



The Changing Landscape of Freedoms in Tanzania: Esther Karin Mngodo

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The Nokoko journal is committed to a world where people are free from all forms of oppression and exploitation, where respect for individuals' varied differences is maintained, and where everyone can realise their full potentials. NokokoPod is a companion to the journal, covering current African issues. It aims to bring forth new perspectives that broaden, trouble, complicate and enrich current discourses. Edited and annotated versions of the conversations will be made available on the journal website.

This issue of NokokoPod discusses the changes to freedoms of speech and press and restrictions on civil society in Tanzania. The podcast for this discussion is available on the Nokoko journal website. This conversation took place on April 16th, with Logan Cochrane and Esther Karin Mngodo in Ottawa. This version of the PDF has been reviewed by Logan Cochrane and Esther Karin Mngodo. In addition to the conversation, a set of annotations have been added as footnotes so as to strengthen the value of these publications and enable them to act as a resource for listeners and readers who want to have additional context and/or find additional resources on the topics discussed.

Logan: While it has not been international headline news over the last year, there have been a number of restrictions of speech,

media and civil society in Tanzania. These changes are serious and have had consequences for a wide range of people and organizations. To help understand these changes, I am honored to speak with Esther Karin Mngodo. She is a longtime journalist in Tanzania; a newspaper editor; an award-winning poet and singer; and is currently based at Carleton University in Canada. Thank you for joining us today.

Esther: Thank you.

Logan: Let us start off with a general question. Could you speak to the changes that have occurred over the last year: media, blogging, politics, human rights advocacy; what appears to be a trend of a closing opportunity space?

Esther: Well, let me first start by saying that - especially for those people who do not know anything about Tanzania - for many years Tanzania has been on the forefront in fighting for the rights of others. Our founding father Mwalimu Nyerere¹ is well known as a pan-Africanist,² championing for the liberation of the whole

1 Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999) was an anti-colonial activist and was President of Tanzania from 1964 to 1985. Mwalimu, which means teacher in Swahili, is a title of respect by which he is often called.

2 This discussion does not cover Nyerere or pan-Africanism, however for an essay on Nyerere's thought, see:

Shivji, I. G. (2011). Nyerere, Nationalism and Pan-Africanism.
<https://www.pambazuka.org/pan-africanism/nyerere-nationalism-and-pan-africanism>

continent of Africa.³ We have also been involved in regional peace talks.⁴ Tanzania has opened its borders for refugees from Burundi and elsewhere.⁵ When the current government administration came into power in 2015,⁶ there was a hope that Tanzania would soar even higher as a powerhouse around the world.⁷

Following the election, things started on a very impressive note.⁸ There was a sense of hope that this was truly a government for the people. The poor should have a share of what is lawfully theirs, that was the tone at the time in 2015. There was a crackdown on

3 One example of this is Tanzanian support for liberation movements in Southern Africa. South African History Online describes Tanzania as playing “an important role in assisting these movements and acted as a consistent opponent of colonial rule in Africa” (<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/tanzania-and-its-support-southern-african-liberation-movements>)

4 Tanzania has a long history of hosting peace talks, historical examples of this include the Arusha Accords (1993) as well as more recent peace talks held for parties involved in the conflict in South Sudan (2015). The head of UN HCR recently described Tanzania as the ‘regional peacemaker’ (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1032291>).

5 Tanzania has hosted refugees for decades, particularly from DR Congo and Burundi. In 2019, it hosted 330,000 refugees (<https://www.unhcr.ca/news/unhcr-chief-international-support-tanzania/>), making it one of the largest hosting nations in the world.

6 The 2015 general election resulted in the rise of John Magufuli, who was previously a Minister in the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, which (including under its earlier party and merger) was a continuation of the ruling party run by Julius Nyerere.

7 According to the World Bank, GDP growth (by annual %) has ranged between 5% and 8.5% over the last ten years (2007-2017; <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=TZ>). Between 2013 and 2017, GDP growth was stable around 7%. The culmination of many factors, including sustained economic growth, fostered a general sentiment of positivity.

