

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL ALBINISM AWARENESS DAY

13 June 2015

People born with albinism can live normal, healthy and productive lives given the right opportunities – but tragically, far too many suffer isolation, mutilation and even death because of persistent discrimination and ignorance surrounding their condition. International Albinism Awareness Day offers an opportunity to dispel the myths that surround these individuals and enable them to exercise their inalienable human rights.

Continued reports of gruesome violations, killings and attacks against persons with albinism, including children, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, remain a deep concern. Persons with albinism continue to live in fear of their lives. Yet the resilience and courage of the survivors of these attacks and the abilities of persons with albinism, and the degree of commitment of those who work for the enjoyment of their rights is heartening.

The General Assembly's recent designation of this commemorative Day shows growing international understanding of the need to fight against discrimination and stigma against persons with albinism while addressing root causes.

While attacks on people with albinism may stem from ignorance, they are still criminal acts that demand justice. I call on States to take all possible measures to provide greater protection to persons with albinism at risk and to strengthen their legal responses to crimes affecting this vulnerable group.

States should also adopt comprehensive strategies to eradicate discriminatory practices against persons with albinism and ensure that they have adequate access to health care, social services, employment and education.

For its part, the United Nations will continue to mobilize international action against this abhorrent discrimination. I call on all countries to engage in this effort. Even those where discrimination is not a prevailing problem should support the dedicated activists who stand for the rights of persons with albinism.

Let us make the most of International Albinism Awareness Day to defend the inherent dignity of those with this condition and, in the process, help create a better world for all.