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# **2019**

# **ChaIr REPORT**

## Social, HumanItarIan & Cultural commIttee (sochum)

## establIsIng measures to combat albIno sacrIfIces In sub-saharan afrIca

## alI fadIl sukan (PresIdent chaIr)

**Introduction**

In Sub-Saharan Africa people with albinism are being killed, hunted and sacrificed. Those sacrifices are great examples for the violation of the right to live which is the first right of a human. We can also say that threats to albinos’ lives are compounded by exclusion, stigmatization and denial of basic human rights. The persecution made to the albinos is based totally on myths and superstitions. First of all, in the region of the conflict people with albinism are seen like ‘’ghosts’’ more than human beings. Secondly, witch doctors are operating in southern Africa believe their body parts possess magical powers such as bringing good luck, richness etc. to the owner. On the other hand there are some beliefs which states that the bodies of the albinos are cursed and the crackpot theories range from the ideas that they are trapped spirits, to being the living souls of colonialist invaders. . Thirdly, people with albinism are not only getting murdered but their body parts are being taken and being sold for a big amount of money to the witch doctors for their false-believed acts. Lastly, it is believed that having a sexual relation with a person with albinism will cure AIDS/HIV which is totally not proven scientifically. Thus, this means the only problem is not the murders but there are serious risks of sexual harassment as well. Albinism is just an illness that should only bother the person facing it but because of the lack of education and the poor life standards in most of LEDCs likewise the region, this basic illness can be considered like a curse, myth, superstition etc. and here in this years’ SOCHUM committee it is our duty to find necessary solutions to our conflict.

### **Key Vocabulary**

Albinism: a congenital absence of pigment in the skin and hair (which are white) and the eyes (which are usually pink).

Sub-Saharan Africa: Sub-Saharan Africa is, geographically, the area of the continent of Africa that lies south of the Sahara.

Witch doctors: A witch doctor was originally a type of healer who treated ailments believed to be caused by witchcraft. The term witch doctor is sometimes used to refer to healers, particularly in regions which use traditional healing rather than contemporary medicine.

Sacrifice: a person or animal that is killed in a sacrifice. (brutally)

Violation of human rights: A violation of economic, social and cultural rights

LEDC: LEDC is an abbreviation for Less Economically Developed Country or we may know it as a developing country. Countries that are claimed to LEDCs are relatively poor countries.

Curse: a prayer or invocation for harm or injury to come upon one

Crackpot theory: a statement or idea (not necessarily presented by a [crackhead](https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=crackhead)) that is extremely [extensive](https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=extensive) in nature and ridiculous in reality.

OHCHR: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, commonly known as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), is a department of the Secretariat of the United Nations that works to promote and protect the human rights that are guaranteed under international law

Amnesty International:Amnesty International (commonly known as Amnesty or AI) is a non-governmental organization based in the United Kingdom focused on human rights.

**Focused Overview**

Firstly, it is easy to state that our conflict is mostly about a major violation of the human rights. Every human being deserves to have right to live and with those sacrifices that right is being violated. In order for us to tackle the issue we should definitely know our enemy and with that it will be easier for us to achieve this knowledge by examining the reasons of the murders. Here are some major reasons:

1) Trading chain of the body parts of the people with albinism

The trade of the body parts of the people with albinism is one of the biggest reasons of the sacrifices. Since there are some misbeliefs, like the good luck that the dead body will bring to the owner, hunting albinos became a dirty business for the ‘’hunters’’ and the witch doctors. This dirty business is like a chain among the hunters and the witch doctors who buys the hunted body parts of the victim. It costs approximately 2.000 dollars for a single leg/arm and 75.000 dollars for the whole body. It is crucial to break this trade chain in order to stop the sacrifices.

2) Myths and superstitions based on the albinos

First of all, it is important to understand that a person with albinism disease is just facing a genetic illness which doesn’t require any need to make up myths or superstitions on it. Sadly in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are a lot of myths, manipulations and superstitions based on the albinos. The region contains mostly LEDC’s and therefore a huge lack of education and quality of life, mostly economically, is being faced. The lack of education is the key for manipulations, myths and superstitions. Since albino is an illness, we can also name it as a difference and that difference is being used under the branches of superstitions. For instance, having sexual relations with an albino provides HIV or the richness that a dead albino body will bring etc. Those unreal myths are causing really important sacrifices.

