



**Joint report Submitted to the CRPD: Human Rights Situation of
Persons with Albinism in the United Republic of Tanzania**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Persons with albinism in Tanzania experience persistent discrimination, social exclusion, and serious threats to their life and physical integrity. These violations are driven by harmful beliefs and practices, structural gaps in protection, and insufficient implementation of existing legal and policy frameworks. Although Tanzania has adopted general disability legislation and policies aimed at promoting equality, these measures have not adequately addressed the specific vulnerabilities associated with albinism, including targeted violence, health risks linked to sun exposure, and stigma rooted in myths and superstition.

Over the past two decades, Tanzania has recorded numerous cases of killings, abductions, mutilations, and grave desecrations of persons with albinism. Survivors of such attacks often sustain permanent physical injuries and psychological trauma, while families and communities live in fear. Accountability for these crimes has remained limited, with investigations and prosecutions frequently delayed or discontinued, contributing to an environment of insecurity and continued risk.

Women and girls with albinism face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender and disability. They are disproportionately exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, social exclusion, and economic marginalization. Children with albinism remain at heightened risk of violence and neglect and face significant barriers in accessing inclusive education and family-based care.

Access to health care for persons with albinism remains inadequate, particularly in relation to dermatological and ophthalmological services. Medical research conducted in Tanzania has long established the elevated risk of skin cancer among persons with albinism, often leading to premature mortality when preventive care and early treatment are unavailable. These health risks are exacerbated by poverty, climate conditions, and the lack of sunscreen and protective equipment in public health systems.

In February 2025, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights delivered its landmark judgment in *Centre for Human Rights and Others v. United Republic of Tanzania*, finding that Tanzania had failed to adequately protect persons with albinism from violence and discrimination



and ordering reparations and guarantees of non-repetition. This judgment represents a significant regional accountability milestone. However, at the time of submission of this report, concerns remain regarding the pace, scope, and transparency of its implementation.

This report assesses Tanzania's compliance with selected provisions of the CRPD, identifies gaps between legal commitments and practical outcomes, and offers constructive recommendations aimed at supporting the State party in strengthening protection, inclusion, and equality for persons with albinism.

1. QUESTIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF TANZANIA

1. What specific legislative, administrative, and policy measures has Tanzania adopted to address discrimination and violence against persons with albinism, beyond general disability frameworks?
2. What concrete steps has the State taken to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish killings, abductions, grave desecrations, and other attacks against persons with albinism, and to ensure effective remedies for victims and their families?
3. What progress has Tanzania made in implementing the judgment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in *Centre for Human Rights and Others v. United Republic of Tanzania* (Application No. 019/2018), including measures related to reparations, investigations, protection, and guarantees of non-repetition? What timelines and monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure full compliance with the Court's orders?
4. How does the State ensure that women and girls with albinism are protected from multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices?
5. What measures are in place to ensure inclusive education for children with albinism, including reasonable accommodation, protection from violence, and support for family-based care?
6. How does Tanzania ensure access to affordable and quality health care for persons with albinism, including dermatological and ophthalmological services, sunscreen provision, and skin cancer prevention and treatment?
7. What steps are being taken to promote access to decent work and employment for persons with albinism, including provision of reasonable accommodation and protection from discrimination in recruitment and the workplace?

2. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Tanzania ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol on November 10, 2009. Following this ratification, the country enacted the Persons with Disabilities Act in 2010 to incorporate the treaty's principles into national law. The treaty officially came into force for Tanzania in December 2009. This submission has been compiled by the Africa Albinism Network (AAN), drawing from insights provided by human rights defenders who serve as leaders within association and organizations working to advance the rights and well-being of persons with albinism in Tanzania. These individuals possess long-standing experience in documentation, advocacy, and service provision within affected communities. Information for this report was gathered through focus group discussions, internal desk research conducted by AAN, review of jurisprudence and findings from regional and international human rights mechanisms, and analysis of credible media reports. The report also draws on academic and medical research related to albinism in Tanzania, including studies on health outcomes and exposure to violence. The report aims to present a balanced, evidence-based assessment that supports constructive dialogue between the State party and the CRPD Committee.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIFIC ARTICLES OF THE CONVENTION

Article 5 – Equality and Non-Discrimination

Article 5 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) obliges States Parties to prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and to guarantee equal and effective legal protection. Tanzania's Constitution and disability-related legislation contain general equality and non-discrimination provisions. However, these frameworks do not explicitly recognize albinism or sufficiently address the distinct and compounded forms of discrimination faced by persons with albinism.