8 Examples of this include President Magufuli’s canceling of costly celebrations and instead investing in healthcare as well as putting in place austerity measures for government travel and expenses. The result was a trending Twitter hashtag of #WhatWouldMagufuliDo (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/01/tanzania-cost-cutting-president-john-magufuli-twitter>; <https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/14/africa/tanzania-president-john-magufuli/index.html>).

corruption and there still is.⁹ We saw the case of government ghost workers being exposed.¹⁰ There was cheer everywhere, not just in Tanzania but across the continent, across the whole world. However, the general climate in Tanzania started to quickly change. There were more and more cases of newspapers being shut down, basically for being critical of the government.¹¹ The government declared that it was in an economic war and whoever seemed to criticize the government's actions was seen to be against this supposed war. There was even a member of parliament who was shot - 32 bullets and hit five times in broad daylight.¹² His name is Tundu Lissu, and he was one of critical voices in Tanzania. And he still is. There are also so many cases of increasing extrajudicial killings and people being taken away by unknown assailants. For instance, a journalist called Azory Gwanda who disappeared in November 2016.¹³ And another case of Mr. Ansbert Ngurumo who is an investigative journalist, now who

9 Magufuli launched a campaign against corruption, ranging from the elimination of 'ghost' workers on the payroll to some high profile business leaders (<https://qz.com/africa/1123780/tanzanias-president-john-magufuli-is-changing-his-country-for-better-and-for-worse/>).

10 A nationwide audit found more than 10,000 'ghost' workers being paid by the government, costing an estimated \$2 million a month, see: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tanzania-corruption/tanzania-says-over-10000-ghost-workers-purged-from-government-payroll-idUSKCN0Y70RW> Continued efforts to reduce waste and corruption would result in the identification of nearly 20,000 'ghost' workers by the end of 2017 (<https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00049233.html>).

11 Newspapers have been accused of 'inciting violence'; some have been closed and others banned for extended periods, such as MwanaHalisi, which was banned for two years (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tanzania-media/tanzania-shuts-down-another-days-numbered-newspaper-idUSKCN1BV14Y>).

12 Member of Parliament Tundu Lissu was returning home from parliament in the capital city of Dodoma when his car was shot at 32 times, five of which hit him (<https://www.wri.org/blog/2017/10/risks-making-difference-tundu-lissu-shot-tanzania>). The attackers have not been identified. Tundu Lissu has been arrested multiple times, including on charges of 'insulting the President'.

13 The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has been vocal regarding this case, for additional information see: <https://cpj.org/2018/11/one-year-after-disappearance-cpj-calls-for-credibl.php>

has sought asylum in Finland during this regime, in fear of his life because of the kind of work that he is doing.¹⁴ These are other things that are happening. There is even a recent study report done by the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) that reflects on the quality of journalism.¹⁵ For instance the report shows that the media has become less and less critical of the government because of self-censorship.¹⁶ And for me what has been shocking looking at this data is that only 8 percent of the news critical of the government is in one newspaper, *Mwananchi*, one that has been very critical in the past. In a nutshell this is what is happening in Tanzania.

Logan: Can you speak to the time after the 2015 government change - I think there was an initial enthusiasm that public services were improving, as you said these ghost worker issues were being addressed, even on the other side services were being improved and there was a positive reception, and then how that shifted.

Esther: In this administration, we have started to see an application of laws that were formulated or passed by previous governments that had been dormant. For instance, the Cyber Crime Act of 2015 is now being used to penalize those making comments online

14 Ansbert Ngurumo wrote about his experience and decisions on African Arguments: <https://africanarguments.org/2018/03/15/i-had-to-flee-my-home-tanzania-for-doing-journalism-i-was-lucky/>

15 Report is available: <http://yearbook.mct.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/YEARBOOK-ON-MEDIA-QUALITY-IN-TANZANIA-2018-PRINT-MEDIA-REPORT.pdf>; the main MCT site is: <https://yearbook.mct.or.tz/>

16 The Media Council of Tanzania (<https://mct.or.tz>) published a range of reports, including investigative reporting, media monitoring and media research, amongst others.

against the regime or against the president.¹⁷ We have seen people being arrested, charged, fined, jailed for comments made on social media - on your WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter.¹⁸ These are things we had never seen before so it is really shocking to be honest.

There is also the Electronic and Postal Communications Regulation of 2018, which requires content producers, including bloggers, to register their sites annually for a sum of about US\$ 900.¹⁹ This content is being monitored, which is what makes it problematic. The regulatory body has been given sweeping powers to remove any undesirable content and failure to comply with the regulations is punished with heavy sanctions which include a minimum term of 12 months imprisonment or minimum fines of 500 million Tanzanian shillings, which is about CAN\$ 300, or both.

