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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office  
of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**


# **Initiatives taken to raise awareness and promote the protection of the rights of persons with albinism**

**Conference Room Paper of the United Nations High  
Commissioner for Human Rights**

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## I. Introduction

1. Human Rights Council resolution 26/10 adopted on 26 June 2014 recommended that the General Assembly proclaim 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day. It also requested the High Commissioner to inform the Human Rights Council at its twenty-ninth session of the initiatives taken to raise awareness and promote the protection of the rights of persons with albinism. In its resolution 69/170 of 18 December 2014, the General Assembly proclaimed, with effect from 2015, 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day.
2. The present conference room paper provides a brief overview of the human rights situation of persons with albinism. It also informs about the initiatives taken by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for the promotion and protection of persons with albinism and contains a summary of the initiatives taken in this regard by other stakeholders, as per written submissions received. The conference room paper also contains a number of recommendations aimed at ensuring the protection of the rights of persons with albinism.

## II. Methodology

3. For the purpose of preparing the present conference room paper, on 4 February 2015, OHCHR addressed a note verbale to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva and to all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes requesting information on the initiatives taken to promote and protect the human rights of persons with albinism, including efforts to increase awareness of the human rights situation of persons with albinism and understanding of albinism.
4. In addition, OHCHR requested information from special procedures mandate holders, national human rights institutions, human rights mechanisms of the African Union and the Organization of American States, and various non-governmental organizations, including associations of persons with albinism.
5. OHCHR is grateful for the 48 replies received, which have informed the present conference room paper. Written submissions were received from seven States,<sup>1</sup> two United Nations entity,<sup>2</sup> the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, three national human rights institutions<sup>3</sup> and 35 civil society organizations.<sup>4</sup> Information was also received from various OHCHR field presences.

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Iraq and Mauritius.

<sup>2</sup> The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

<sup>3</sup> Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance of the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the National Human Rights Commission of Rwanda.

<sup>4</sup> Albinism Society of South Africa, Albinos Sans Frontière (Benin), Albinos Sans Frontière (Burundi), ALIVE Albinism Initiative Trust (Zimbabwe), Amizero Association (Rwanda), Association Burkinabè pour l'Intégration des Personnes Albinos, Association Mondiale pour la Défense des Intérêts et la Solidarité des Albinos – ASMODISA (Cameroon), Association Nationale des Albinos de Côte d'Ivoire, Association Nationale des Albinos du Niger, Association Nationale des Albinos du Sénégal, Association Nationale des Albinos du Togo, Association pour la Promotion des Albinos au Cameroun, Association pour la Promotion et l'Insertion Sociale des Enfants Albinos - SOS Albinos (Mali), Association pour la Protection et le Développement de la Personne Albinos – APRODEPA (DRC), "Bien-Etre des Albinos de Cote d'Ivoire" (BEDACI), Chinese Organization for Albinism, Confédération Nationale des Albinos de Guinée, Famille d'Actions Multiforme Communauté Nationale des Personnes Atteintes d'Albinisme FAM-CNPA (Republic of the Congo), Ecran Total

### III. Albinism<sup>5</sup>

6. Albinism is a rare, non-contagious, genetically inherited condition present at birth. In almost all types of albinism,<sup>6</sup> both parents must carry the gene for it to be passed on, even if they do not have albinism themselves. The condition is found in both genders, regardless of ethnicity and in all countries of the world.

7. Albinism results in a lack of pigmentation (melanin) in the hair, skin and eyes, causing vulnerability to the sun and bright light. As a result, almost all people with albinism are visually impaired and are prone developing skin cancer. There is no cure for the absence of melanin.

8. Many types of albinism exist: the most common form is known as oculocutaneous albinism (OCA) and affects the skin, the hair and the eyes. There are different types and subtypes of OCA, with varying degrees of melanin deficiency. The main ones are tyrosinase negative (OCA1) and tyrosinase positive (OCA2). In OCA1, there is little or no melanin production. In the more prevalent – particularly in African countries – OCA2 type, some melanin is produced, giving rise to sandy-coloured hair and light brown irises in those affected.

9. Another less common form is ocular albinism (OA), which only affects the eyes. A more rare form of albinism is known as Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome (HPS) and is accompanied by bleeding disorders and large bowel (colitis) and lung diseases.