Persons with albinism in Tanzania experience discrimination in multiple areas of life, including education, health care, employment, and access to

justice. Harmful stereotypes and misconceptions portraying persons with albinism as cursed, inhuman, or possessing supernatural attributes continue to shape social attitudes and practices. Such beliefs contribute directly to exclusion, stigmatization, marginalization, and violence.

Although persons with albinism are generally included within the broader category of persons with disabilities, the absence of explicit recognition of albinism within certain policies and implementation frameworks has resulted in inconsistent access to reasonable accommodation, targeted protection measures, and tailored social services. This gap undermines substantive equality and limits the effectiveness of existing anti-discrimination mechanisms.

It is important to acknowledge that Tanzania adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) on albinism in 2024, which represents a significant policy step toward addressing violence, discrimination, and social exclusion faced by persons with albinism. The NAP has the potential to strengthen coordination, prevention, protection, and awareness-raising efforts. However, its effectiveness will depend on full implementation, adequate budgetary allocation, institutional coordination, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Without sustained political will and measurable indicators, the NAP risks remaining largely aspirational.

Furthermore, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights has affirmed that the failure to take adequate measures to protect persons with albinism from violence and discrimination constitutes a breach of equality and non-discrimination obligations under regional human rights law. This jurisprudence reinforces the State's obligation under Article 5 of the CRPD to adopt specific, targeted, and effective measures to guarantee substantive equality for persons with albinism.

Article 6 – Women with Disabilities

Women and girls with albinism in Tanzania face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on the basis of gender and disability. They are disproportionately exposed to sexual violence, exploitation, and harmful practices linked to myths surrounding albinism. Social stigma and economic marginalization further increase their vulnerability.

Women with albinism often face barriers in accessing education, reproductive health services, and employment. Discrimination within families and communities can lead to abandonment, early marriage, or exclusion from decision-making. While Tanzania has adopted policies aimed at promoting gender equality and addressing gender-based violence, these measures do not sufficiently address the specific risks faced by women with albinism.

Article 6 of the CRPD requires States Parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement, and empowerment of women with disabilities. Targeted, gender-responsive strategies that explicitly include women with albinism remain necessary to fulfill this obligation.

Article 7 – Children with Disabilities

Article 7 of the CRPD obliges States Parties to ensure that children with disabilities enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children, and that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions concerning them. Children with albinism in Tanzania remain among the most vulnerable groups, facing heightened risks of violence, neglect, and exclusion.

Children with albinism continue to be targeted for abduction and ritual-related violence due to persistent harmful beliefs that their body parts possess supernatural or economic value.¹ These threats have resulted in some families keeping children indoors, withdrawing them from school, or placing them in protective institutions far from their communities. While such measures are often intended to ensure safety, they can have the unintended effect of separating children from their families and limiting their social development.²

Institutionalization of children with albinism, including placement in special shelters or boarding facilities, remains a concern. Although protection is necessary in contexts of imminent risk, long-term institutionalization undermines the right of children to family life and community inclusion, as

¹ Under The Same Sun, *Attacks of Persons with Albinism – Extended Dataset (2026)* available at <https://www.underthesamesun.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Attacks-of-PWA-Extended-23.01.2026.pdf>

² As above

recognized under both the CRPD and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.³ Community-based protection mechanisms and family support services remain insufficiently developed and resourced.

Children with albinism also face systemic barriers in accessing inclusive education. Low vision, photosensitivity, and lack of reasonable accommodation such as large-print materials, seating arrangements, and assistive devices significantly hinder learning outcomes.⁴ Bullying, stigma, and fear of violence further contribute to absenteeism and school drop-out. Teachers often lack training on albinism and inclusive pedagogical approaches, limiting their capacity to respond effectively to the needs of these children.

Despite Tanzania's commitments under international human rights law, the persistence of these challenges indicates that the best interests of children with albinism are not consistently prioritized in policy implementation and service delivery.

Article 8 – Awareness-Raising

Article 8 of the CRPD requires States Parties to adopt immediate, effective, and appropriate measures to raise awareness throughout society regarding persons with disabilities, combat stereotypes, and promote respect for their rights and dignity. In Tanzania, awareness-raising initiatives related to albinism have been undertaken sporadically, but harmful beliefs and stigma remain deeply entrenched.