There is also the case of the Statistics Act, which was recently amended.²⁰ This Act includes articles that state it is illegal to publish any statistics without the approval of the National Bureau of Statistics. It is legal to question official statistics in public as well you have to check with the board, and in private. Under the amendment, people who question the accuracy of official statistics will be fined at

17 The Act is available online (https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/the_cyber_crime_act_2015.pdf). At the time of passing, in 2015, it received criticism. However, more recently it has been applied to restrict freedom of expression in broad ways (<https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/Human-rights-body-wants-govt-action-on-shrinking/1840340-4822076-yfmmmyz/index.html>).

18 As one example, people have been arrested for posting private messages about the President, accused of insulting the President (<https://qz.com/africa/782239/five-tanzanians-were-charged-with-cybercrime-for-insulting-president-john-magufuli-on-social-media/>).

19 For an analysis of the Electronic and Postal Communications Regulations, see: <https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Tanzania-Online-Content-Regulations-2018-Final.pdf>

20 The amendment has attracted more international attention, particularly because international bodies are producers and publishers of statistical information in Tanzania, such as the World Bank and other United Nations agencies (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tanzania-worldbank/tanzania-law-punishing-critics-of-statistics-deeply-concerning-world-bank-idUSKCN1MD17P>).

least ten million Tanzanian shillings, which is about CAN\$ 6,000, or at least three years in jail, or both. It is interesting that just a week ago: the IMF lowered its forecast for Tanzania's economic growth this year, and in 2020, to around 4 percent from a previous forecast which was 6.8 percent.²¹ What is interesting is that the government's own forecast is 7.3 percent.²² The African Development Bank's is 6.6 percent.²³ The World Bank's forecast is 6 percent and the IMF is the one that has the lowest, at 4 percent. I have not seen any major newspaper in Tanzania covering this news. Even the main party in Tanzania came forward and spoke against this – saying that Tanzania has its own statistics that should be followed.

Then there is also the example of how the civic space is shrinking. In 2018, there was an organization called Twaweza.²⁴ It is a citizen-centered initiative focusing on creating change in East Africa. They found themselves in trouble because of publishing data that was not approved by the government. They have a platform which is called Sauti za Wananchi,²⁵ basically it is a mobile phone polling platform. Once a year they do an approval rating of the president and local authorities. Last year the polls indicated that the president's popularity had declined and it was not received well. The head of the NGO, Mr Aidan Eyakuze, has his citizenship questioned.²⁶ Notably, this was not the first time that the citizenship card has been used for people who seem to be critical. His passport was

21 Reporting on this: <https://af.reuters.com/article/tanzaniaNews/idAFL8N21R5QE>

22 Reporting on this: <https://www.ecofinagency.com/public-management/1202-39643-tanzania-bot-forecasts-7-3-growth-in-2019>

23 Reporting on this: <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/tanzania/tanzania-economic-outlook/>

24 Twaweza may be most well-known for its work on assessing quality of education, it also conducts public surveys on governance. See: <https://www.twaweza.org>

25 Available here: https://twaweza.org/go/sauti-za-wananchi-english#_

26 Reporting on the case available here: <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/-Eyakuze-s-citizenship-probe-in-new-twist/1840340-4807858-v6ben1/index.html>

taken away and I think that is still the case up to this day.²⁷ In essence, these changes have created a sense of fear, which appears to be the purpose of all this - to create the sense of fear. So that people are afraid to speak out.

Logan: For clarity: This would include not only publishing alternative statistics but in journalism what might be considered fact checking. So, fact checking what has been stated by a government official would also fall under this umbrella of an activity you cannot undertake, or face fines for doing.

Esther: Yes.

Logan: It has become quite restrictive in the outward legal sense and then also, as you said, in an inward self-censorship sense as well.

Logan: Taking a broader, long-term history from at least the last two decades, if not more, Tanzania has been a positive story of freedom and democratization. With many people and nations looking to it as a country to emulate. What is driving the shift of the last year?

