

Southern Africa: UN agencies, Mozambique host first-ever forum to fight trafficking of people with albinism

19 May 2017 – United Nations agencies are joining forces with governments in Southern Africa in a push to strengthen protections for persons with albinism, who often fall victim to a raft of abuses, including maiming, trafficking and even murder, linked to the belief that their parts have magical powers in witchcraft potions.

A two-day regional forum on preventing and combating human trafficking and protecting people with albinism in Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania is currently underway in Pemba, northern Mozambique. The first-of-its-kind workshop was organized by the UN International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) in partnership with the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)), the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Mozambique and the Prosecutor of Cabo Delgado province.

"UNICEF is supporting the Government to enhance civil registration by investing in the establishment and expansion of a digitalized system of birth registration to ensure the basic rights of every child to name, identity and nationality," [said](#) the UNICEF Representative in Mozambique, Marcoluigi Corsi.

Participants include representatives of Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania's counter-trafficking coordination bodies, prosecutors, criminal investigation police, national human rights institutions, NGOs concerned with the protection of people with albinism and traditional healers.

"This will in turn prevent and address disappearance of children, abandonment or assist in investigations when children with albinism are affected. Following new instances of kidnapping and killing of children and people with albinism in Mozambique, UNICEF launched in August 2015 a social media campaign called #TodosIguais to create awareness on this issue. The ongoing campaign has so far reached over five million people," Mr. Corsi added.

Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania share common borders and are either countries of origin or destination for the trafficking of people with albinism and their body parts. The forum will result in a plan of action on cross-border cooperation for the prevention and prosecution of human trafficking-related crimes and the protection of the rights of people with albinism, eventually resulting in more effective investigation and prosecution, as well as victim protection.

"A regional approach like this that complements national efforts in Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania is the only way we will improve cross-border coordination and investigation to protect people with albinism," said

Katharina Schnoering, IOM Chief of Mission in Mozambique. “This regional approach to investigation, research and cooperation was recommended in a recent report by the [UN independent expert](#) who visited Mozambique in 2016,” she added.

IOM is working in partnership with the Governments to assist trafficking victims and provide strengthened national counter-trafficking responses in the three African countries.

UNICEF backs the strengthening of child-friendly justice systems through capacity-building support to the police, judiciary and public prosecution to enhance accountability for violence and crimes against children.

The agency also endorses the strengthening of multi-sectoral case management systems to enable adequate channelling of cases of violence, harmful practices, including ritualistic killings or trafficking, child abandonment or any other risks that children face. UNICEF’s health and education programmes help increase access to health and education services, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized children.