

Mandate of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism

Ref.: AL MOZ 3/2025

(Please use this reference in your reply)

15 August 2025

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 55/18.

In this connection, I would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information I have received concerning disturbing reports of an abduction and killing of ██████████ in the Sofala province of Mozambique.

According to the information received:

██████████ a 14-year-old girl in ██████████ the Sofala province of Mozambique. She attended ██████████ Elementary School where she actively participated in school activities despite the apparent lack of appropriate measures to address the barriers and stigma associated with her albinism. While going to school, she also engaged in the selling of small commodities during weekends to earn some money to pay for her school fees.

██████████ was reported missing on 7 June 2025, and her parents accordingly registered a missing person's report with the police ██████████. Her body was reportedly found on 17 June 2025 by a local fisherman on the banks of the Buto river, which lies between the Macharote and Muzimbite neighbourhoods in the Sofala province. The reports further indicate that some organs/body parts, including the uterus, were missing ██████████. She was buried at a private cemetery on 18 June 2025. No autopsy was reportedly conducted to determine the cause of death.

Between 7 – 16 June 2025 when ██████████ was missing, three unknown individuals reportedly called her parents and demanded 10,000 Mozambican Metical (equivalent to USD 158.00) for her release. Two suspects were reportedly arrested by local police at the Dondo police command.

██████████ parents are concerned that her death could have a significant psychological impact on their 28-year-old son, ██████████, and have requested for some form of protection for their son while the case is being investigated and prosecuted.

While efforts by local police, which culminated in the arrest and detention of two suspects are noted, ██████████ death comes at a time when persons with albinism continue to suffer widespread discrimination, recurrent violence, including attacks and killings, cross-border trafficking of body parts, often perpetuated with impunity. In the past three years, at least seven persons with albinism were allegedly abducted, trafficked or killed in Mozambique, while

violent attacks continue to be reported in Sofala, Zambezia, Nampula, Pemba and Niassa localities of Mozambique.

In my quest for information on these allegations, I reached out to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mozambique to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva and held a meeting with [REDACTED] (Counsellor) on 7 August 2025, who underscored the commitment of the Government to continue to advance the human rights of persons with albinism, including undertaking to follow up allegations of attacks and killings with the aim of bringing perpetrators to justice.

Without prejudging the accuracy of the information received, I would like to express deep concerns over the unexplained death of [REDACTED] and allegations of abduction and killing of at least six other persons with albinism in Mozambique in the past three years. These attacks against persons with albinism, which often result in grievous bodily harm and death, are reportedly linked to harmful practices related to witchcraft and ritualistic attacks. I am further concerned at the lack of robust investigations that have failed to effectively hold perpetrators to account for these violations and at the likelihood of these violations continuing resulting in the physical and mental integrity of persons with albinism being threatened, as they continue to live in fear of further attacks and killings.

I am also concerned by the seeming rise in the trade of body parts in Mozambique, including reports of cross-border trafficking of these parts, often obtained through abduction, violence and killing of persons with albinism. The rise in trafficking of body parts has significantly increased anxiety and vulnerability to persons with albinism, whose lived experiences include a constant state of fear both in their homes and whenever they go out for routine livelihood chores.

It is worth noting that the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) – of which Mozambique is a member – adopted a Declaration on the Protection of Persons with Albinism at its summit in Harare, Zimbabwe on 17 August 2024. The Declaration acknowledges that persons with albinism in the SADC region have faced prejudice and stigmatisation, as well as multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Through the Declaration, SADC Member States reaffirm their commitment to the principles of nondiscrimination and underline that the situation of persons with albinism in the SADC region can be addressed by focusing on public education and awareness raising campaigns, effective law enforcement, improved specialised services and bringing to justice perpetrators of violence against persons with albinism.

