Resolution on the situation of persons with albinism in Africa, notably in Malawi

2016/2807(RSP) - 07/07/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 603 votes to 5, with 46 abstentions, a resolution on the situation of persons with albinism in Africa, notably in Malawi.

The text adopted in plenary was adopted by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Parliament recalled that albinism is a congenital disorder affecting about one in 20 000 people worldwide; whereas this rate is much higher in sub-Saharan countries, with Tanzania, Malawi and Burundi having one of the highest concentrations of persons with albinism (PWA). It recalled that **persons with albinism face some of the most extreme forms of persecution and human rights violations**, ranging from widespread societal discrimination, verbal abuse and exclusion from public services to killings (448 reported attacks on albinos in 2015 alone across 25 African countries).

Parliament noted that the biggest threat to persons with albinism in Africa comes from the **widespread superstitions and misleading belief systems** about their condition, including the myth that PWA have magical powers, resulting in them being regularly killed by criminal gangs and traffickers for their body parts, which are believed to bring luck, health and fortune.

Parliament noted that in Malawi, where an estimated 10 000 people live with albinism, the police have reported 69 attacks since November 2014.

It deplored the silence and inertia surrounding these events and recalled that the primary responsibility of a state is to **protect its citizens**, including vulnerable groups. Members urged the Government of Malawi and the authorities of all the countries affected to take all the necessary measures to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against PWA. They called on the Malawian Government more effectively to meet the medical, psychological and social needs of PWA by guaranteeing them **equal access to healthcare and education**, as part of inclusion policies.

While welcoming the efforts made, Members called on the authorities of the countries affected, in cooperation with their international and regional partners, to commit to taking all the necessary measures to prevent and **tackle the illegal trade in albinos' body parts**, to revisit cases of suspected grave robberies, to trace and identify the source of demand for such body parts, and to bring the 'albino hunters' to justice.

Parliament underlined that the general lack of understanding and health information on albinism tends to aggravate the health condition of PWA. This is why it called for improved training of teachers and school administrations on albinism, and for the Malawian authorities to facilitate PWA's access to and enjoyment of education.

Lastly, Parliament called for the EU and its Member States to keep engaging with the countries affected in order to effectively support their efforts to formulate policies addressing the special needs and rights of albinos and to closely monitor the human rights situation of PWA in Africa.