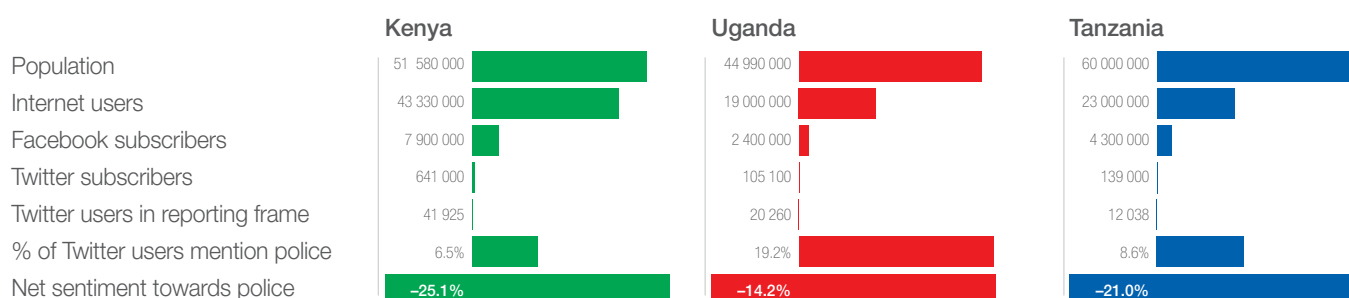
1. The need to generate information or make information available

Members of the public and CSOs in both Kenya and Tanzania used social media hashtags effectively to highlight specific incidents of human rights violations committed by the police (killings, beatings or disappearances) or to raise broad awareness about police misconduct and abuse in their communities.

Representatives of the Social Justice Centres Working Group in Kenya confirmed that they have become tactical in using the group to launch information on social media. They meet to strategise around creating hashtags for events, incidents, people who have been violated or broad categories of violations in order to raise awareness among the general public about what is happening within certain communities.⁸¹

Workshop participants from Kenya indicated that although human rights defenders are fearful of the police, making information (about who they are, what they are doing and where they are) available to the public online through personal accounts actually makes them safer.

Figure 20: Measuring the impact of social media in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania



Participants from Tanzania felt the opposite and believe that high-profile activists who speak out online are targeted by the authorities. They gave the example of Fatma Karume (one of the activist profiles mentioned in the findings above) who was suspended from practising law while involved in a case challenging the appointment of the Attorney General of Tanzania.⁸²

2. The need to organise groups of individuals or coalitions of CSOs to enhance bargaining power

As can be seen in the findings, hashtags generated and pushed out by CSOs in Kenya and Tanzania triggered spikes in the overall volume of police mentions over the period under review. Ugandan workshop participants noted that the police had accused human rights defenders of creating a legion of soldiers on social media.⁸³ This shows that the prevalence and traction of hashtag campaigns on social media are effective in driving awareness, spreading messages and mobilising people around specific concerns, events or perspectives in Kenya and Tanzania.

The testimony of the Social Justice Centres Working Group in Kenya (above) regarding the release of 12 human rights activists is evidence of the bargaining power of a coalition of CSOs in real life.

There are also strategic and logistical advantages of advocating through groups or coalitions. The Kenyan workshop participants pointed out that the coalition of CSOs involved in the social media campaigns on police accountability pushed out hashtags from group handles and accounts, both to maximise reach and for the safety of individual activists.

There are, however, challenges to organising individuals and coalitions in contexts where the space for civil society to operate is closing down. Workshop participants from Tanzania noted that, in the current repressive climate, the public have become cautious about speaking out. The result is that social media conversations are not focussed on accountability or organised around demanding change and have therefore lost their potency.⁸⁴

Participants from Uganda commented that the government is opposed to social movements

and that as social media use increases around social movements (usually driven by coalitions of CSOs), so does police surveillance. Civil society is, therefore, moving towards self-preservation and urging individual members of the public or communities to take over the role of advocating for good governance and accountability.⁸⁵ This is precisely where social media, as a means of efficiently gathering individual voices into a critical mass, can be useful as a tool for the public to use in demanding accountability.

3. The need to make the available information public and target it towards the intended audience and relevant actors

Government regulations over the use of the Internet and social media in all three countries have resulted in a closing down of the space for freedom of expression in the last few years.

The Ugandan social media tax implemented in 2018 saw a decrease in social media users over the last year. In Kenya, the licences now required for Kenyans to upload videos makes doing so more onerous and riskier. In 2018, Tanzania adopted new online content regulations that restrict the sharing of content. All of these measures serve to contain the impact of social media as a form of public accountability.

Despite these restrictions, members of the public using social media in these countries continue to attempt to engage the police when reporting their concerns, issues and complaints on social media. Figures 22 and 23 show the proportion of conversation directed towards the police in comparison with other profiles in Kenya and Uganda. These figures clearly illustrate that the public are deliberately tagging the police in an attempt to engage.