Esther: That is an interesting question. I think if you compare the situation with how it was before and how it is now, and looking for instance at media specifically, perhaps we can analyze it in four phases. There was the colonial era, in which the media - and maybe there was no civic space - was a colonial media. And then there is the post-colonial era, where between 1961 and 1991 we had a one party

²⁷ Aidan Eyakuze recently spoke with Duncan Green from Oxfam about the civil society in Tanzania, and speaks briefly about his personal situation:
<https://soundcloud.com/fp2p/aidan-eyakuze-twaweza-on-civil-society-space-in-east-africa>

state and the country was led by Julius Nyerere under socialism.²⁸ From that point forward, from 1992 onward, when a multi-party system was introduced by an amendment of our Constitution,²⁹ you see that the civic space is opened and even there were more voices, more media platforms were introduced in our democracy. You start seeing these changes and you start seeing people opening up. You start seeing freedom of expression. But I could see that what has recently changed, and especially after this current administration came into power, is the politics of one man's rule. It almost feels like we are going back to the time when we had only one party ruling. Actually, this has been said publicly that this is the way forward. There are many instances where government leaders, including the president, have openly said that the ruling party will rule forever.³⁰ We can also see the crackdown on the opposition and that opposition rallies are prohibited.³¹ The opposition are constantly captured,

28 Much has been written on Tanzanian socialism, for some historical references, see:

- Freund, W. M. (1981). Class conflict, political economy and the struggle for socialism in Tanzania. *African Affairs*, 80(321), 483-499.
- Lal, P. (2015). *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nyerere, J. K. (1967). Socialism and rural development. *Mbioni: The Monthly Newsletter of Kivukoni College*, 4(4), 2-46.
- Pratt, C. (1999). Julius Nyerere: reflections on the legacy of his socialism. *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines*, 33(1), 136-152.
- Rodney, W. (1972). Tanzanian Ujamaa and scientific socialism. *African Review*, 1(4), 61-76.
- Samoff, J. (1981). Crises and socialism in Tanzania. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 19(2), 279-306.
- Weaver, J. H., & Kronemer, A. (1981). Tanzanian and African socialism. In *Socialist Models of Development* (pp. 839-849). Pergamon.

29 See: Ngasongwa, J. (1992). Tanzania Introduces a Multi-Party System. *Review of African Political Economy* 54: 112-116.

30 See, for example, the President making this statement:
<https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/1840340-4667956-1lib1gz/index.html>

31 See, for example, the banning of opposition protests "until further notice":
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tanzania-politics/tanzania-police-uses-teargas-at-opposition-rally-bans-protests-idUSKCN0YT2G7>

charged and jailed.³² You can see the tone has changed because the politics of the ruling party have changed and in a way it is a dishonor to our Constitution.

Logan: Do you see any regional influences? I am thinking about Rwanda's adoption of the developmental state ideology³³ and Ethiopia's use of the developmental state,³⁴ and their justification of the need for stability to create jobs, to create economic growth, that multi-party democracy hinders these processes. Is there any influence from other regional countries that have pushed some of these changes?

Esther: There are those arguments. Even in Tanzania that is a constant debate. However, it is a tricky subject because I do not think you can sacrifice freedom for development. It has to come hand-in-hand because the people will always want to be free. And if they are living in an environment where they are not able to freely express themselves and their views, they might want to do that in violent ways or other means that are unnecessary. I think we are at a point where, first of all, we are in shock because Tanzanians have not had to fight for a long time, perhaps the last time we had to fight for anything was the Maji Maji Rebellion.³⁵ Generally, we are not

32 The case of Tundu Lissu was mentioned above, including him being arrested multiple times. Another example is the arrest of Zitto Kabwe (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tanzania-arrest/tanzania-arrests-opposition-leader-over-deaths-claim-party-idUSKCN1N64WP>), Freeman Mbowe and Esther Matiko (<https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Tanzania-opposition-leader-arrested/1066-4866344-ma494l/index.html>). These cases appear to have received more coverage in regional newspapers, such as Kenyan ones, than local ones.

33 See: <https://theconversation.com/rwandas-economic-growth-has-given-its-strong-state-even-more-power-114019>

34 See: Clapham, C. (2018). The Ethiopian developmental state. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(6), 1151-1165.

