

Albino attacks drop in Tanzania, as exhumation of bodies for witchcraft rises

Local News By AFP 1 day ago

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Cases of grave vandalism are on the rise.[Courtesy]

Tanzania has seen a decrease in attacks on albinos, whose body parts are often sought for witchcraft, but has seen an increase in their bodies being exhumed, an NGO said

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"Recent trends indicate a significant decrease of incidents of attacks and killings of people with albinism," said Tanzania's Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC).

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Canadian charity Under the Same Sun has documented 161 attacks on people with albinism in Tanzania in recent years, including 76 murders, more than anywhere else in Africa.

Albinos are kidnapped and their body parts hacked off for use as charms and magical potions in the belief that they bring wealth and good luck.

However in good news for those suffering from the genetic condition that results in a reduction of pigment in the hair, skin, and eyes, no attacks were registered in the first six months of 2017, according to the LHRC.

This is attributed to increased efforts from Government, rights groups and UTSS to stop such attacks.

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Tanzania's prosecuting authority reported in June that 30 people had been convicted for killing albinos between 2006 and 2016, and another 67 cases were underway.

The LHRC however noted an "increase of incidents of vandalism of graves" containing the bodies of albinos.

In January a man was arrested in the southern Mbeya region for vandalising a grave and exhuming body parts, with similar incidents taking place in northern Kagera and central Morogoro.

Despite the decrease in attacks on albinos, they "continue to live in fear and consequently cannot fully participate in social, economic and political activities," said the LHRC. In Sub-Saharan Africa one person in every 1,400 people has albinism.

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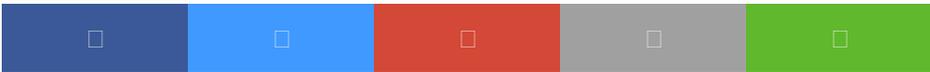
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