10. The prevalence of albinism varies across the world. Reports suggest that in North America<sup>7</sup> and Europe an estimated 1 in every 20,000 persons have some form of albinism.<sup>8</sup> Epidemiologic data on albinism from a public survey in African countries, published by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006, mentions that: “Epidemiologic data on albinism, such as prevalence, were available for South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Nigeria. Prevalence as high as 1 in 1,000 were reported for selected populations in Zimbabwe and other specific ethnic groups in Southern Africa. An overall estimate of albinism prevalence ranges from 1/5,000 – 1/15,000”.<sup>9</sup> According to WHO, the estimated prevalence of albinism suggests the existence of tens of thousands of people living with albinism in Africa. OHCHR has not received detailed data on the prevalence of albinism from any country or region.

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(Belgium), Fondation Mwimba Texas (DRC), Genespoir (France), Ghana Association of Persons with Albinism, Human Rights Media Center (South Africa), Initiative Network of Zambia, Mennonite Central Committee (Tanzania), National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation, NOAH (USA), NOAH-German Albinism Association, Organisation des Personnes Albinos du Burundi, Site for Community Services Program (Uganda), The Albino Foundation (Nigeria), The Zimbabwe Albino Association, Tshimologo association (Botswana), Under the Same Sun (Canada), Women Albinism Group of Burundi (Burundi) and the World Blind Union (Canada)

<sup>5</sup> As per the definition in OHCHR report on persons with albinism (A/HRC/24/57)

<sup>6</sup> The exception is one type of ocular albinism, which is passed on from mother to son.

<sup>7</sup> The National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation (NOAH) refers on its webpage to 1 person in 17,000 having some type of albinism in the United States of America. Available from [www.albinism.org/publications/what\\_is\\_albinism.html](http://www.albinism.org/publications/what_is_albinism.html).

<sup>8</sup> Estimates from the NGO “Under The Same Sun”.

<sup>9</sup> Esther S. Hong, Hajo Zabeed, Michael H. Repacholi, “Albinism in Africa as public health issue”, *BMC Public Health*, vol. 6, No. 212 (August 2006). Available from [www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/6/212](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/6/212).

#### **IV. The human rights situation of persons with albinism**

11. Albinism is still misunderstood. The physical appearance of persons with albinism is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition, which foster their marginalization and social exclusion. This leads to various forms of discrimination.

12. Women who give birth to children with albinism are often rejected by their husbands and their families, because of the lack of understanding of albinism. Children with albinism are frequently abandoned by their parents or, occasionally, the victims of infanticide, due to the belief that they may be a source of misfortune. Further, children with albinism are likely to face bullying because of stereotypes based on the colour of their skin.

13. The forms of discrimination faced by persons with albinism are interrelated. Their right to education, for instance, is affected by the challenges of school systems in addressing their vision impairment as well as mockery and abuse that can force children with albinism to drop out of school. A poor level of education, in turn, can lead to unemployment and affect their right to an adequate standard of living, consigning many to poverty.

14. The deeply entrenched prejudices persons with albinism face also impede them from accessing adequate health care, social services, legal protection and redress for rights abuses.

15. The worst expression of discrimination against persons with albinism is their dehumanization, which lays the foundation for physical attacks against them. Because some believe that they are magical beings or ghosts, they mutilate or even kill them so their body parts can be used for witchcraft rituals. These attacks claim many lives and surviving victims and their families experience severe trauma.

16. Hundreds of ritual attacks against persons with albinism, particularly children, have been reported by civil society organization in at least 25 countries. Many cases remain undocumented or unreported because of the ostracism of victims and their families, as well as the secret nature of witchcraft. The violence is largely met by social silence and indifference.

17. The impunity for killings and attacks against persons with albinism is a concern. While some investigation and prosecution seem to take place in some countries, convictions appear to be rare. Victims face significant difficulties in bringing their cases to justice, fearing retaliatory attacks or further stigmatization. Without effective and affordable access to justice, persons with albinism cannot claim their rights and contest the human rights violations to which they are subjected.

