



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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11 DAYS OF HORROR CREATES FEAR IN TANZANIA

Vancouver, Canada – During an 11 day period in the East African nation of Tanzania, 3 brutal attacks, and 2 attempted attacks, were perpetrated against persons with albinism, also known as “albinos.” Albinism is a rare genetic condition, present in all races, but has a higher prevalence in Africa, affecting 1 in 1,400 people in Tanzania. Persons with albinism have little or no pigment in their hair, skin and eyes and live with significant visual impairment.

This rampage of brutality has left the country’s population of people with albinism in a state of immobilizing fear. Since 2006 there have been 151 murders and attacks on persons with albinism in Tanzania. These are recorded cases only. We believe most attacks go unrecorded and unreported. The attacks result from societal stigma and the belief that the body parts of persons with albinism can bring good fortune when used by witch doctors to create good luck potions.

Peter Ash, Founder/CEO of Under The Same Sun, and a person with albinism himself remarked, **“My brothers and sisters with albinism in Tanzania are facing an unprecedented crisis. They have no place that is safe. Formerly the attacks occurred primarily in isolated rural areas. This is not the case anymore. Last week, just miles from the country’s largest commercial center, the mutilated body of a young man has been found. Law enforcement and the judiciary have been impotent in addressing this human rights crisis! Only 5% of the 151 cases of murder and attacks have reached prosecution in the Tanzanian courts to date. The government has not said a single word about this latest wave of brutal attacks. The very lives of innocent children, women and men hang in the balance. The United Nations must intervene to do what the Government of Tanzania has not yet done – ensure safety and security for its citizens with albinism and that the rule of law prevails on behalf of the victims.”**

On August 5, 2014 at 9:00 PM, a 15 year old girl named Pendo Sengerema was brutally attacked at her home as she ate dinner with her family. The violent attack occurred in the Kaliua District of the Tabora Region in northwestern Tanzania. While Pendo screamed in agony, the assailants hacked off her right arm just below the elbow. The men disappeared into the darkness with her arm, ready to sell it on Tanzania’s active black market for the body parts of persons with albinism. Pendo is receiving treatment for these severe injuries at a District Hospital, 100 kilometers from her village. Dr. James Kang’oma, who initially treated Pendo, told Under The Same Sun (UTSS) that Pendo had lost a lot of blood and was semi-conscious when brought to hospital.



**Pendo Sengerema (age 15)
with Vicky Ntetema of UTSS**

Police have arrested three men, including John Fumbuka, a neighbour who is also a witchdoctor, in connection with this attack. On the night of the attack, three men (one of whom was the witch doctor) went to Pendo’s home asking for the girl’s stepfather. Her mother told the men that her husband was not at home. As Pendo was taking the dishes into the house the goons pounced on her. One pinned her down while the second attacker employed a machete to violently hack off her arm. The third assailant stood guard to prevent any attempts to disrupt the gruesome attack. Pendo recalls that it was the second machete strike that completely separated her arm from the rest of her body. “They took away my arm and left me bleeding” she said. Speaking from her hospital bed with fear and in pain, the traumatized teenager told UTSS’ First Response Team that her family could not scream for help because the assailants threatened that if they made any noise they would all be immediately murdered.

Pendo is devastated and worried that the attackers might return to finish her off. “I am asking the police to move me to a safer place and protect me because bad men might come back to kill me,” she tearfully pleaded. Pendo’s family begged UTSS staff, “Please help her! I am afraid for her life! We cannot protect her.” Pendo asked UTSS staff to send her “to a faraway boarding school with a fence and security guards where the attackers would not reach me!” Eye witnesses to the attack, who have



spoken to police, have since received death threats and have been told not to speak of the matter any further.

UTSS has also learned that a senior witch doctor had received an order from a wealthy client indicating that if Pendo's arm could be provided it would garner a price of \$600 USD.

On the same day of Pendo's attack (August 5), her Uncle who also has albinism, Simon Sengerema, barely escaped an attempt on his life as he walked to his father's village. He was chased by two men holding machetes. He said he heard the men shouting, "Let's cut him! Let's cut him now!" When interviewed by UTSS, Simon indicated that they were the same gang that hacked off his niece's arm. He ran as fast as he could, using shortcuts that might not have been familiar to the assailants, and fortunately escaped the brutal attack. Simon refuses to leave his father's home, indicating he is not safe from attack anywhere.

Also on August 14, 2014, a man with albinism estimated to be between 20-25 years was found dead by local children. His mutilated body had been dumped in a swampy area of Kinyerezi, which is a suburb of Tanzania's largest city, Dar Es Saalam. Photographs of the young man's body have been posted widely on popular Tanzanian social media sites, and the body has been viewed by multiple eyewitnesses at the scene, all of whom are certain that the deceased is a person with albinism. The photographs clearly show that his hair and skin have no pigment and his facial features are clearly indicative of a person of African descent. Sections of skin on his upper torso have been peeled off and a mark is visible where a sharp object was used to remove his skin. Also visible, is a hole in the lower-right side of the abdomen. The skin, hair, blood and internal organs of persons with albinism are in high demand for witch craft rituals and command high prices on this grizzly black market. UTSS has contacted Police and other authorities asking that they publish a press release and that any family who may know the man come forward to claim his body. They have refused thus far to do so. If permitted, UTSS will give the man a proper burial.



Body of unidentified man

Only days after this first spate of attacks, on **August 16, 2014** a 35 year old mother of 7 children, named Munghu Masaga was brutally attacked at her home in the Igunga District in Tabora Region of Tanzania. Two unidentified attackers cut off her left arm before fleeing. During the attack, her husband Mapambo Mashiri (age 50) was beaten to death during a lengthy battle with the assailants. Two of Munghu's children also sustained injuries during her attack and were treated in hospital. Earlier that day, Munghu's brother Samwel Masaga (age 30), who also has albinism, narrowly escaped an attack on his own life. One suspect has been arrested in connection with the attacks on Munghu and her husband.



Munghu Masaga, age 35

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