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DPM to call albinos to indaba

By SIBONGILE SUKATI on September 23, 2010



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DPM to call albinos to indaba, DPM, to, call, albinos, indaba

MBABANE — Following the recent killings of albino children, government, in particular the Deputy Prime Minister, has decided to pay special attention to Swazis with albinism, to get to know them better.

The DPM, Themba Masuku, has proposed having a luncheon with all the albinos in the country, where he would get a chance to listen to their problems.

According to the DPM, last week he met with one albino, had an extensive talk with him and was hurt and shocked at some of the things he heard.

“Albinos are hurting and one can never appreciate what they go through until such a time that one really speaks to them,” he said.

He said the gentleman he met with even mentioned that he, in particular, and others found the Swazi term for them, ‘inkawu’, very discriminatory.

Two albino children aged 11 were killed in the Shiselweni Region in cases which police believe are related to ritual purposes.

In the most recent incident, a girl was shot dead in front of her friends and beheaded after being grabbed by a man near a river where the children were playing.

The DPM said this was meant to be a social meeting in which he hoped the albinos would be able to voice their concerns or just give personal testimonies of whatever experiences they had in life.

The DPM said maybe this would also show that they were okay with their lives.

He said it was a pity if perhaps felt they had been neglected and said it was disheartening that there was suddenly a focus on them, only because of the recent murders.

“They are hurting and it is very important for my office and society in general to do their part to ensure they are all treated as equally human, which they are,” he said. The DPM said he did not know if it was possible to change the Siswati name that they had been labelled with but said probably a way forward could be mapped out after the meeting.

He said he was still organising the logistics for the meet but hoped that it would be soon.

Masuku pleaded with the media and the public to ensure that the culprits were apprehended and said this matter should not die a natural death because the culprits would think they had gotten off scot free.

Last week at the opening of the Hluthi Magistrates’ Court and police station, the Prime Minister, Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini, also spoke against the killing of albinos.

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Comments

To the editor May I once again appeal to this newspaper to refrain from labeling people according to their physiological, structural or even colour disorder or whatever you refer to it. I don't know if it is for money making reasons or for making us feel bad? But this is way out of order. I would cite an example, would you call someone who has lost his leg or had one of his legs deformed a "one legged man" as far as I am concerned you would rather call everyone by their names or even refer to the disorder and not make the disorder a name. Education should start with how the media report issues or stories and goes on to how they cover up and describe incidents in a way that the public learns from such an influential type of institution and refrain from wrong doings. I believe the employees in the media are not fully aware of how they can either build or destroy the community and or nation. I would therefore in conclusion state that what you write has a great impact on how certain individuals choose to do things. What is in the newspaper has the power to influence how an individual chooses to act on a particular day. If the media has negative sentiments about a certain issue the influence into the readers' actions goes far than one can imagine. I don't want to go down the road and hear a child or drunk call me an albino just because that is what the Times of Swaziland has chosen to refer to me. I am personally ok if you say 'persons with albinism' persons living with HIV/AIDS and not AIDS people or one legged people' they are people with disabilities and it is ok. Please take me seriously this once. Thank you Nicollete
Sep 23, 2010, 2:50 PM, Nicollete Mhlanga (nicolletemhlanga@yahoo.co.uk)

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