Workshop participants from Kenya commented that Kenyans tag both the institution and individuals in power (such as @fredmatiangi, Minister of Interior) as a way of focussing on the personal accountability of government officials. They explained that if they tag individuals on social media and the person doesn't act, it looks to the public as if 'they're sleeping on the job' – something the politicians and top government officials want to avoid.⁸⁶

Figure 22: Kenya: 10 most-tagged profiles

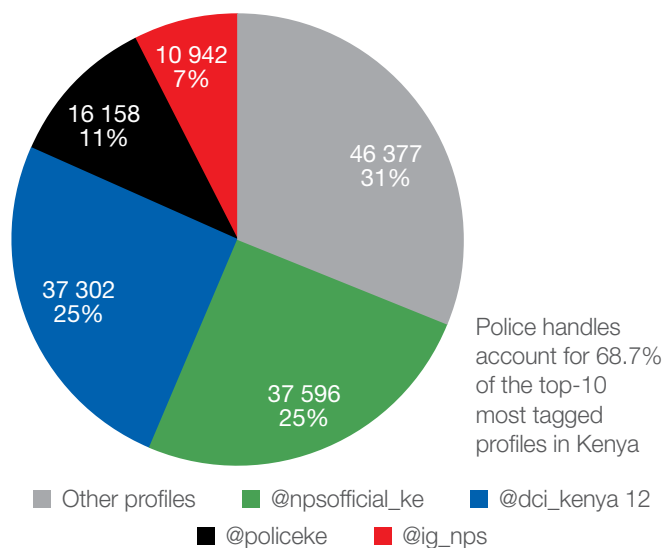
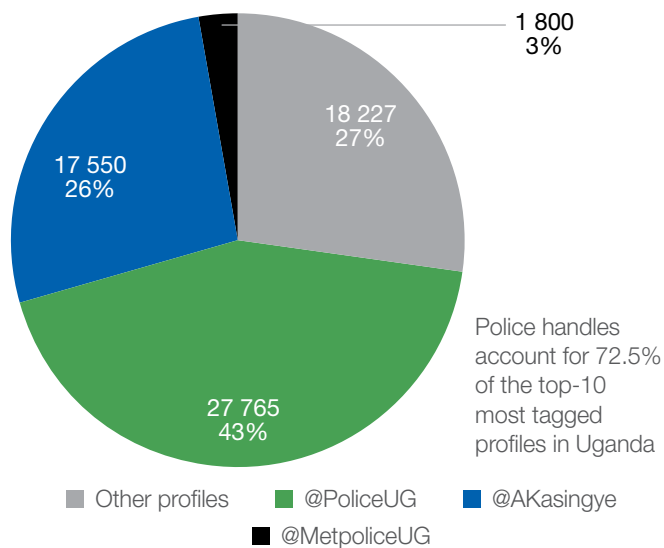


Figure 23: Uganda: 10 most-tagged profiles



There was also a high rate of engagement with police posts from the public on social media in Kenya. The 656 posts published by the police were engaged with 13 315 times. This means members of the public shared, re-shared or replied to every police post approximately 20.2 times. Posts from the handle @NPSOfficial_KE elicited an especially large volume of engagement.

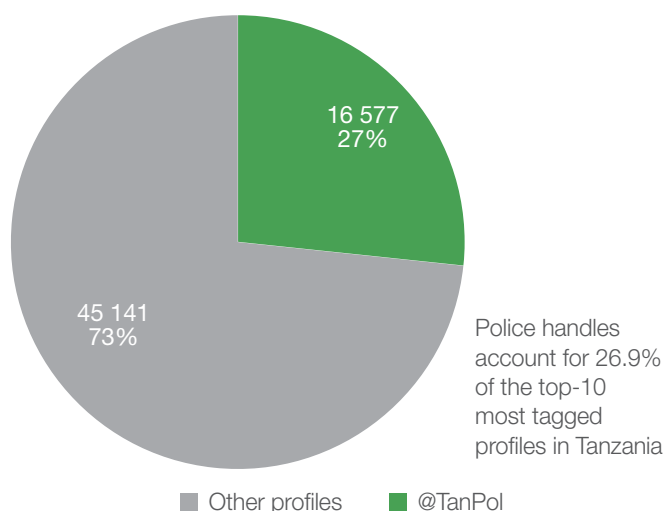
Participants from Uganda noted that communicating with government institutions and officials from behind a phone elicited a certain courage that allows the public to tag those in authority and ask tough or controversial questions.

The public in Uganda are also highly responsive to content published by police agencies and are keen to engage with the police on issues that they feel affect them. The 772 police posts were engaged with 17 929 times at a rate of 23.2 shares, reshares and replies per post.

