

Tanzania imposes 7-day publication ban on *The Citizen*

Authorities in Tanzania should lift a seven-day publication ban on the privately-owned newspaper *The Citizen* and allow journalists to report on matters of public interest freely, the Committee to Protect Journalists said last week.



Tanzanians sit next to a tree in Dar es Salaam in 2015. Tanzanian authorities this week imposed a temporary ban on *The Citizen* over its reporting. Credit: CPJ/AP/Khalfan Said.

The Information Services Department, which oversees newspaper licenses, [temporarily suspended](#) the publication license of *The Citizen* on February 27, on accusations that it published reports that were false, misleading, and seditious, according to [media reports](#).

The suspension order relates to an article on the state of Tanzanian democracy, published in July, and an article on the country's currency, published last month, according to [a report](#) by *The Citizen's* sister publication, *Mwananchi*.

The order extends to the newspaper's online publications. As of today, CPJ was unable access *The Citizen's* [website](#) and its [Twitter](#) account had been deactivated. Reuters [reported](#) that *The Citizen* did "not appear on newsstands on [February 28]".

"Tanzania is sending a troubling message that public debate on critical matters is a punishable offense. Unfortunately, media shutdowns have become all-too familiar as President John Magufuli's government relentlessly tries to silence the free press," said CPJ's Sub-Saharan Africa representative Muthoki Mumo. "Authorities should immediately lift the suspension on *The Citizen* and allow journalists to operate freely and independently."

The suspension order said that a February 23 article that reported the Tanzanian shilling had depreciated against the U.S. dollar was false and misleading because only the Bank of Tanzania can release information on currency rates, according to media reports. The article cited data from bureaus in the major city of Dar es Salaam and local commercial banks, according to [an archived](#) version of it reviewed by CPJ.

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