

UN expert urges greater protection of people with albinism from witch doctors

3 March 2017 – With hundreds of attacks in the last six years on people with albinism, a United Nations independent expert is calling for additional oversight of traditional healers who use body parts in witchcraft rituals and so-called medicines.

Presenting a report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by people with albinism, Ikponwosa Ero, said the demand for the body parts of people with albinism for the purposes of witchcraft rituals, or in traditional medicine known as *muti* or *juju*, has led to the existence of a clandestine market for body parts operating at regional, national and international levels.

“The issue is further complicated by the lack of effective oversight over the practice of traditional healers, the secrecy that often surrounds witchcraft rituals and the absence of clear national policies on the issue,” Ms. Ero said.

She called for a twin-track approach that would urgently address the trafficking of body parts from people with albinism, while also demystifying the misbeliefs about albinism.

At least 600 attacks and violations of rights of people with albinism have been reported in 27 countries, the majority in the past six years, according to information from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Ms. Ero is the first Independent Expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council to monitor, report and advise on the situation of those worldwide who have albinism.

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