Misconceptions portraying persons with albinism as cursed, ghost-like, or possessing magical attributes continue to circulate within communities. These beliefs fuel discrimination, social exclusion, and violence, and they undermine efforts to promote inclusion and equality.⁵ Media reporting and advocacy by civil society organizations have contributed to increased visibility of the issue, but sustained, nationwide public education campaigns remain limited.

³ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Art. 7; Convention on the Rights of the Child, Arts. 3 and 20.

⁴ E. Mdomondo, "Educating Children with Albinism in Tanzanian Regular Secondary Schools: Challenges and Opportunities," *International Journal of Education and Research* (2015).

⁵ Alexander Alum et al., *Hocus Pocus, Witchcraft, and Murder: The Plight of Tanzanian Albinos* (2009).

Awareness-raising efforts have not been sufficiently institutionalized within education systems, health services, law enforcement, or local governance structures. As a result, frontline service providers often lack accurate information about albinism and its human rights dimensions. Traditional and religious leaders, who play influential roles in shaping community attitudes, have not been consistently engaged in prevention and awareness strategies.

The absence of sustained and coordinated awareness-raising initiatives undermines prevention efforts and perpetuates an environment in which discrimination and violence against persons with albinism persist.

Articles 10 and 15 – Right to Life and Freedom from Torture or Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Article 10 of the CRPD affirms the inherent right to life of persons with disabilities, while Article 15 prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. These provisions are of particular relevance to the situation of persons with albinism in Tanzania, who continue to face serious and ongoing threats to their lives and physical integrity.

Over the past two decades, Tanzania has recorded numerous cases of killings, attempted killings, abductions, mutilations, and grave desecrations of persons with albinism.⁶ These acts are often linked to harmful practices and beliefs associated with witchcraft and the alleged economic value of body parts of persons with albinism. Violence has affected men, women, and children, with children frequently targeted due to beliefs that their body parts possess stronger powers.⁷

Although the intensity of reported killings has fluctuated over time, recent documentation confirms that attacks and threats persist. Survivors of attacks frequently sustain permanent disabilities, including loss of limbs, and experience long-term psychological trauma. Families of victims often

⁶ UTSS, Attacks of Persons with Albinism – Summary and Extended Reports (2026).

⁷ CRPD Committee, *Y v. United Republic of Tanzania*, Communication No. 23/2014, Views adopted 31 August 2018.

live in fear and insecurity, sometimes resorting to guarding graves or relocating to protect themselves and surviving relatives.⁸

Medical and humanitarian reporting from the Great Lakes region, including Tanzania, has documented the profound human impact of this violence, emphasizing that the danger to persons with albinism has not been fully eliminated.⁹ The persistence of such acts indicates shortcomings in prevention, early warning, and protection mechanisms.

Investigations and prosecutions related to attacks against persons with albinism have not consistently resulted in accountability. In several documented cases, prosecutions were discontinued due to alleged lack of evidence or procedural shortcomings, even where perpetrators were initially identified.¹⁰ This has contributed to perceptions of impunity and undermined trust in justice institutions.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has previously found that Tanzania violated multiple provisions of the CRPD in individual communications involving attacks against persons with albinism, including Articles 5, 15, and 16, due to failures to prevent violence, investigate effectively, and provide adequate remedies.¹¹

In February 2025, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights delivered its judgment in *Centre for Human Rights and Others v. United Republic of Tanzania*, finding that the State had failed to take sufficient measures to protect persons with albinism from serious human rights violations, including violations of the right to life and physical integrity.¹² The Court ordered the State to adopt measures aimed at preventing future violations, ensuring accountability, and providing reparations.

While the judgment represents a significant step toward accountability at the regional level, the effectiveness of its impact depends on timely and comprehensive implementation. At the time of submission of this report,

⁸ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Danger Not Yet Over for the Great Lakes Albinos* (2010).

⁹ As above

¹⁰ CRPD Committee, *Z v. United Republic of Tanzania*, Communication No. 24/2014, Views adopted 19 September 2019.

¹¹ CRPD Committee, Communications Nos. 23/2014 and 24/2014, Views against Tanzania.

