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The hunt for Albinos is still on

[The Observers](#) ^ | 13/04/2009 | Stefan Chiara Gregoracci

Posted on **Friday, September 18, 2009 10:40:54 PM** by [csvset](#)

The hunt for Albinos is still on



© Alida Vanni. A

school in Tanzania.

The case of [18-year-old Moszy](#), who landed on a Spanish beach along with several other refugees from Africa, has raised awareness of the plight of albinos in many African countries, where witchdoctors claim albino body parts can bring wealth and good luck.

Albinism is an inherited genetic condition characterised by the absence of melanin in skin, eyes and hair and can affect all races. African albinos, easily spotted by their white skin and fair hair, have long been ostracised and discriminated against. The target of superstitions and sorcery, [they are hunted down](#) for their body parts, some of which are thought to confer magical powers.

‘There is an old belief, that when the volcano erupts, only albino blood can placate the god of the mountain’

Stefan arrived in Italy two years ago after fleeing his native Cameroon. A trained journalist, he was granted asylum on humanitarian grounds and now lives in Turin.



I left my country to escape the widespread prejudice targeting albinos such as me. People are starting to talk more and more about the plight of albinos in Tanzania, but things are much the same in

Cameroon. Different parts of our bodies are sought for their supposed miraculous powers: to become rich, win elections or concoct love potions.

In south-west Cameroon, where I studied, there is an old belief that when the local volcano erupts, only albino blood can placate the god of the mountain. When I was fifteen, we found the body of my elder brother, also an albino, with his heart and testicles removed. I was forced into hiding several times.

It was very hard for me to cope with other people's scorn. My parents insisted I get a proper education, but there is no special treatment for albinos with poor eyesight. Still, I managed to complete university degrees in journalism and English literature.

There is a lot to be done in countries such as Cameroon to ensure albinos have access to healthcare and education. But we must do our bit to educate other people and raise awareness of such major dangers as skin cancer. We must persuade other people and the government to make it possible for albinos to play their part in society.”



Stefan

- Italy
- Journalist

‘Mothers often refuse to breastfeed albino babies’

Chiara Gregoracci is the founder of the Association of Handicapped Albino Youths of Cameroon and Africa (AJAHCA). An orphaned child, she was picked up by albino foster parents.



People here in Cameroon know little or nothing about albinos. There is a lot of ignorance and superstition. They are treated as outcasts, and parents don't send them to school. Mothers often refuse to breastfeed Albino babies; and having albino children can sometimes lead to parents divorcing. So far we've been trying to find foster families for albino orphans, but we've already bought a plot of land to build a couple of houses, where the children can be looked after properly. Our aim is to ensure they can feel autonomous and build up their confidence. In time, we hope to convince the government to back our cause.”



Daniel (left) and George (right) were both abandoned by their parents before the AJAHCA helped them find foster families.



Chiara Grego...

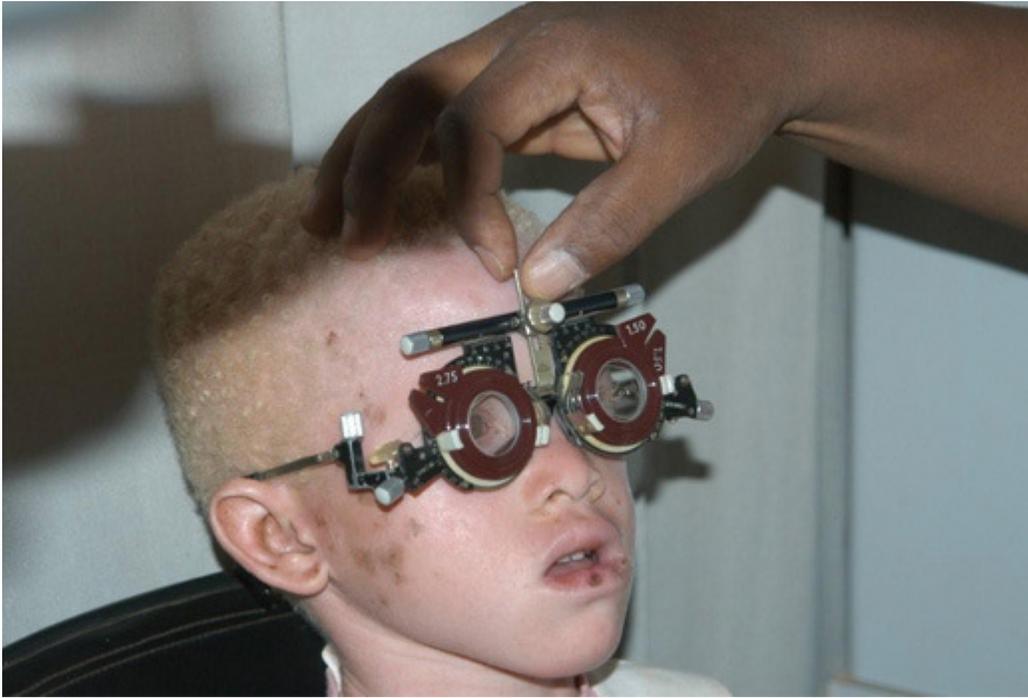
- Cameroon
- Community worker

‘We are human beings just like everyone else, only we need more care’

Mzawa Iddi Jagame is a member of the Tanzania Albino Society. Her account and the accompanying pictures were put together by Matteo Tortone and Alessandro Baltera of [Olmo Produzioni](#).