35 Iliffe, J. (1967). The organization of the Maji Maji rebellion. *The Journal of African History*, 8(3), 495-512.

known to fight physically for our freedom, if I may put it that way. However, being in Tanzania right now there is a feeling that that the, that the climate has changed, and the tone has changed. You can see that people are angry. People are using social media, say Twitter, more and more right now to express themselves and their anger. I think that we should not test the waters. You might try for a year for two years, but we have seen what has happened with our neighbors in Kenya and in other neighboring countries even recently when the people are tired, they will find a way. I don't think we want to get to that point.

Logan: Potentially that tiredness can be shown in Ethiopia's mass protests,³⁶ and in Sudan's current protests.³⁷ Repression of this sort does not, in the end, continue. People do find a way to express themselves, and probably to the detriment of those who are seeking to maintain control. Aidan also mentioned, in an interview that he did, that some of the restrictions on speech and media are not necessarily new. He said: if you ask our parents and our grandparents they also had this historical experience, for example the 1960s.³⁸ Is there anything that we can learn by reflecting on that period, and how it was changed, to how this current period might be changed?

Esther: In the 60s, we had a one party state. When it is one, strong man's rule you would expect that they have control of the media and any other voice that is critical, which in a way feels like exactly what is happening. It feels like we are going back, we are

36 Cochrane, L. and Mandefro, H. (2019). Discussing the 2018/19 Changes in Ethiopia: Hone Mandefro. *NokokoPod* 2019(2): 1-24.

37 See: <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2019/04/photos-sudan-protests-removal-of-president-omar-al-bashir/586933/>

38 Aidan Eyakuze recently spoke with Duncan Green from Oxfam about the civil society in Tanzania, and speaks briefly about his personal situation: <https://soundcloud.com/fp2p/aidan-eyakuze-twaweza-on-civil-society-space-in-east-africa>

digressing. There was a reason why we left that time. There was a reason why we thought it is time to include more voices. It is time for the people to be given a voice through the civic space; through journalism; through storytelling; through critical news; through open discussions; through alternative views. There is a lot we can learn from that time because a lot of things did go wrong. We saw, in 1967, Mwalimu nationalizing banks and private owned companies,³⁹ which in a way we are sort of seeing that happening right now as well. And it is not a good place to be. It is not a good environment to live in. I do hope that this ends sooner than soon.

Logan: Could you give us a glimpse, for external viewers looking in, what the local language media, Swahili media, looks like. If it is different or similar, in terms of these restrictions? And, potentially also as finding avenues to counter the restrictions? For example, what we would see in the English print media - are the restrictions being expressed in similar ways, or are they different?

Esther: I would say they are similar because we have seen Swahili newspapers being banned for being critical. The journalist I mentioned before, Ansbert Ngurumo, he wrote for a Swahili newspaper. This is across all platforms. What I would say is that it is quite interesting how people are using Twitter right now, especially Twitter. I would not say this is the majority of Tanzanians, because not everyone is on Twitter, but it feels like when the traditional media is not working, people still try to find another way to voice their grievances and their concerns. We really see, at this point in time, how digital media is taking that role when it feels like journalists are afraid and they are kind of toning it down a little. I have been in Canada since September, and I think it was just a month ago, when the newspaper I was working for when I was in Tanzania was shut

39 Dias, C. (1970). *Tanzanian Nationalizations: 1967-1970*. Cornell Int'l LJ, 4, 59.

down for seven days because they wrote a story about the failing shilling, which was true, but the government just was not happy about it.⁴⁰ As a result, they said "you rest for seven days, think about what you just did, and don't do it again." I was just talking to my colleagues back home and you can feel you can feel that fear. It is really sad, but you can feel it because as much as you want to do the bold journalistic work, and speak the truth - especially as leaders in the newsroom - there is also that feeling that you also need to be responsible for all these jobs.⁴¹ You want the newsroom to sail through this storm. It feels like a moment, and it will pass. As a result, there is that feeling that it is better to just stay put, and then at one point we will go back to how things used to be. But, there is also a sense of uncertainty. Not knowing when it will change, or how. Especially since we have not been in such situations in recent history, it feels as if you do not have a reference point. You are kind of playing it by ear.

Logan: Do the public facing expressions, like Twitter (unless someone makes it private, but generally public expressed information), from individuals rather than the formal media institutions face restrictions? Or, is it just that there are so many people that it's so difficult to actually restrict that?