### **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

### South Africa

South Africa is a country were mostly the albino killings occur. Approximately, there have been 150 sacrifices which is an enormous number. Also, in a recent period of time some terrifying facts has been released in a court stating that a witch doctor had cut off a hand of a 9 year old kid and then buried the dead body. Luckily, the country started taking some measures and getting more serious on the issue and the sanctions on the murderers to decrease the number of the albinos who are sacrificed. Also government officials started to step up against the killings by delivering speeches and urging everyone to fight against the murders.

### Tanzania

Albinism effects 1 in 1400 Tanzanians which is above average. There has been an extensive amount of albino murders in the past decade especially in Tanzania, where in 2007 more than seventy documented killings took place and one hundred and fifty body parts of albinos were reported to have been chopped off. Sadly, Tanzania is the country where the albinos are mostly in danger. Recently, 65 witch doctors have been arrested and the government ordered to all healers to obtain a special license and they requested all willing organizations to help them fight against the killings.

### Malawi

There are less than 10.000 albinos in Malawi, but nearly all of them are highly under a huge risk. After 2015 when Tanzania enacted tougher steps against violent manners towards albinos, Malawi has seen a "steep upsurge in killings" with 18 reported killings since November 2014, and they are more likely to toll higher because of missing persons and unreported murders. Some of the albinos who are living in this area have been taken to Canada in order to secure their lives by UN officials.

### OHCHR

As a branch of the UN, OHCHR is responsible for the human rights all over the world. They encourage all countries to take special measures in order to prevent killing. For their part, they have and still are collecting information, tracking any positive or negative developments, getting involved if it is asked. They have taken some albinos from Malawi to Canada to ensure their right to live. They have also written several reports and resolutions to present them to the UN General Assembly.

### Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a NGO related to the UN. They have been working recently on the issue. They have been raising awareness, keeping track of the recently happened events, getting involved physically and making elaborative news. It is crucial to cooperate with them in order to get correct news, useful information and their help.

### Timeline of Events

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| **Date of Event (Day/Month/Year)** | **Description of Event** |
| 2008 | Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete appointed the countries first albino member of parliament. |
| 15 November 2013 | First resolution on the people with albinism by the African Commission on Human and people’s rights. |
| January 2015 | Malawi’s president Peter Mutharika condemned attacks on albinos by National response Plan which makes the situation more legal. |
| June 2015 | Ikponwosa Ero who is a woman with albinism started ‘’Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism’’ to UN Human Rights Council. |
| April 2016 | A 2 years old baby with albinism was murdered in Malawi |
| 2016 | OHCHR created an official report about the importance of the issue including the recent developments |

### **Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

* Resolution 13/10 June 13 2013 (Human Rights Council, Geneva)

This resolution was the first resolution submitted on the issue. It was a crucial step, in order to prevent albinos from getting murdered, since it was the first official attempt. It was submitted by the African Council.

* Resolution 69/170 December 18 2014

With the submission of this resolution June 13 was proclaimed officially the International Albinism Awareness Day. In order to raise awareness and encourage people with albinism, this resolution will be a good step.

### **Possible Solutions**

Our conflict occurs mainly in the LEDC countries in the Sub-Saharan region. Due to the lack of education, people who are living there are open to believe all sorts of myths and superstitions. First of all, we must start tackling the issue by ending the belief to those myths. It would be only achievable if the level and the quality of education is increased. Second of all; the trading chain, of the body parts of the people with albinism, should be broken. This could be achieved only with the cooperation of the governments and the UN. Thirdly, raising awareness on the sacrifices especially by focusing on the brutal parts and raising awareness on the albinism separately by clarifying that it is only a genetic illness would be useful. Also, augmenting the legal sanctions on the possible murderers in order to deter them from committing those crimes could be a key point. Lastly, getting help from all relevant NGOs, willing nations and organizations in order to ensure safe life conditions to all albinos by taking necessary precautions should be the main ideas to be focused on this year’s Sochum committee to prevent any possible albino sacrifice.

### **Further Reading**

# Tanzanian children lost limbs in brutal attacks for having albinism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PKWoW0ZzIk>

# Albino body organs sold for witchcraft

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9F6UpuJIFaY>

# Newsroom: Tanzania, Albino Killings with Dr. Ally Possi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--fkUlbjJMU>

* <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-malawi-killings/malawi-offers-7000-reward-to-stop-albino-killings-idUSKCN1QI4FE>

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