It is very difficult in Tanzania, as in all sub-Saharan countries, to assert our equal dignity. We are human beings just like everyone else, only we need more care. For instance, we need to make sure our skin gets adequate protection from the equatorial sun, and in classrooms we need to have a place in the front row, or else we cannot see the blackboard. The Tanzania Albino Society was founded in 1979 and was recognised by the state in 1982. Three years ago we obtained a national day for albinos. It's on April 26, and this year it will be celebrated in Mwanza, the capital of the province worst affected by massacres of albinos.”





©Alida Vanni. Tanzania Albino Society. The pictures were put together by Matteo Tortona and Alessandro Baltera of [Olmo Produzioni](#).

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1 posted on **Friday, September 18, 2009 10:40:54 PM** by [csvset](#)
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The Dark Continent. The horror, the horror.

2 posted on **Friday, September 18, 2009 10:41:53 PM** by **csvset**
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[Spain mulls albino's asylum bid](#)

Madrid - The Spanish government has agreed to consider a request for asylum from an albino teenager from Benin who fears he will be killed in a witchcraft ritual if he is sent home, an official said on Wednesday.

The 18-year-old, identified only by his first name Moszy, arrived on the island of Tenerife in Spain's Canary's Islands last week on a wooden boat carrying about 60 other illegal African migrants.

He made the request for asylum, which the government has now agreed to process, with the help of the Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid (Cear).

The Cear is also trying to get him released from the centre for illegal immigrants in Tenerife where he has been held since his arrival in Spain.

"In Africa albinos are considered to be a bad omen or a factor of good luck. It is logical that he fears for his life because among different ethnic groups his body may be used in a sacrifice ritual," the director of Cear, Juan Carlos Lorenzo, told reporters.

Belief in sorcery is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, where some witch doctors believe that a potion using albino body parts and blood can lead to wealth and luck.

Officials in some African nations report a growing trade in albino body parts for use in witchcraft, with buyers willing to pay thousands of dollars.

Albinism is a congenital lack of the melanin pigment in the skin, eyes and hair which protects from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Albinos are vulnerable to medical complications, and social discrimination in Africa.

The Canary Islands, in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Morocco, are a magnet for Africans hoping to reach Europe. - AFP



An albino teen identified only as Moszy is seen after arriving on the island of Tenerife, Spain. He is asking Spain for asylum.

3 posted on **Friday, September 18, 2009 10:54:07 PM** by **csvset**
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4 posted on **Friday, September 18, 2009 10:58:18 PM** by **Michael.SF.** (Where are we going and how did I get in this hand basket?)
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To: **Michael.SF.**

About 15 years ago, I saw Johnny Winter play at a bar in Virginia Beach.

He put on a good show.

5 posted on **Friday, September 18, 2009 11:04:26 PM** by **csvset**
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6 posted on **Friday, September 18, 2009 11:35:43 PM** by **JoeProBono** (A closed mouth gathers no feet)
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To: **csvset**

and the world still blames us for slavery

7 posted on **Friday, September 18, 2009 11:39:56 PM** by **dalebert**
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To: **csvset**

I saw Johnny Winter years ago at an ABATE rally in Humbolt Iowa. It was a full moon. He really stood out, tattoos and all glowing in the moonlight. He was jamming his ass off, too.

8 posted on **Saturday, September 19, 2009 12:19:06 AM** by **Uncle Meat**
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To: **dalebert**

Re slavery and Africa.

I highly recommend [Sufferings in Africa: The Incredible True Story of a Shipwreck, Enslavement, and Survival on the Sahara](#)

The story of [Captain James Riley](#) and the crew of the American merchant ship Commerce.

9 posted on **Saturday, September 19, 2009 4:07:13 AM** by **csvset**
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To: **StayAt HomeMother; Ernest_at_the_Beach; 1ofmanyfree; 21twelve; 24Karet; 2ndDivisionVet; 31R10; ...**

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**Gods
Graves
Glyphs**

Great start to a new week...

African albinos, easily spotted by their white skin and fair hair, have long been ostracised and discriminated against. The target of superstitions and sorcery, they are hunted down for their body parts, some of which are thought to confer magical powers.

To all -- please ping me to other topics which are appropriate for the GGG list.

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10 posted on **Saturday, September 19, 2009 6:56:37 AM** by **SunkenCiv**
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To: **SunkenCiv**

It's hard to imagine that this stuff still goes on in the 21st century.

Maybe its time to leave the dark continent to its own devices since we still get accused of trying to change their culture or take over their resources.

11 posted on **Saturday, September 19, 2009 10:11:19 AM** by **wildbill** (You're just jealous because the Voices talk only to me.)
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To: **wildbill**

:') Better we should take over their resources than the Muzzies.

12 posted on **Sunday, September 20, 2009 3:03:52 PM** by **SunkenCiv**
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