

CWM MEMBERS' MISSION FORUM

STATEMENT ON THE VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS WITH ALBINISM

The Members' Mission Forum of the Council for World Mission (CWM) meeting in Blantyre, Malawi, from 19-21 February 2019 has been deeply disturbed to learn of the ongoing ritual killings of persons with albinism (PWA), based on a senseless belief that body parts of persons with albinism bring wealth and good luck. While this has been highlighted in Malawi, which has seen a surge in these horrific killings since 2014, we acknowledge that this is a concern throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region.

We affirm the belief that every human being is created in the image of God and thus has inherent sanctity and dignity. In the Gospel according to John, Chapter 10 verse 10, Jesus describes his mission to bring life to all creation in all its fullness. The targeting of any group of people for harm is a denial of their humanity and an affront to all humankind. This robs us all of life in all its fullness. Thus, we condemn in the strongest terms the killing of persons with albinism and deplore the senseless superstition that leads to these killings.

- We express our outrage and dismay that the atrocities committed against PWA persist and largely remain unresolved since they were first reported in Malawi in 2014.
- We urge the government of Malawi to act swiftly and decisively to ensure the safety of all persons with albinism and their families; to end the violence against PWA, and to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. We address this also to all the governments of the SADC Region as this matter prevails to some extent in all the countries of the Region. We ask these governments to ensure that persons with albinism and all citizens are given the security and freedom to exercise their right to life and dignity as children of God.
- We urge the Churches in Malawi and throughout the SADC Region to continue to use their platforms and resources to uphold the sanctity of life and voice their condemnation of these atrocious acts, support communities in their efforts to protect persons with albinism, and to call upon their governments and security agencies to respond swiftly and competently bring an end to the crisis.
- We call upon all communities to work together for the security and protection of PWA in their communities. We applaud the remarkable actions of some communities that have saved persons with albinism from abductions and certain death through their vigilance, courage, and spirit of Ubuntu.
- We commend the independent media houses and citizen journalism for shining the spotlight on this ongoing crisis, and we urge them to continue keeping the public informed to ensure that every life lost or threatened is counted and accounted for.

Council for World Mission is a worldwide partnership of thirty-two Christian denominations formed in 1977, incorporating the London Missionary Society (1795), the Commonwealth Missionary Society (1836) and the (English) Presbyterian Board of Missions (1847). CWM's members are located in over forty countries across Africa, Caribbean, East Asia, Europe, Pacific and South Asia. In Africa, our members are the Churches of Christ in Malawi, Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, the United Church of Zambia, and the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

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