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Albinos in Tanzania murdered or raped as AIDS "cure"

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By Fumbuka Ng'wanakilala

DAR ES SALAAM (Reuters) - Hundreds of albinos are thought to have been killed for black magic purposes in Tanzania and albino girls are being raped because of a belief they offer a cure for AIDS, a Canadian rights group said on Thursday.

At least 63 albinos, including children, are known to have been killed, mostly in the remote northwest of the country.

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"We believe there are hundreds and hundreds of killings in Tanzania, but only a small number are being reported to the police," Peter Ash, founder and director of Under The Same Sun (UTSS), told Reuters.

"There is belief that if you have relations with a girl with albinism, you will cure AIDS. So there are many girls with albinism who are being raped in this country because of this belief, which is a false belief."

Around 1.4 million Tanzanians among a population of 40.7 million have the HIV virus that leads to AIDS.

Albino hunters kill their victims and harvest their blood, hair, genitals and other body parts for potions that witchdoctors say bring luck in love, life and business.

"(It is believed) a person with albinism is a curse. They are from the devil, they are not human, they do not die, they simply disappear," said Ash.

Ernest Kimaya, head of the Tanzania Albino society and a sufferer of the pigment disorder, said social stigma prevented many girls from reporting rape, making it difficult to say how many albinos had been sexually abused. [Continued...](#)

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