18. The OHCHR report on the situation of persons with albinism (A/HRC/24/57) presented to the Human Rights Council in its 24<sup>th</sup> session, expressed grave concern at the severity of the human rights violations committed against this vulnerable group, particularly the attacks against persons with albinism with a view to using their body parts for ritual purposes. The report also highlighted the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, stigma and social exclusion faced by persons with albinism across the globe.

#### **V. Action by international and regional human rights mechanisms**

19. Until recently, international and regional human rights mechanisms had only occasionally addressed the needs of persons with albinism. Since 2013, because of repeated attacks against persons with albinism and the increased awareness on their situation, human rights mechanisms have given more attention to the issue.

20. Specific mention of the situation of persons with albinism has been made in concluding observations from the Human Rights Committee<sup>10</sup>, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>11</sup>, the Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>12</sup> and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women<sup>13</sup>.

21. As part of the universal periodic review, recommendations were made to the Governments of Burundi<sup>14</sup>, Cote d'Ivoire<sup>15</sup>, Democratic Republic of Congo<sup>16</sup>, Guinea Bissau<sup>17</sup>, Kenya<sup>18</sup>, Uganda<sup>19</sup> and the United Republic of Tanzania<sup>20</sup> to take preventive and protection actions to address violence and discrimination against persons with albinism.

22. The Human Rights Council has adopted four ground-breaking resolutions on albinism. In its resolution 23/13, adopted in June 2013, the Human Rights Council expressed concern about attacks against persons with albinism and the widespread discrimination they suffer and requested OHCHR to submit a preliminary report at its twenty-fourth session (A/HRC/24/57). In its resolution 23/13 on technical cooperation for the prevention of attacks against persons with albinism, adopted in September 2013, the Human Rights Council requested its Advisory Committee to prepare a study on the situation of human rights of persons with albinism and to submit a report at its twenty-eight session (A/HRC/28/75). In its resolution 26/10, adopted in June 2014, the Human Rights Council recommended that the General Assembly proclaim 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day. Moreover, on 26 March 2015, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 28/L.10 creating the mandate of Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights of persons with albinism. This important new mandate will help give a voice to people with albinism and contribute to their protection through greater awareness-raising, annual reporting to the Human Rights Council on human rights concerns, and the provision of advisory services and technical assistance to Member States.

23. At the regional level, in November 2013, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) adopted resolution 263 on the prevention of attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism. Also in November 2013, the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) adopted a Declaration on Ending Discrimination and Violence against Girls in Africa, which made reference to children with albinism. At its 24th session in December 2014, the ACERWC considered a request to investigate the situation in centres hosting children with albinism in Tanzania and pursuant to Article 45 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, decided to undertake an investigative mission to the State Party.

24. The various resolutions adopted convey a clear sense of urgency and set an important reference for mobilizing actions to support the well-being of persons with albinism and to ensure their safeguard from violence and discrimination.

<sup>10</sup> CCPR/C/TZA/CO/4, para. 15 ; and CCPR/C/KEN/CO/3, para. 17 ; and CCPR/C/BDI/CO/2.

<sup>11</sup> E/C.12/COD/CO/4, para. 19, and E/C.12/TZA/CO/1-3, para. 5.

<sup>12</sup> CRC/C/OPSC/TZA/CO/1, paras. 20 and 21; CRC/C/BDI/CO/2, paras. 33 and 34; CRC/C/GNB/CO/2-4, paras. 28 and 29 ; and CRC/C/TZA/Q/3-5, para. 8 and CRC/C/TZA/CO/3-5 paras. 25, 29 and 30.

<sup>13</sup> A/63/38, paras. 142 and 143 ; CEDAW/C/SWZ/CO/1-2, paras.22-23; and CEDAW/C/MWI/Q/7 para. 16.

<sup>14</sup> A/HRC/10/71, para. 80.5, and A/HRC/23/9, paras. 126.31 and 126.84.

<sup>15</sup> A/HRC/27/6 para. 127.103

<sup>16</sup> A/HRC/27/5 para. 134.47

<sup>17</sup> A/HRC/29/12 paras 96.71; 96.72 and 96.73.

<sup>18</sup> A/HRC/29/10 para 22; 142.56 ; 142.70 and 142.79.

<sup>19</sup> A/HRC/19/16, para. 111.35.