The findings were slightly different in Tanzania. This illustrates the shutting down of independent voices and of dialogue between the government and the public, which is apparent from the literature and was emphasised by the Tanzanian workshop participants.⁸⁷

As can be seen in Figure 24, there is only one police handle and it was tagged in only a quarter of the conversations about the police among social media

Figure 24: Tanzania: 10 most-tagged profiles



users. This underscores the comments by workshop participants that the Tanzanian government does not believe in communicating with the public through social media and are not interactive or responsive on social media. The result is that the public has stopped tagging them.⁸⁸ Workshop participants also claimed that those who tag a government institution in Tanzania become a target of the state.

However, the public is still trying to engage with the police. The small number of police posts (54) was engaged with 1 026 times at a rate of 19 shares, reshares and replies per post, a similar rate of engagement to Kenya and Uganda.

4. The need of the state or state institutions to respond once the information has been received

In all three countries, the police had a very low rate of response to social media posts by members of the public that tagged or mentioned them, as seen in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Number of replies and reshares from police to members of the public

	Public mentions of police	Police replies	Police reshares
Kenya @NPSofficial_KE @DCI_Kenya @PoliceKE	91 077	265	149
Tanzania @TanPol	16 577	4	0
Uganda @PoliceUG @AKasingye @MetpoliceUG	48 115	496* *495 of these were from @AKasingye	46

When the police did respond to the public, there was clear evidence of an upturn in positive sentiment towards the police.

In Kenya, @NPSOfficial_KE posted up to 24 replies to the public on 31 July, directly correlating with an increase in positive perceptions towards the agency (see Figure 9 above). In Uganda, the Ugandan police sharing stories on social media of their officers protesting to raise awareness about violence against women in March 2018 was still having a positive impact on perceptions in July 2019.

@AKasingye sharing positive news stories about the achievements of the police and his high rate of reply drove positive sentiment from the public up to 30.2%. The link between Kasingye's engagement with individuals on social media and increased positive sentiment towards the police signifies the importance of establishing and nurturing lines of communication in building trust between the public and the police.

The Tanzania police handle lagged behind those of Kenya and Uganda, only replying four times out of 16 577 mentions.

These findings indicate that the police can drive up positive sentiment from members of the public as well as increase trust between themselves and the public by engaging in a meaningful, open and transparent way with the public on social media.



POLICE IN KENYA, TANZANIA AND UGANDA HAD A VERY LOW RESPONSE RATE TO SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Workshop participants did, however, indicate that there was also a strong element among the police in all three countries that sought to control the social media narrative in order to impose upon (rather than enter into dialogue with) the public.

In Kenya, some police officers have their own Facebook accounts where they post pictures of suspects who have not been formally arrested or charged and have had no access to due process. These pictures are posted alongside stories intended to shape public opinion into an angry and even violent response. One example is Hessa wa Dandora, a police officer who has been accused of inciting the public to violence on Facebook.⁸⁹

Participants noted that although these are not official police social media accounts, they are condoned by the police. Human rights organisations have allegedly reported the existence of these Facebook accounts to the police but their reports have been ignored.⁹⁰

In Tanzania, the government dictates the narrative by carefully controlling what is published and suppressing independent voices from the media and civil society.⁹¹

In Uganda, the narrative promoted by the police that militance is necessary in countering serious crime due to its persistence means that the public is sympathetic to the police combatting crime and violence with equal force.⁹²

The findings of this study have shown that social media engagement alone can achieve only limited results in promoting accountability from below for police misconduct in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. However, social media engagement does have the potential to contribute to public engagement in police accountability in various ways:

- It can facilitate communication between police agencies and the public, allowing for information to flow both upward and downward.
- Well-coordinated, strategic social media campaigns by civil society can mobilise the public, energise the masses and achieve results. This is even more effective when social media posts are used to inform

points of action in real life, as illustrated by the #freehuruma12 social media campaign that was given effect in real life through complementary street activism.

- Civil society can develop systematic strategies to engage with the police in different ways. Positive interactions can be used to build trust and open the lines of communication, and photographs and videos of specific events and incidents of police misconduct can be used to demand accountability.

The police should consider appointing dedicated social media liaison officers

Social media platforms are far from being a panacea but they can be a useful tool. They can multiply and improve the pathways available to the public to engage in holding the police accountable for misconduct, human rights abuses and non-action, particularly at the local level.