Esther: There is that tone that they cannot shut us all down. That they cannot kill us all. As I said before, there are a few cases. I remember a story about someone, who insulted the President. You would not even think that you could get in trouble for it, as it is not a serious criminal matter. In most cases you would ignore such

40 Reporting on that incident: <https://cpj.org/2019/03/tanzania-citizen-7-day-publication-ban.php>

41 For another commentary on journalism in Tanzania, see: <https://www.africanliberty.org/2019/02/03/how-journalism-became-the-deadliest-profession-in-tanzania/>

comments. But, she was charged with insulting the President and was jailed for a year. But then there are thousands of people making comments - there is that attitude that they cannot do it to all of us. You don't know when it will be you. In the meantime, you just keep on talking. There are also many people who don't use their real identities online. They put fake names, fake pictures. I see a lot of that. In a way they are more free to speak back to power.

Logan: With reference to the North African experience: Are there shifts away from those public facing social media platforms, like Twitter, to encrypted, private networks, such as WhatsApp or Telegram?

Esther: Yes and no. The funny thing is that even with WhatsApp people have gotten into trouble, especially if you are in a group chat. I remember one day I was in a group chat with journalists and one day we were talking about something that was sensitive and then everyone would delete their message like just a minute after they posted and it was a thread of deleted messages. This was because you do not know who to trust. You do not know, especially if you are in that space, who is, who is going to tell on you. Even those encrypted messages you might wonder how someone found themselves in conflict with the law by being open in such a space - it is because of that. So, in a way, it does not really matter if it is encrypted or open. It does not matter.

Logan: One of the ways in which Ethiopia tried to restrict this space was in addition to these concerns about who might get the message and who might pass it to who, they actually required every phone to be registered to a specific individual, every phone number

and every phone device.⁴² This allowed them to track, even if you used that fake profile or that fake picture, they have a record of the serial number of the phone in addition to the phone number that is being used. The road could potentially get more difficult.

Esther: People have ways. Especially if you are aware that you are being followed, say by government officials or whatever, people will find other means.

Logan: What about those who are not online? Are these restrictions - especially because the Cyber Crime Act and the Electronic and Postal Communications Regulation tend to be more of formal media outlets or online social media expressions – broader? How about day to day life in rural Tanzania? Are these having implications for how people speak to one another? Is that fear percolating throughout the nation?

Esther: I would say it is. Especially because of politics. At the moment it feels like you are either or; you are either with the ruling party or you are the other. And if you are the other, and we know that you are, then that is a problem. I would say that the people are very careful, fearful. There are cases where people are bold and do not care, and just decide to exercise their freedom of speech. But there is also that tone - that you have to be careful who you are talking to, where you are talking; otherwise you will get into trouble. I would say it is beyond a physical newspaper, is beyond your phone, it is that space that we share on a daily basis.

Logan: It is more of a cultural shift?

42 For reporting on this, see: <https://www.ezega.com/News/NewsDetails/4138/New-Registry-System-to-Make-Four-Million-Ethiopian-Mobile-Phones-Obsolete>

Esther: It is. I think for the past one year we have seen a lot of members of the opposition moving to the ruling party, including from the village level. You can imagine if your village leader, or leader that you know, was in opposition and then they moved to the ruling party. What kind of tone does it set in that locality? You can feel the change. You know what is happening. You know why it is happening. You know the implications of being against this change. It is openly said that whoever is against the government's agenda is an enemy. That is why we see people disappearing. That is why there are more and more cases of unknown assailants. People who commit crimes. People who take other people, and they are not known, supposedly. These cases are increasing. A good example is that of Azory Gwanda, the journalist who was writing about cases of disappearing people. Who then himself disappeared.

Logan: Do you feel optimistic that things will change? What is your sense?

Esther: You can only hope. That is what I can say right now. You have to hope that the best is yet to come, that things will not get worse. There is that fear that because we have seen in our neighboring countries things escalating quite quickly and going towards the wrong direction. I hope that we come to our senses - from the top leadership to the level of the village - I hope we come to our senses. Even with the coming general elections next year, I hope it will be a time where we can rethink our politics and build Tanzania together.

Logan: I hope so too. Thank you for joining me today. A very interesting conversation. We look forward to watching what happens in the next months and year.

Esther: Thank you too.