<sup>20</sup> A/HRC/19/4, paras. 85.33–35 and 85.39–42.

## **VI. Initiatives taken by OHCHR to raise awareness and promote the protection of the rights of persons with albinism.**

25. Further to new reports of ritual killings and attacks against persons with albinism documented in early 2013, OHCHR started to actively promote and advocate for the respect of the rights of persons with albinism, resulting in very concrete actions at the international and regional levels and an increased response from national actors.

26. The OHCHR report on the human rights situation of persons with albinism, submitted to the Human Rights Council in its 24<sup>th</sup> session, provided an overview of the most serious human rights violations faced by persons with albinism, guiding further work on the issue<sup>21</sup>.

### **A. Advocacy and awareness-raising activities**

27. The High Commissioner's voice, through press statements and side-events at the margins of the Human Rights Council sessions, has contributed to increasing the visibility of the violations committed against persons with albinism. It has also triggered a consolidated response from international and regional human rights mechanisms.

28. Of particular interest was the Expert Meeting on "Persons with Albinism: Violence, Discrimination and Way Forward" organized in September 2014 with the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF). The meeting was organized as a round table discussion, bringing together experts from international and regional human rights bodies and civil society organizations from various countries to assess the situation of persons with albinism, and identify appropriate responses to ensure the promotion and protection of their rights. The Expert Meeting also provided key information to the work of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, mandated by resolution 24/33 to submit a study on the human rights situation of persons with albinism at its 28th session. Throughout 2014, OHCHR provided support and advice to the Advisory Committee on this endeavour.

### **B. OHCHR communication campaign**

29. A public information campaign on albinism was developed to support the advocacy work of the Office to promote and protect all the human rights of persons with albinism around the world, in particular by combatting discrimination and impunity for violent attacks against them. The Albinism Awareness Campaign also expects to create greater awareness of the condition and thus debunk the erroneous and sometimes harmful beliefs around it.

30. The campaign was launched in July 2014 with a Google+ Hangout, followed by a number of media briefings and a photo exhibition that yielded sizeable coverage in the media. It reached its climax with the unveiling of a campaign microsite in May 2015, in the lead-up to the first International Albinism Awareness Day. The OHCHR microsite<sup>22</sup> includes personal stories, with videos, of 13 persons with albinism, their supporters assisting them medically and those advocating for their human rights. It also contains a wealth of resource material on albinism and human rights with respect to the main issues affecting persons with albinism, as well as visual promotional material to support OHCHR's awareness raising efforts around the world.

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<sup>21</sup> A/HRC/24/57

<sup>22</sup> <http://albinism.ohchr.org>

### **C. Promoting further engagement of human rights mechanisms and supporting civil society actors**

31. In order to promote greater engagement with human rights mechanisms and increased understanding of albinism, OHCHR has organised general briefing sessions with treaty bodies and special procedure mandate-holders. At the African regional level, OHCHR has also provided support aimed at enhancing the engagement of civil society organizations with human rights mechanisms with a view to stimulating regional responses to key human rights concerns. For instance, OHCHR supported representatives of civil society organizations conducting advocacy on behalf of persons with albinism to participate in the non-governmental organizations' (NGO) Forums prior to the 53th and 54th sessions of ACHPR.

### **D. Human rights monitoring and advocacy work at country level**

32. The Human Rights Advisers to the United Nations Resident Coordinators in Malawi and Tanzania have been instrumental in promoting an active role of the respective United Nations Country Teams, the national human rights institutions and the relevant authorities in the protection of persons with albinism. As a result, the Tanzanian Commission of Human Rights and Good Governance and the Malawian Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare have taken the lead on developing national strategies to combat violence and discrimination against persons with albinism in their respective countries. In Malawi, the United Nations is also supporting research into root causes of killings and attacks against persons with albinism and awareness raising activities. In addition, the United Nations in Malawi has provided financial support to the Ministry of Justice to ensure that perpetrators of attacks against persons with albinism are prosecuted.

33. The Human Rights Adviser in Nigeria has also been working with the National Human Rights Commission and civil society actors to create awareness and enhance government engagement in addressing issues relating to the rights of persons with albinism.