I would also draw your attention to a report on Mozambique by the mandate of the Independent expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism (A/HRC/34/59/Add.2), which provided recommendations on strengthening protection, closing gaps in the implementation of relevant initiatives, and removing barriers to the enjoyment of human rights by Mozambicans with albinism. I also take note of efforts made by your Excellency's Government in increasing public awareness of albinism, enhancing the capacity of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute, including the adoption of a new penal code which provides the judiciary with adequate tools to deal with the specificities of cases of attacks against persons with albinism.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is my responsibility, under the mandate provided to me by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to my attention, I would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide detailed information on, and where available the results of, investigations, medical examinations, and judicial or other inquiries carried out in relation to the above-mentioned case.
3. Please provide information on the measures that have been taken to strengthen protection of persons with albinism including the prevention of abductions, attacks and killings.
4. Please provide any information on steps your Excellency's Government has taken with regards to mechanisms that support the recuperation of victims of albinism attacks ensuring mental and physical integrity.
5. Please provide an update on the implementation of measures in the National Action Plan on albinism, among which are measures to strengthen protection against attacks.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

In this regard, I would appreciate receiving assurances from your Excellency's Government that a thorough investigation into the circumstances leading to the death of [REDACTED] will be undertaken and that the perpetrators of this crime are brought to justice to serve as a possible deterrent and solace to her family.

As persons with albinism continue to face violence and other intersecting forms of discrimination in Mozambique, I call on your Excellency's Government to speedily put in place robust, practical and complementing measures and mechanisms, to ensure the full protection of the rights of persons with albinism, including the approval and implementation of the National Action Plan on albinism (*Plano Nacional de Acção Multisectorial sobre Pessoas com Albinismo 2023-2027*). This would require concerted action, sustained advocacy and closer cooperation with civil society, local communities, and especially neighbouring States in the context of cross-border trafficking of body parts.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond
Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, I wish to draw your Excellency's Government's attention to article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Mozambique has been a party since 1993, which provides that every individual has the right to life and security of the person, that this right shall be protected by law, and that no person shall be arbitrarily deprived of their life. I highlight Human Rights Committee, general comment 36, which observes that the duty to protect the right to life requires States parties to take special measures of protection towards persons in vulnerable situations whose lives have been placed at particular risk because of specific threats or pre-existing patterns of violence, including persons with albinism, and must respond urgently and effectively to protect individuals who find themselves under a specific threat.

I would also like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment as codified in articles 2 and 16 of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), to which Mozambique is a party since 1993. Article 15 of the CAT provides that, "Each State Party shall ensure that any statement which is established to have been made as a result of torture shall not be invoked as evidence in any proceedings, except against a person accused of torture as evidence that the statement was made." The Committee against Torture has examined the particular situation of persons with albinism and emphasized that persecution and physical assaults leading to the death and mutilation of persons with albinism would fall under the scope of the Convention. Among the elements considered by the Committee is the impunity of perpetrators of such crimes (see CAT/C/BDI/CO/2). The Committee on the Rights of the Child has also stressed that "violence perpetrated against children with albinism ... amount[s] to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, kidnapping and even death." (See CRC/C/CAF/CO/2).

I would also like to draw attention of your Excellency's Government to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by Mozambique on 30 January 2012, particularly on articles 10, 13, and 16. Article 10 reaffirms "that every human being has the inherent right to life" and requires State Parties to "take all necessary measures to ensure its effective enjoyment by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others." Article 16, paragraph 1 of the CRPD requires State Parties to "protect persons with disabilities (...) from all forms of exploitation, violence, and abuse, including their gender-based aspects". Paragraph 2 of article 16 speaks directly to the obligation of States Parties to prevent violence, and paragraph 5 speaks to the necessity to end impunity and to ensure that instances of violence are identified, investigated, and, where appropriate, prosecuted. Article 16 overlaps with and fully reinforces article 17 on the obligations to protect every person's physical and mental integrity." In addition, paragraph 4 stresses that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote the physical, cognitive and psychological recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration of persons with disabilities who become victims of any form of exploitation, violence or abuse, including through the

provision of protection services.”

In their Concluding Observations addressing the right to life for persons with albinism, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has expressed concern at the different forms of violence perpetrated against persons with albinism, including kidnappings, killings, and attacks for the purpose of witchcraft practices, and the absence of measures to protect victims and to prosecute and convict perpetrators. The Committee urged the States where this type of violence was taking place to: (a) Promptly investigate all cases of violence against persons with albinism ensuring that they are appropriately prosecuted and punished; (b) Create shelters and redress services for victims of attacks including healthcare, counselling and free legal aid; and (c) Redouble efforts to raise awareness about the dignity and rights of persons with albinism and ensure the involvement of organizations of persons with albinism in any campaigns aimed at eliminating stigmatisation and myths that underpin violence against persons with albinism (CRPD/C/KEN/CO/1 paras. 19 and 20).

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org and can be provided upon request.