

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Statement by Faith Leaders on the Rights and Welfare of People with Albinism in Tanzania**

We Religious Leaders unite with persons with albinism in the country, including mothers with albinism and mothers of children with albinism in defending their rights and welfare. This is due to challenges that this group continues to face in the society. Due to difference in their skin colour appearance, as well as poor vision, society has been treating them with a negative attitude.

For the most part, it has led this group, especially in rural areas, to be subjected to violent acts, including maiming, killings, social stigma and neglect by family and relatives. As a result, many have found themselves in difficult life circumstances due to lack of education, sources of income, and even cancer caused by spending extensive time in the sun without protection from the harmful sunrays.

### **Our CONVICTION**

We religious leaders believe that all believers ought to respect human life. We affirm scripture teachings on the importance of loving our neighbors without discriminating. We believe in denouncing all forms of stigma against persons with disabilities, particularly persons with albinism, and we insist that believers of all religions are human members of one family and that this is the basis for a common responsibility basis to ensure social welfare.

As Religious Leaders, we recognize the magnitude and importance of the role we play in influencing positive attitudes in society about the rights and humanity of persons with albinism in the country. On those basis, with support from the "Mothering and Albinism" project from Trinity Western University in Canada, we have been able to meet several times from November 2021 to January 2022. These meeting sessions aimed at sensitization about albinism and its challenges, particularly for women with albinism and mothers of children with albinism; sharing experience from our

fellow religious leaders on ministering to this group; as well as developing a plan of actions to be taken according to our positions, including preparing this statement.

Therefore, today we religious leaders call for and recommend the following:

**i) We call for the government of Tanzania**

1. To review and enforce laws that protect persons with albinism for effectiveness. So that perpetrators are severely punished for subjecting PWA to violence.
2. To develop and manage PWA friendly policies and laws that prioritize persons with disability including PWA, especially mothers and children with albinism in accessing education, employment, capital and entrepreneurship opportunities.
3. To provide feedback on the status of PWA especially women and children who were reintegrated back into their communities. The government should include them in its ongoing initiatives for economic empowerment of poor households namely the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF).
4. To adopt the draft guidelines for educators of persons with albinism. This guidelines document will facilitate provision of reasonable accomodation for children with albinism in school.
5. To sensitize health workers on implementing the guidelines regarding health services provision for persons with albinism. These are found in the Ministry of Health Standard Treatment Guidelines and National Essential Medicines List (STG & NEMLIT)

**ii) We call for the general public**

1. To report cases of stigma or violence against PWA including women with albinism, and mothers of children with albinism to government authorities including the police and social welfare department.
2. To involve PWA including women, children, mothers of children with albinism in all social activities without discrimination,

whether at school, at the market, or anywhere else. This also includes eating and playing with them.

3. To be welcoming to advice, supervision or ideas from mothers or children with albinism, and to accept leadership from people with albinism.
4. To openly condemning anyone showing signs of stigma or violence.

### **iii) Religious Institutions**

1. Continuing to provide teachings and lessons from the sacred religious books that explain how our Creator hates discrimination, stigma, and violence against fellow humans based on color, status or any other form. To continue also to raise awareness and understanding on love, mutual respect, and compassion from religious books.
2. To rebuke and warn against false beliefs that cost the lives of our brothers and sisters with albinism, especially mothers and children with albinism.
3. Continuing to give compassionate acts for mothers and children with albinism, for example, providing them with basic human needs, giving them opportunities to lead in places of worship and so on.
4. To prepare joint religious leaders messages on hope and love for dissemination through social and print media.
5. Preparing messages of hope and love that will be held together by religious leaders. These will be spread through social media, posters, qaswida, choir, poems and cinemas that will emphasize love to people with albinism and condemn violence and stigma against children or mothers with albinism.
6. Promoting marriage to believers in our religion, between those with albinism and those without albinism, which will build solidarity, love and brotherhood.

### **iv) Persons with Albinism**

1. To build each other's capacity on advocating for their rights including through the Tanzania Albinism Society

2. To view themselves positively without promoting weaker images before society

## OUR PROMISE

We Tanzanian religious leaders promise to:

- Continue promoting peace for common good
- Continue developing social relationships for peace and calm.
- Continue preaching on love for persons with albinism and making this part of our responsibilities without depending on assistance.

Lastly,

We pray for peace for all persons with albinism including women and all families of children with albinism. We pray for them to feel loved and to feel as part of society.

Issued by:

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Peace Committee Member

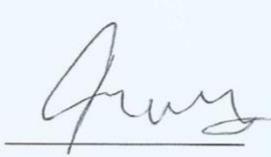
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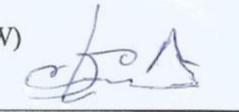
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Date

Imetolewa na:  
Tarehe..... 14/02/22

  
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