Recommendations

The following are broad recommendations for harnessing the power of social media to build trust and foster relationships between the police and the public in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda:

- Communicating via social media is an under-utilised method of developing, building or rebuilding trust between the public and the police:
 - The public is looking for transparency, so the police should focus on providing appropriate information. This should include information about policing methods, police events and campaigns, upcoming protest action, types of crime to be aware of, channels for reporting crime, channels for reporting police misconduct, news stories about police achievements and contributions to the community. It can even include updates on unresolved cases that are in the public interest. By being transparent, the police can help the public to understand what they do every day,

as well as giving the public the information they need to hold the police accountable.⁹³

- The public in this study was particularly sensitive about police brutality in informal settlements and during public protests. Focusing on positive news stories and police accomplishments in these communities, as well as how the police have helped to keep people safe during protests, might help the public to see the police differently.
- The responsiveness of the police had a direct impact on how positively the public viewed them. The police should consider appointing dedicated social media liaison or communication officers whose job it is to keep track of social media accounts and respond to queries, concerns and even criticisms. A change of policy towards engaging with the public, listening and responding can make a material difference to the sentiment of the public towards the police and their trust in the police.
- News media stories had an influence on positive or negative sentiment towards the police. The police should consider sharing positive news stories about police achievements and contributions with the mainstream media to increase positive perceptions as well as the reach and impact of these stories. Considering the longevity of the positive news stories, such as the police protest about violence against women which occurred in March 2018 in Uganda, investing in similar campaigns that help shape public perceptions could potentially repair trust.
- Social justice activists and organisations were very influential in shaping the primary narratives in social media conversations about the police. The police should invest in building relationships and rapport with these organisations to repair trust with the public.
- To take advantage of empowering the public through democracy-enhancing technology such as mobile devices, internet access and social media, strong protections for the public need to be in place. These should include affirmations from the government and the police of the right to

freedom of expression. This must include filming and taking photographs of the police while they do their duties and the right to publicise such material on social media. There should also be guarantees from the government and the police that witnesses to police misconduct will be safe from retaliation or targeting.

- The public needs to be educated and made aware of where to direct their reports or posts of police misconduct and brutality on social media in order to achieve the desired effect. They must ensure their posts are seen by the right people and that they reinforce other members of the public's accounts of the same event.

Conclusion

This research has shone a light on the nature and extent to which members of the public in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are willing and able to engage with, and about, the police on social media. It has increased our understanding of the role that social media plays in engaging the public in police accountability in these countries. It has also highlighted the potential of social media as a tool for contributing to holding the police accountable for their inaction, misconduct and brutality in these countries.

The responsiveness of the police had a direct impact on how positively the public viewed them

Relying on social media as the universal solution to engaging the public in police accountability would be to severely underestimate the challenges that exist both in the ICT and governance spaces of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and more generally in Africa. Disparities in connectivity infrastructure and access to technology, as well as state surveillance, can lead to the under- or non-reporting of police misconduct and even the victimisation of those who publish such stories on social media.⁹⁴

In addition, while social media may open channels of communication between the police and the public and increase the capacity of the government to respond to

the public's enquires, concerns and criticism, it cannot necessarily influence their willingness to do so.

Social media platforms do have the potential to expose police misconduct and brutality as well as improve the accountability of police agencies. This happens through the more effective engagement of a far wider range of stakeholders, such as the public, CSOs, the news media, victims, as well as formal oversight and accountability mechanisms. Social media platforms also have the potential to legitimise the police, improve trust between the police and the public, and increase police effectiveness.⁹⁵

Effective social media strategies should be included as one of the mechanisms available to the public to hold the police to account. They should equally be utilised by the police and other government institutions to respond to the needs of the public and to open transparent and responsiveness channels of communication to increase legitimacy and build trust where these relationships have broken down.

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Notes

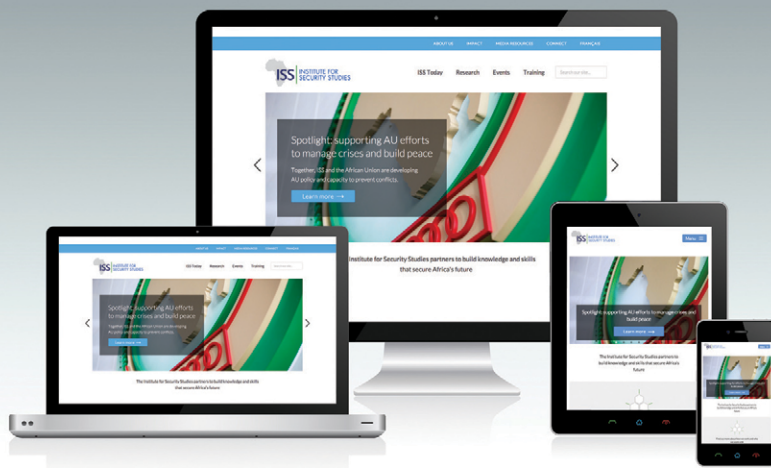
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