¹² African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, *Centre for Human Rights and Others v. United Republic of Tanzania*, Application No. 019/2018, Judgment on Merits and Reparations, 5 February 2025.

information regarding concrete measures taken to implement the Court's orders remains limited, raising concerns about continued exposure of persons with albinism to life-threatening risks.

The persistence of killings, attempted killings, and other forms of severe violence against persons with albinism indicates that Tanzania must strengthen its prevention, protection, and accountability frameworks to fully comply with Articles 10 and 15 of the CRPD.

Article 24 – Education

Article 24 of the CRPD recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to inclusive education at all levels, without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity. While Tanzania has adopted policies promoting inclusive education, children and young persons with albinism continue to face substantial barriers in accessing quality and inclusive education.

Low vision and photosensitivity associated with albinism significantly affect learning, particularly in environments that are not adapted to accommodate these needs. Many schools lack basic reasonable accommodations such as large-print textbooks, assistive devices, appropriate seating arrangements, and classroom lighting adaptations.¹³ As a result, learners with albinism often struggle academically, not due to lack of ability, but because of inaccessible learning environments.

In addition to structural barriers, stigma and discrimination within school settings remain widespread. Learners with albinism are frequently subjected to bullying, name-calling, and social exclusion by peers.¹⁴ Fear of violence, including abduction or attack while traveling to and from school, has led some families to withdraw children with albinism from education altogether. These factors contribute to irregular attendance, high dropout rates, and poor educational outcomes.

Teacher training on inclusive education and albinism-specific needs remains limited. Many educators lack awareness of albinism as a disability with specific accommodation requirements, which undermines effective

¹³ E. Mdomondo, "Educating Children with Albinism in Tanzanian Regular Secondary Schools: Challenges and Opportunities," *International Journal of Education and Research* (2015).

¹⁴ Africa Albinism Network & Tanzania Albinism Society, *Joint Alternative Report on the Human Rights Situation of Children with Albinism in Tanzania* (2025).

inclusion.¹⁵ Although inclusive education policies exist at the national level, their implementation is uneven, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

The placement of some children with albinism in special schools or boarding institutions, often justified on grounds of safety, raises concerns regarding segregation and the right to inclusive education. While protection is essential, long-term segregation risks reinforcing exclusion and limiting opportunities for social participation.

Taken together, these challenges indicate that Tanzania has not yet fully realized its obligations under Article 24 of the CRPD with respect to persons with albinism.

Article 25 – Health

Article 25 of the CRPD requires States Parties to provide persons with disabilities with the same range, quality, and standard of health care as provided to others, including services needed specifically because of disability. For persons with albinism in Tanzania, access to health care remains a critical and life-determining issue.

Persons with albinism face a significantly heightened risk of skin cancer due to lack of melanin and prolonged exposure to ultraviolet radiation. Medical research conducted in Tanzania has demonstrated that chronic skin damage begins early in life for persons with albinism, with malignant changes often occurring by early adulthood if preventive care is not provided.¹⁶ Untreated skin cancer remains a leading cause of premature mortality among persons with albinism in the country.

Despite this well-documented risk, access to dermatological services remains limited, particularly outside major urban centers. Many health facilities lack trained specialists, diagnostic capacity, and referral systems for early detection and treatment of skin cancer.¹⁷ Sunscreen, protective clothing, and regular skin examinations—recognized as essential

¹⁵ Report of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), 43rd Session (2024).

¹⁶ J. Luande, C.I. Henschke & N. Mohammed, “The Tanzanian Human Albino Skin: Natural History,” *Cancer*, Vol. 55 (1985).

¹⁷ Africa Albinism Network, *Submission on Social Development Challenges Faced by Persons with Albinism* (2023).

preventive measures—are often unavailable or unaffordable for persons with albinism. Sunscreen is not consistently included in essential medicines lists or provided through public health facilities, placing it beyond the reach of many affected individuals.

Persons with albinism also commonly experience visual impairments, yet access to ophthalmological services, corrective lenses, and low-vision support remains inadequate. These gaps directly affect educational attainment, employment opportunities, and independence.

The intersection of poverty and disability further compounds health challenges. Many persons with albinism engage in informal or outdoor work due to limited employment options, increasing sun exposure and health risks.¹⁸ Climate change and rising temperatures exacerbate these vulnerabilities.

