Resolution on the killing of albinos in Tanzania

2008/2625(RSP) - 04/09/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate that took place on 4 September 2008, the European Parliament unanimously adopted (93 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions) a resolution on the killing of albinos in Tanzania.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, UEN, Greens /ALE and GUE/NGL groups.

The resolution recalls that, according to NGOs and media reports, confirmed by the Government of Tanzania, at least 25 albinos, including children, have been killed and mutilated since March 2008 in the Lake Victoria zone, especially in Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara, where there is a high concentration of albinos. These three regions are not only notorious for the killings of albinos but also for the killings of people believed to be witches or wizards. According to the national police, witch-doctors sell severed body parts and blood from albinos to miners and fishermen who believe that these parts can bring them luck, health and fortune. The media in Dar es Salaam have reported the arrest of 173 people in connection with the killing of albinos in Tanzania, including a considerable number of witch-doctors and their clients.

The Parliament strongly condemns the killings of albinos in Tanzania and speculative trading in their body parts. It welcomes President Jakaya Kikwete’s promise of concentrated efforts to put an end to these crimes and his decision to nominate Ms Al-Shymaa Kway-Geer as the first albino Member of Parliament. While welcoming the steps taken by the Tanzanian Government, the resolution endorses Tanzanian Members of Parliament's demand that the Government take further measures to address the root of the problem and end all discrimination against albinos.

The resolution calls on the Tanzanian authorities, local government authorities and civil society in general to collaborate in order to protect all albinos. The Parliament urges the Tanzanian Government to undertake immediate action, promoting social awareness and providing information related to albinism. It considers that such measures should particularly be implemented in rural areas, where people tend to be less educated and more superstitious.

MEPs welcome the arrest last month of 173 suspects in connection with the killing of albinos in Tanzania but regret that an investigative journalist, Vicky Ntetema, has gone into hiding after receiving death threats for exposing witch-doctors and police involvement in these killings. They urge the Tanzanian authorities to initiate an in-depth and independent investigation of these accusations.

The Parliament calls on the Commission to support the UNDP's efforts to promote and protect albinos in Africa, to actively support the Albino Association of Tanzania and its call on academics, religious leaders and human rights activists to make the public aware that the killing of albinos is socially and morally unacceptable.

The Commission and the Member States are called upon to support the efforts of the Tanzanian Government, NGOs and civil society to formulate policies to address the needs and rights of albinos, based on non-discrimination and social inclusion, and equal access to employment.