



Gruesome Criminal Acts Continue against albino children (children with albinism) in Tanzania - UPDATED

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“Justice has not come and horrifying crimes against children with albinism continue unabated in Tanzania. Only firm and decisive action on the part of Tanzanian government and society will stem this tide of innocent blood being spilled!” declares Peter Ash, a person with albinism himself and Founder/CEO of Under The Same Sun (UTSS). Albinism is a genetic disorder affecting 1 in 20,000 in North America and Europe and 1 in 2,000 in Tanzania. It results in severe visual impairment and little or no skin pigmentation. Those with the condition in Africa are at high risk for skin cancer. UTSS advocates for the rights of persons with albinism wherever they face discrimination.

In the last 10 months there have been five gruesome attacks against persons with albinism in Tanzania. Here are the facts:

1. **On October 21, 2011 in Mbizi Village, Kahama District, Shinyanga Region, a 15 year old girl with albinism by the name of Kulwa was attacked at her home.** UTSS spoke with Kulwa’s mother, Mrs. Habi Lusana (48 yrs), who said her daughter had been attacked at around 1:00 AM by three masked men. Kulwa had been sleeping with another sibling in a shed near the main house. The three assailants managed to open the door without force and, knowing exactly where Kulwa was sleeping, used a machete to hack off her arm above the elbow. In response to her screaming, the father came out of the main house but was immediately attacked by one of the masked men. The mother also tried to rescue Kulwa but it was too late. She saw the men disappearing with her daughter’s arm wrapped in one of the men’s coats. At the time of this report Kulwa was still in Kahama District Hospital with her father, Mr. Lusana (75 yrs).



2. **On October 14, 2011 the machete attack and attempted murder of 12 year Adam Robert occurred in Geita Region, Tanzania.** A man seeking his body parts for sale to witchdoctors and their customers began hacking off his arm. He resisted and was left laying in front of his home with multiple wounds including three fingers which were severed from his right hand. His three fingers will quickly fetch a handsome price in Tanzania’s continuing black market for albino body parts. Adam survived the gruesome attack and reported to police that his father, stepmother, uncle, and another male relative were involved in this criminal act. His testimony was confirmed by neighbours. Adam is currently in hospital suffering from severe wounds and trauma. He says he can never go home to his family.



3. **On May 13, 2011, the murder by poisoning of 14 month old infant Doto Mbiti from the Ibanda Village, Geita Region, Tanzania occurred.** His horrific killing was committed by an aunt simply because she did not want a child with albinism in her family. Two hospitals were unable to treat the poisoning and baby Doto passed away after extreme suffering in Sengerema Hospital. His tiny body is buried in the floor of a dirty animal shed to prevent the body parts from being stolen by those who poisoned him. The news of Doto's murder was delivered to UTSS by his parents in August of 2011. The parents did not report his death to the police because of fear that they would never survive the Sukuma tribes' traditional revenge. "Sukumus cannot stand relatives who reveal family secrets to the authorities" they said. The family also revealed that there have been several attempts to steal the body parts from the grave for use in witchcraft rituals.

4. **In January of 2011 the abduction and bodily violation of 4 year old Meriki in Kasemie village, Geita Tanzania occurred.** The assailant forcibly held the young boy for several hours. During this time Meriki's hair was cut and collected by the attacker, for sale to witchdoctors and their customers. Albino hair is a hot commodity in Tanzania's dark underground market. When the man finally released Meriki, his grandmother noticed that part of his head had no hair and asked who cut it. He said the violation had been perpetrated by a neighbour, Mr. Robert Matage (40yrs). The crime was reported to the police, Robert was questioned, and later released. On October 18, 2011 Tanzanian police told the media that the police could not interfere. UTSS believes this is an appallingly inadequate response.

5. **On February 9, 2011 in Rukwa Region, three year old Juma Kapela was abducted while playing with a group of children.** His recovery follows a four-day intensive search mounted jointly by the police, a team of Tanzania People's Defence Forces (TPDF) soldiers and villagers. For their safety, Juma and his 5 year old sister Wande, who also has albinism, have been removed from their family, friends & village and relocated to a safer place some 400 miles from home.

Young children with albinism experience Horrific suffering and neglect in Tanzanian public boarding schools.

On October 17, 2011 UTSS received information about several children with albinism who are residents of the government operated Buhangija boarding school in Shinyanga Region. The situation in Buhangija School is appalling and disturbing! The head teacher of the school made these remarks concerning the spreading skin cancer affecting the young students; "It is the children's fault that they have skin cancer." A mother who recently lost her 28 year old daughter with albinism to skin cancer was told by a doctor in Shinyanga; "Don't worry, this is how *these people* (persons with albinism) are." **UTSS Believes that this stigma and discrimination is killing thousands of Tanzanian citizens with albinism.**



Edmund Burk once remarked, “All that is needed for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing!”. UTSS is unable to “do nothing”. We are asking that those perpetrating these atrocities are brought to justice. We also seek a day when persons with albinism will take their rightful place in every level of Tanzanian society. We implore the authorities in Tanzania, media, NGO’s and all concerned citizens to raise the alarm about the ongoing slaughter and violation of persons with albinism in Tanzania.

To date there has been 78 documented attacks resulting in 62 murders and 16 survivors. Only 5 of these cases have resulted in convictions in Tanzanian courts.

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