34. OHCHR field presence in Burundi has been monitoring the situation of persons with albinism with a view to promoting their protection. The Office conducted an assessment of displaced persons with albinism in the Northern Province of Kayanza, in Musongati and in Gitega. The Office has also been following up on the cases of persons with albinism killed since 2008, advocating with judicial authorities to strengthen the legal response to these crimes. In addition to its monitoring activities, OHCHR-Burundi has conducted awareness raising activities in partnership with civil society actors in the country.

35. The Human Rights Components of United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali have been working to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors to conduct human rights monitoring and to engage with human rights mechanisms. They have also supported civil society actors in their awareness raising activities, in particular those to mark the first International Albinism Awareness Day.

### **E. Assisting victims**

36. As mentioned in the Advisory Committee study on albinism (A/HRC/28/75), the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, managed by OHCHR, is used to assist survivors of attacks and their family members. It provides direct assistance to victims of torture and their family members through grants awarded to non-governmental channels

of support, including NGOs, rehabilitation centres, associations of victims and family members. In 2014, the Fund awarded a grant, through its inter-sessional emergency procedure, to the non-governmental organization “Under The Same Sun” in Tanzania, to provide medical and psycho-social assistance to 17 victims of attacks. In 2015, the Fund has renewed its financial support to this victim-focused project to extend the specialized assistance provided to an additional number of victims and their families, and to include prosthetic work to five victims, both men and women, who were mutilated during attacks.

## **VII. Initiatives taken by the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children**

37. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children has continued to place a high priority for addressing the serious violations of the rights of children with albinism to survival and development, to protection from discrimination and to freedom from violence, including in her annual reports to the General Assembly<sup>23</sup> and to the Human Rights Council<sup>24</sup>.

38. In addition, the Special Representative has continued to promote the recommendations from her thematic study on “Protecting children from harmful practices in plural legal systems with a special emphasis on Africa” launched in 2012, which also addressed this issue.

39. In the field missions carried out across regions, the Special Representative has advocated with the relevant authorities to address the alarming cases of discrimination, violence and harmful practices against children with albinism. The Special Representative has promoted a strategic partnership with OHCHR, and civil society organizations. Advocacy efforts and policy discussions have contributed to important results over the past year, including debates within the Human Rights Council and with its Advisory Committee, and significant resolutions adopted by the Council, the General Assembly and by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

## **VIII. Initiatives taken by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights**

40. The Commission’s Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and People with Disabilities was mandated to articulate the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities including persons with albinism; to collect data and ensure mainstreaming of their rights in the policies and development programmes of Member States to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, and to facilitate the process of drafting a Protocol on the Rights of the Elderly and People with Disabilities for adoption by the African Union.

41. The Working Group monitors the situation of older persons and persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism, across the continent and reports to the Commission on its activities at each Ordinary Session. In doing so, it issues press releases<sup>25</sup>,

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<sup>23</sup> A/69/264, paragraphs 33-38

<sup>24</sup> A/HRC/28/55, paragraph, paragraph 126

<sup>25</sup> A press statement was jointly issued by the chairpersons of the Working Group on Death Penalty, Extra-Judicial, Summary and Arbitrary Killings in Africa and the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in Africa on the 11 March 2015 condemning attacks against persons with albinism. See joint statement on <http://www.achpr.org/press/2015/03/d251/>



statements<sup>26</sup> and urgent appeals on issues affecting the rights of persons with albinism and recommends the adoption of resolutions<sup>27</sup> and provisional measures.

## **IX. Initiatives taken by Member States, national human rights institutions and civil society actors**

42. OHCHR received examples of a number of preventive measures taken by Tanzania and Burundi, such as the public condemnation of attacks and killings; the appointment of a person with albinism as Member of Parliament or Cabinet; the banning of witchdoctor licences and public awareness-raising campaigns.

43. Member States also informed OHCHR about initiatives taken to counter discrimination, particularly the promotion to an adequate access to health care to persons with albinism having an elevated risk of developing skin cancer and visual impairment associated with the condition.

