



EUROPEAN UNION

PRESS RELEASE

Friday, 12 June 2015,

ON THE INTERNATIONAL ALBINISM AWARENESS DAY

Saturday, 13 June 2015; Dar es Salaam: Today we celebrate the International Albinism Awareness Day.

Last year, when the UN General Assembly passed its resolution to proclaim this recurrence, all the 28 Member States of the European Union voted in favour.

Today the EU Delegation in Tanzania wishes to reiterate that the European Union remains deeply concerned by discrimination and violence suffered by persons with albinism in different countries and regions, unfortunately including Tanzania.

We hope that the proclamation of the International Albinism Awareness Day will help increase attention about discrimination, stigmatization and violence against persons with albinism. Such violence is abhorrent and disheartening and cannot be justified as simply the product of poverty and ignorance, although there is certainly a need to educate people and explain that some myths are not only false and misleading, but against Human Rights, against the law and, more broadly, against the same concept of humanity.

The truth is that people with albinism are like anybody else, but their life is challenged more than the majority of people, partly for their physical fragility, and partly for the threats they suffer.

The EU Delegation is honored to have as its EYD15 Champion the famous pop-singer Keisha, who has been a long time campaigner of the rights of people with special needs, including persons with albinism, as she herself has albinism. The Head of the EU Delegation, Ambassador Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi, commends her efforts and resilience, "*Ms Keisha is living proof that talent, excellence and humanity are not the exclusive prerogative of people living without albinism. I wish her and all Tanzanians with albinism a happy and safe day, and encourage all Tanzanians to make it safe for them today and everyday*".

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The EU Delegation commends the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, and the Prime Minister, Mr Pinda, for their leadership in addressing discrimination and violence against people with albinism. A representative of the EU Delegation is joining the official celebrations organized today in Arusha.

It also encourages the efforts of the Commission of Human Rights and Good Governance under the guidance of its Chairman, Commissioner Bahame Tom Nyanduga, to tackle the scourge of killings and maiming of people with albinism through a whole of government response, involving the judiciary and the police.

Finally, the European Union believes that death penalty for the killers and perpetrators of violence against people with albinism cannot be the response, as it has not proven to be an effective deterrent and justice cannot be confused with revenge.

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