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Tanzania

Situation of the Albinos in Tanzania

Albinism is the result of a genetic condition that impairs normal skin pigmentation. 1 in 3,000 people in Tanzania are Albinos. Since 2008 a wave of violence against Albinos led to the killing of at least 57 Albinos. Body parts of the murdered Albinos were used by witch doctors in order to create “magic drinks” that would enhance people’s power.

In a commendable reaction the government of Tanzania barred all so-called „healers“ in January 2009. In September 2010 they were allowed to practice again, but control mechanisms for their activities were introduced. In the spring of 2009 President Kikwete personally appointed Albinos to become members of parliament who are supposed to represent their communities. President Kikwete also called on the population to report to the authorities incidents of violent acts against Albinos. Citizens were asked to write down on slips of paper the names of those they suspected of involvement. Legal officials then would gather the names and pass them to the police.

Albinos due to their condition are highly susceptible to skin cancer. The government ordered the building of three new cancer treatment centers and a increased distribution of pharmaceuticals that help people with Albinism.

Religious organizations, the media and other groups also participated in campaigns designated to educate the public with regards to the Albinos. Albinos organized in self-help groups and non-governmental organizations. At the end of October 2010 the 51-year old Salum Bar’wani was the first Albino to be elected into the parliament. He won the district of Lindi-town.

Loliondo Game Controlled Area conflict

For 19 years there has been a conflict between the Ortello Business Corporation (OBC) of Dubai which organizes wild huntings and eight villages in the Loliondo Game Controlled Area (GCA) in Tanzania’s Arusha Region. In 1992 the Loliondo GAC hunting block was leased to OBC; the affected communities had not been consulted. More than 80 per cent in the district are pastoralists that rely on livestock. The Massai who live in Loliondo originally lived in the Serengeti. They were displaced to Loliondo when the famous Serengeti National Park was founded in 1951.

In July 2009 the Tanzanian government introduced the Wildlife Conservation Act 2009 and launched an operation to evict residents from eight villages in Loliondo. More than 3,000 Massai were forcibly displaced, and 200 of their homes were burnt down in order to prevent the Indigenous people from returning. 50,000 cattle were also displaced, leading to economic losses of the communities. At least eight women were raped and beaten. In April 2010, some 3,000 Massai women demonstrated for the return of the displaced in the provincial government Ngorongoro. The authorities reacted by arresting dozens of women.

The government claimed that the Massai communities were evicted because the area was a vital forest for the sustainability of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the Serengeti National Park. It stated that the pastoralists' livestock would overgraze the area, thus inducing degradation. However, there is a lack of scientific evidence for the government's claim.

The splinter development and the establishment of new Wild and National Parks has increased difficulties for the indigenous peoples to go on with their traditional lifestyle. More than 130 hunting concessions for an area of more than 250,000 square kilometers, one quarter of Tanzania's total area, have been contracted out.