

Questionnaire

on

The human rights of persons living with albinism

1. What is the human rights situation of persons living with albinism in your country or in any country you are familiar with? Are they considered a particular social group? Are they considered disabled? Are they considered to belong to another category?

ANSWER 1:

The human rights situation of persons living with albinism (“PLIWA”) in Namibia is life-threatening to say the least. Like all other social minorities, PLIWA have been experiencing widespread societal discrimination. This includes stigmatization, socio-economic and even socio-political marginalization. PLIWA people are particularly vulnerable to sunburn which often results in them contracting skin cancer. As they have little or no access to public health care, owing to the aforementioned stigmatization and marginalization, this state of affairs has often resulted in early deaths and low longevity. There are no state programs designed to cater for the special needs of PLIWA in Namibia. PLIWA children are often stigmatized at schools by all and sundry and this has resulted in very low literacy rates and or educational performance.

2. Does your country, or any country you are familiar with, have any problem of prejudice or stigmatization against the persons with albinism? How serious is it?

ANSWER 2:

Please refer to Answer 1, supra.

3. What are the obstacles that impede the efforts to improve the human rights situation of persons living with albinism?

ANSWER 3:

As implicitly referred to in Answer 1, supra, there are numerous socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political obstacles which impede respect, protection and realization of the basic human rights and freedoms of PLIWA in the country.

4. What measures, if any, (legislative, administrative, institutional, or other policy/measures) have been put in place in your country to ensure the elimination of violence against persons with albinism and their protection from all other human rights violations?

ANSWER 4:

Although the Namibian Constitution and international human rights treaties to which Namibia is party, require legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures to be undertaken to give effect to inter alia PLIWA rights, very little, if any, is being done in this field.

5. What improvements (if any) have to be made to such measures in order to make them more effective?

ANSWER 5:

As there are very little, if any, measures taken, your kind attention is drawn to the provisions of Answer 4, supra.

6. How, if at all, does your country rehabilitate victims of attacks against persons living with albinism?

ANSWER 6:

As there are very little, if any, measures taken, your kind attention is drawn to the provisions of Answer 4, supra.

7. Do you have any information on allegations, complaints, investigations, prosecutions and their outcomes?

ANSWER 7:

Although there are widespread allegations and reports of societal discrimination against PLIWA, there are not state investigations to prosecute offenders.

8. Do religious/spiritual institutions in your country play a role in helping persons with albinism? Are they effective in preventing attacks against these persons?

ANSWER 8:

No religious/spiritual institutions have taken action in order to help persons with albinism.

9. In what ways can the Human Rights Council and the other UN human rights bodies assist with improving the situation of persons living with albinism within your country or any country you are familiar with?

ANSWER 9:

There is urgent need to empower not only those civil society organizations which are managed by PLIWA people themselves, but also other non-PLIWA civil society organizations. In Namibia there is only one program, designed to help PLIWA people, called Support In Namibia of Albinism Sufferers Requiring Assistance ("SINASRA").

10. What other institutional or practical measures should the Human Rights Council take to strengthen the efforts to improve the human rights situation of persons living with albinism?

ANSWER 10:

HRC can help in putting in place ad hoc international human rights mechanisms, such as thematic and other special procedures of the HRC which specifically prescribe respect, protection and realization of PLIWA rights.