The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism has previously highlighted Tanzania’s need to strengthen preventive health care, ensure access to sunscreen, and integrate albinism-specific services into national health systems.¹⁹ Continued gaps in implementation suggest that the right to health for persons with albinism is not yet fully realized.

Article 27 – Work and Employment

Article 27 of the CRPD recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others, including the right to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labor market that is open, inclusive, and accessible. Persons with albinism in Tanzania face persistent barriers in accessing decent work and employment.

Discrimination in recruitment and employment remains widespread. Persons with albinism are often excluded from job opportunities due to stigma, misconceptions about their abilities, and concerns about appearance or health.²⁰ Even where individuals possess relevant

¹⁸ As above

¹⁹ Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism on her mission to the United Republic of Tanzania.

²⁰ Africa Albinism Network, Submission on Social Development Challenges Faced by Persons with Albinism (2023).

qualifications and skills, discriminatory attitudes can prevent hiring or advancement.

As a result, many persons with albinism are confined to informal or precarious employment, including subsistence farming, petty trade, or manual labor. Such work frequently involves prolonged sun exposure, directly undermining health and increasing the risk of skin cancer. The lack of reasonable accommodation in workplaces further limits participation in formal employment.

Existing employment and disability policies do not sufficiently address the specific needs of persons with albinism. Measures such as workplace accommodations, anti-discrimination enforcement, and vocational training programs tailored to persons with albinism remain limited in scope and reach. Social protection schemes and employment support services often fail to account for the intersection of disability, health risk, and stigma.

Economic exclusion contributes to cycles of poverty, dependence, and vulnerability, undermining the autonomy and dignity of persons with albinism and impeding their full participation in society.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings of our report, we recommend the following:

1. Implement the African Court judgment on persons with albinism in a transparent and time-bound manner

The committee should request the State party to adopt and publish a clear implementation roadmap for the African Court's judgment in *Centre for Human Rights and Others v. Tanzania*, including timelines, responsible institutions, budgetary allocations, and indicators to track progress on reparations, investigations, protection measures, and guarantees of non-repetition. Progress reports should be made publicly available on an annual basis.

2. Strengthen prevention and protection against violence targeting persons with albinism

The committee should also request the State party to establish and operationalize community-based early warning and protection mechanisms in high-risk regions, including coordination between local authorities, law enforcement, health services, and civil society, with specific protocols for preventing abductions, killings, and grave desecrations of persons with albinism.

3. Ensure access to essential health services for persons with albinism

The committee should request the State party to integrate albinism-specific health services into the public health system by ensuring regular access to dermatological and ophthalmological care, early skin cancer screening, and the inclusion and free or subsidized provision of sunscreen as an essential preventive health product, particularly for children and persons in rural areas.

4. Guarantee inclusive education for children with albinism through reasonable accommodation

We also recommend that the committee request the State party to Ensure that inclusive education policies are effectively implemented by providing reasonable accommodation for learners with albinism, including large-print materials, assistive devices, teacher training, and protection from bullying and violence, with monitoring by education authorities at district and national levels.

5. Address stigma through sustained, nationwide awareness-raising initiatives

We recommend that the committee should request the State Party to develop and implement long-term awareness-raising campaigns on albinism that engage schools, health institutions, law enforcement, media, and traditional and religious leaders, with measurable indicators to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to albinism and disability.

5. CONCLUSION

This alternative report has highlighted the persistent and interrelated human rights challenges faced by persons with albinism in the United Republic of Tanzania. Despite the State party's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the adoption of general disability-related laws and policies, persons with albinism continue to experience discrimination, exclusion, and serious threats to their life, physical integrity, health, education, and livelihoods.

The continued occurrence of violence and harmful practices, barriers to inclusive education, preventable health risks such as skin cancer, and exclusion from employment indicate gaps between legal commitments and their practical implementation. These challenges are compounded by stigma and harmful beliefs that have not yet been sufficiently addressed through sustained awareness-raising and community-based prevention strategies.

The 2025 judgment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in *Centre for Human Rights and Others v. United Republic of Tanzania* represents an important opportunity for structural reform and strengthened protection for persons with albinism. Its effective and transparent implementation, alongside CRPD obligations, can serve as a catalyst for meaningful change.

The Africa Albinism Network and the Tanzania Albinism Society submit this report in the spirit of constructive engagement and dialogue, with the aim of supporting the State party in strengthening its efforts to ensure that persons with albinism can enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others, in dignity, safety, and inclusion.