

Four sentenced to hang for killing albino in Tanzania

By **Faith Karimi**, CNN

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There are some 200,000 albinos in Tanzania -- this photo shows an albino child in neighboring Burundi.

(CNN) -- A court sentenced four people to death in northern Tanzania for the killing of an albino man who was targeted for body parts believed to have special powers, authorities said Friday.

The four were found guilty of killing the 50-year-old albino in the Shinyanga region and sentenced to die by hanging for removing his body parts, said Lucca Haule, assistant commissioner of police.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Four sentenced to death for killing an albino man in northern Tanzania
- Seven convicted and many more waiting trial for murder of more than 50 albinos in past two years
- Albinos have little or no pigment in the eyes, skin and hair
- In some areas of Africa, people believe albinos' organs have special powers

So far, seven people have been sentenced to death for the killing of more than 50 Tanzanian albinos, including children, in the past two years, Haule said. Dozens more are awaiting trial.

Albinism is a genetic condition that leads to little or no pigment in the eyes, skin and hair.

Body parts of albinos are sought in some regions of [Tanzania](#) and other African countries, where some believe they bring wealth and good luck. Attackers chop off limbs and pluck out organs, selling them to witch doctors.

Killings have gone up in the east African nation, which has an estimated 200,000 albinos, according to the Tanzania Albino Center.

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"People believe that albino body parts mixed with traditional medicine can make people rich," said Franck Alphonse, the center's director. "It is a thriving business ... witch doctors are asking business people to bring the body parts of albinos, who are not considered human beings."

Tanzanian government officials said they have mobilized police to help the embattled population, but admit it is hard to quell the attacks.

Most happen in rural areas, where there is not enough police presence, according to the police commissioner.

"We don't have the resources in those places ... it is not easy, but we are trying to map out locations where albinos live so that we can better protect them," he said. "We are hoping the convictions will serve as a lesson for the killers to stop."

The Tanzania Albino Center educates the public and provides albinos with basic services such as shelter, medication to prevent skin cancer, advocacy and awareness. Most albinos are stigmatized and do not go to school, leading to lack of employment and means to protect themselves, according to Alphonse.

He said politicians should go after albino killers more aggressively.

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"We want to see justice done to everyone involved in the killings," Alphonse said. "They (police) only pick those who slaughtered albinos, what about those who send these people to kill?"

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