



Children with Albinism in Tanzania
April 2017

1. This report is respectfully submitted by Under The Same Sun to 29th Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), Maseru, Lesotho, April 2017.
2. Under The Same Sun (UTSS) is a civil society organization committed to ending the often-deadly discrimination against people with albinism. UTSS promotes, via advocacy and education, the wellbeing of persons with albinism who are misunderstood, marginalized, attacked and killed because of their genetic condition. While UTSS acts globally, much of our focus has been on the crisis faced by people with albinism in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Executive Summary

3. Across 28 African countries, there have been 522 reported attacks since year 2000. This includes 191 documented murders of people with albinism and 331 cases of missing persons, assault, mutilation, rape, attempted abductions, grave violations and other acts of violence.¹ In the reports, in 2016-2017, 30 children with albinism between the ages of less than 1yr to 17yrs were attacked in 12 African countries.²
4. Under the Same Sun makes recommendations to the United Republic of Tanzania in the areas of policy development, Law reform, budgetary allocation, government accountability, and data gathering.

Interventions by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania

5. UTSS welcomes all interventions taken by the United Republic of Tanzania in addressing violations of rights and welfare of children with albinism in the country especially pursuant to the recommendations given in the ACERWC 2016 investigative mission report.
6. To mention a few;
 - i. The active role played by the Tanzania Commission of Human Rights and Good Governance in publicly condemning atrocities and discrimination against PWA and lobbying for the establishment of one official taskforce and Action plan addressing the issue.
 - ii. The Launch of a nationwide albinism awareness raising campaign by the then Deputy Minister (Prime Minister's Office) in charge of person with disabilities.
 - iii. Close monitoring and follow-up of court cases involving attacks against PWA by the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.
 - iv. Free handouts of sunscreen lotions to PWA where available in medicine stores of Regional Hospitals.
 - v. Allowing a country visit by the United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of rights of PWA as well as supporting her previous activities in the country.
 - vi. Making the safety and protection of PWA a permanent agenda in meetings of local government safety and security committees.



- vii. Adoption of the Teaching Guide for Teachers and Educators for the proper handling of students with albinism in the classroom setting, by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and vocational training.
- viii. Launching of an official statistics database for persons with disabilities by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2016³.

Observations

7. Along with all the interventions by the government; UTSS still notes the following with regards to the situation of children with albinism in Tanzania;
 - i. There is still occurrence of human rights violations against children with albinism
 - **On Jun 06, 2016**, there was an attempted abduction/ mutilation in Kilulu, Sub-village, Ilumya Village; Kiloleni Ward; Busega District, Simiyu Region **on Baraka John Msalaba (M, 6)**, and his sister Pendo John Msalaba (F, 9). The matter was reported to the Chairperson and Village Executive Officer and a suspect was arrested and released. A witchdoctor who had just moved into the village fled with his family after the incident. The children are now in Mitindo Temporary Holding Centre for PWA⁴.
 - **In Jan, 2017**, in Ngh'olongo Sub-Village; Tumaini Village, Nsenda Ward, Urambo District, Tabora Region, **Anna Charles Ally (F, 3 months)** was rejected and abandoned by her father. She also suffered death threats from her father, neighbour, sub-village chairperson, and step-grandfather. Police arrested the father and sub-village chairperson for a day and released them on bail pending investigation. Urambo District Local government moved the child and her mother to safety at Huruma Vision Centre⁵.
 - **On Mar. 23, 2017**, in Kahangala Village, Magu, District, Mwanza Region, there was an attempted abduction and verbal death threats on **Sarah Mabula (F, 5)** from unknown attackers. During the attack, Sarah's elder sister Ushindi, was raped by two men after they could not find Sarah (with albinism) who was hiding with her mother behind a chair under a bed sheet in the parents' bedroom. Police arrested five men, who are still in remand prison pending investigation. They also took Ushindi to the hospital for treatment and counselling. The family plans to send Sarah to safety⁶.
 - **In 2016 -2017**, UTSS made several visits to **Huruma Vision Centre for Children** located in Urambo Town, Urambo District, Tabora Region. 26 children with albinism out of 76 reside in the center. The children live in conditions of poor healthcare and very poor supply food, water, clothing and school supplies. The center mainly depends on handouts and scarce donations from good Samaritans for the children's survival⁷.
 - ii. The 2014 National policy on Disability⁸ and the 2010 Disability Act do not address harmful practices facing people with albinism.
 - iii. Inadequate data on children with albinism is still a great hindrance in planning for and ensuring their safety, security, health, education and development in general. Local government leaders in both rural and urban areas are still not well informed about CWA residing in their jurisdictions.
 - iv. The National Human Rights Action Plan 2013-2017⁹ does not address harmful practices against children with albinism. It only focuses upon interventions in education for people with disabilities.



