Tanzania in witchdoctor crackdown

Tanzania's president has ordered a crackdown on witchdoctors who use body parts from albinos in magic potions to bring people good luck or fortune.

"This is senseless cruelty. It must stop forthwith," Jakaya Kikwete said on television, AFP news agency reports.

"I am told that people kill albinos and chop their body parts, including fingers, believing they can get rich when mining or fishing," he said.

The order comes after the murder of 19 albinos in the last year.

The BBC's Vicky Ntetema in Dar es Salaam says there is a widespread belief in Tanzania that the condition is the result of a curse put on the family.

Some people hide the albino members of the family for fear of them either being rejected by the community or killed.

Old women with red eyes have been killed in parts of Tanzania, after being accused of witchcraft, she says.

In the past, Tanzania's Albino Society (TAS) has accused the government of turning a blind eye to the killing of albinos.

There are more than 8,000 registered albinos in Tanzania, although TAS believes there to be 150,000 among the country population of some 35m.

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