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Albino killings in Tanzania

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Margrete Auken***

on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rule of Procedure

A. Whereas according to NGOs and media reports, confirmed by the Government of Tanzania, at least 25 albinos, including children, had been killed and mutilated since March 2008 in the Lake Victoria zone, especially in Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara, where there is a high concentration of albinos;

B. whereas according to the Tanzanian authorities, the killings of albinos are the work of organised gangs hired by witchdoctors;

C. whereas 173 people are arrested in connection with the killing of albinos in the country, among which there is a considerable number of witchdoctors and their clients;

D. whereas according to national police, witchdoctors sell severed body parts and blood of albinos to miners and fishermen who believe that these parts can bring them luck, health and fortune;

E. whereas 36% of the Tanzanian population live below the national poverty line; whereas access to health care system is restricted by its accessibility, including long distances to nearest dispensary or health centre, lack of public transport and affordability, making the use of witchdoctors or traditional healers considered acceptable, even by the government;

F. whereas discrimination against albinos is a serious problem throughout sub-Saharan Africa;

G. whereas according to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) study, nearly half of the parents of albino children felt humiliated at the time they gave birth ; albino women are subject to discrimination from other women and also women who give birth to albino babies are often mocked or rejected and suffer work discrimination; about two-thirds of parents said that specific health interventions for albino children were expensive, and half said their children had serious vision problems; however, 83 per cent said their children did as well at school as any other children;

H. whereas albinism affects one in 20,000 people worldwide, but there is an estimated 4,000 to 173,000 albinos in Tanzania,

1. Strongly condemns the killings of the albinos in Tanzania;

2. Welcomes Tanzania's President Mr. Jakaa Kikwete's numerous statements and condemnations of the killings of albinos and his promise of concentrated efforts in order to put an end to these crimes; stresses that words must be backed up with actions;

3. supports and welcomes the steps taken by the Tanzanian Government so far, such as the creation of an albino census and the establishment of a police escort service for albino children; endorses the demand by Tanzanian Members of Parliament that the Government urgently needs to addressthe problem and launch an investigation to establish the root causes and a solution plan of action;

4. Regrets that despite the arrest last month of 173 suspects in connection with the killing of albinos in the country, so far the authorities had failed to investigate these allegations of human rights violations and none have been prosecuted;

5. Stresses that an investigative journalist, Vicky Ntetema, has gone into hiding after receiving death threats for exposing witch-doctors and police involvement in the killings**;** urges Tanzanian authorities to initiate an in depth and independent investigation of this accusation;

6. Expresses its appreciation and support for the work of the Albino Association of Tanzania that render assistance to the albino community; calls on the Commission to actively support this association and their call on academics, religious leaders and human rights activists to make members of the public aware that the killing of albinos is socially and morally unjustified;

7. Calls on the Commission to support the UNDP's efforts to promote and protect albino minorities in Africa;

8. Considers that the best way to protect the rights of Tanzanian albinos is to guarantee them equal access to quality education and health care, within the framework of inclusion policies, and to ensure them an adequate social and legal protection;

9. Calls on the Commission and Member States to support the Tanzanian government, NGOs and civil society's efforts to formulate policies to address the needs and rights of persons with albinism to education in integrated institutions, proper health care to prevent early deaths from preventable cancers, non-discrimination and social inclusion, and access to employment;

10. Insists that the Commission and Member States do their utmost to ensure that healthcare funds reach the poorest in Tanzania; highlights the urgent need for access to healthcare in rural and remote areas;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States as well as the African Union and the Government and the Parliament of Tanzania.

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