- v. There is still no comprehensive strategic plan for the deinstitutionalization and reintegration of children with albinism back to their communities which takes into account the safety and security situation, psychological conditions, family welcoming environment, as well as available education and health facilities.
- vi. The Tanzania Penal Code which provides for offenses and penalties involving violations against children with albinism is limited in addressing all human rights violations against them in the view of international Human Rights Standards. Some violations not resulting into actual physical injury are not considered offenses punishable by the court. For instance where a parent shaves the hair of his child with albinism for ritual purposes without actually injuring them; it is highly unlikely for this act to be considered an offense to be penalized.
- vii. Educators, healthcare providers, social workers, local government officials and law enforcement officers are still inadequately equipped with information, tools and skills for handling the challenges facing children with albinism. This hinders the provision of adequate social services and protection of the children from harmful practices.

Questions to the Government of Tanzania

8. To what extent does the recent State Budget cater for promoting the welfare of children with albinism regarding skin cancer prevention and treatment and protection from harmful practices?
9. What progress has been made in empowering and raising awareness on albinism to schoolteachers, health workers, social workers, law enforcers, and the general public?
10. What strategy is there for deinstitutionalizing PWA holding shelters and reintegrating children with albinism back into their communities?
11. What support is there for children with albinism who lost their body parts from attacks as well as children of similar victims of those attacks?

Recommendations

12. A specific National Policy on People with Albinism should be put in place by building upon recommendations suggested by previously constituted task forces spearheaded by the Commission of Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) and the Prime Minister's Office disability department, the UN Independent expert for the enjoyment of rights of persons with albinism as well as civil society organizations.
13. Officers with albinism should be given charge over the specials desks created in government ministries/departments to address albinism related issues. This is so as to enhance the government's accountability over issues relating to children with albinism.
14. Special consideration should be made in government budgetary planning and allocation to facilitate availability of funds for activities and services promoting the rights and welfare of children with albinism. Special funds should be made available for relevant government ministries and departments for awareness raising campaigns; purchasing sunscreen lotions, sunhats and low vision assistive devices; law review and reform; redress and rehabilitation for victims of attack; deinstitutionalization of the shelters as well as skin cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.



15. The Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics should gather data on children with albinism in the country and make it easily accessible to other government institutions both central and local, and the general public.
16. The Tanzania Law Reform Commission should undertake research for re-assessing the Penal Code, Witchcraft Act, and the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act on how these laws fail to reflect the current circumstances children with albinism are in, and propose recommendations thereto.

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¹Under the Same Sun. “Reported attacks for PWA” 2016

<http://www.underthesamesun.com/sites/default/files/Attacks%20of%20PWA%20-%20extended%20version%201.pdf>

²ibid.

³ <http://www.nbs.go.tz/nbstz/index.php/english/statistics-by-subject/health-statistics/disability-statistics/705-disability-statistics-database?highlight=WyJwZXJzb25zliwid2l0aCIsImRpc2FiaWxpdGllcyIsInBlcnNvbNmgd2l0aCIsInBlcnNvbNmgd2l0aCBkaXNhYmlsaXRpZXMiLCJ3aXRolGRpc2FiaWxpdGllcyJd>

⁴ UTSS Community Resource Person and TAS regional Chairperson; Phone Interview with UTSS Executive Director in June 2016; Face to face interview with UTSS Executive Director on April, 04, 2017

⁵ UTSS Community Resource Person and TAS Tabora Coordinator was informed by the baby’s great grandparents on Fri. Mar, 13, 2017; UTSS First Response Mission Interview with baby’s mother and great grandfather on April 10, 2017); Interview with Nh’olongo sub-village chairperson, Urambo District Social Welfare Officer, District Police: Officer (OCD), and other Local government officers on April 11, 2017.

⁶ UTSS Community Resource Person and TAS regional Chairperson, Alfred Kapole; UTSS FRM Interview with Sarah’s father and other family members

⁷ UTSS Tabora Visit in February 2016; UTSS FRM visits and interviews with TAS Urambo Coordinator/ UTSS Community Resource Person; Huruma Vision Centre children and the centre authorities, District Authorities, Social Welfare Officer, and other Local government officers

⁸ http://www.tanzania.go.tz/egov_uploads/documents/NATIONAL_POLICY_ON_DISABILITY_sw.pdf

⁹ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Education/Training/actions-plans/Excerpts/Tanzania_en%202013-2017.pdf