44. OHCHR received examples of a number of initiatives taken by national human rights institution for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with albinism. For instance, the National Commissions on Human Rights of Kenya and Rwanda are monitoring the human rights situation of persons with albinism and are working closely with the National Council of Persons with Disabilities in their respective countries. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has undertaken research on access to education by children with albinism and has been involved in the review of the Persons with Disabilities Act, which includes albinism as part of the definition of disability.

45. The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance of the United Republic of Tanzania has lead consultations with national and regional authorities, civil society organizations, religious institutions and international organizations to develop sustainable strategies to end violence and discrimination against persons with albinism.

46. Civil society organizations have been actively promoting the rights of persons with albinism, particularly in Africa. Most of their activities focus on educating the public and raising awareness among communities to fight superstitious beliefs and the stigma associated to albinism. Awareness is also conducted with persons with albinism themselves and their families, also promoting the use of measures to prevent skin cancer. Teachers are also been educated in the specific needs of children with albinism with vision impairment. Some civil society actors are monitoring the rights of persons with albinism, with a view to advocating for better protection and accountability. Few others are promoting a coordinated public action to combat discrimination and violence against persons with albinism and a more active participation of persons with albinism in the design and implementation of policies and programmes. Some organizations have also opened help centres or shelters, to assist persons with albinism rejected by their family or their peers.

47. Civil society organizations working for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with albinism often lacked the necessary expertise to monitor and report on human rights violations as well as the resources to conduct effective awareness-raising campaigns.

<sup>26</sup> On the 26 May 2014, a statement was issued on the murder of Munghu Lugata, a 40-year-old woman with albinism in north-western Tanzania on 12 May 2014. See statement on <http://www.achpr.org/press/2014/05/d206/>.

<sup>27</sup> At the 54th Ordinary Session held in Banjul, The Gambia from 22 October to 5 November 2013, the Commission adopted a Resolution on the Prevention of Attacks and Discrimination against Persons with Albinism. See Resolution on <http://www.achpr.org/sessions/54th/resolutions/263/>

Their support role is critical in empowering individuals with albinism themselves with knowledge of their condition and self-acceptance.

## **X. International Albinism Awareness Day**

48. The General Assembly proclaimed 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day which is a symbolic date, as the first resolution on attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism was adopted by the Human Rights Council on 13 June 2013. Human Rights Council resolution 26/10 and General Assembly resolution 69/170 on the Albinism International Awareness Day recognise the importance of increasing awareness and understanding of the albinism condition to fight against global discrimination and stigma against persons with albinism.

49. Civil society actors are planning a wide-range of activities to commemorate the International Albinism Awareness Day. These include seminar and debates, press conferences, marches, sun-cream distributions, publication of books and other cultural activities<sup>28</sup>. Some of these activities have been organized in collaboration with national human rights institutions.

50. These celebrations will provide a platform to raise public awareness on the human rights situation of persons with albinism and an opportunity for civil society actors to engage with all stakeholders, including national and regional authorities at the highest levels.

## **XI. Conclusion and Recommendations**

51. **Wide scale and sustained public information, education and awareness raising campaigns are critical to combating superstition and stigma associated with albinism and to addressing the root causes of violence and discrimination against persons with albinism. The observation of the International Albinism Awareness Day is an opportunity to increase awareness and understanding of the albinism condition and mobilizing concerted action in favour of persons with albinism.**

52. **The multi-layer human rights challenges persons with albinism face required that the educational measures be accompanied by protection and accountability measures. Persons with albinism deserve to have their rights to life and security protected, as well as the right not to be subjected to torture and ill-treatment. States should afford greater protection to persons with albinism at risk, particularly in rural areas, via the strengthening and sensitization of law enforcement authorities. The protective role of the family and community should also be supported. Moreover, the States' obligation to criminalize, investigate and prosecute perpetrators of crimes against persons with albinism is particularly critical due to the vulnerability of this group. Commitment to do so by States would ensure access to effective remedies, redress and rehabilitation, including medical and psychological care, for the survivors and their families.**

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<sup>28</sup> For a full calendar of activities to commemorate the first International Albinism Awareness Day see <http://albinism.ohchr.org> and <http://www.albinismday.com/>

53. Finally, the right to freedom from discrimination requires States to adopt comprehensive strategies that will eradicate discriminatory practices against persons with albinism and ensure that they have adequate access to health care, social services, employment and education.

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