

Why Albino's were killed and used for medicine murders in Sukumaland, Tanzania

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Introduction

In the documentary 'In the Shadow of the sun' the Tanzanian Joseph Torner, who advocates for the rights of Albinos, stands on the top of the Kilimanjaro and, being an Albino, compares the difficult climb to this top with his life: a fight against discrimination and excesses.¹ One horrible example of excesses against Albinos is the killing of fifty Albinos between 2007-2009 in or near Sukumaland, in the north of Tanzania. Those people were killed, because it was said that if their body parts were put into magical medicines for charms, the owner of the charms would prosper and be protected against evil spirits. In this documentary, as well as in international, African and Tanzanian newspapers, the stories about those killings are nauseating – Albinos were dragged out of their houses or attacked in the street, their arms and legs cut off while they were still alive. Often their next of kin witnessed the brutal attacks. The medicines to which their body parts allegedly was added, were sold by witchdoctors, so called *Waganga* (singular: *Mganga*). The police in Dar es Salaam states that a set of four limbs, genitals, ears, tongue and nose would pay around 75,000 US dollars.² The for this essay investigated sources claim the buyers were miners and, to a lesser extent, fishermen.

Albinism occurs all over the world amongst humans as well as animals and it is a biological lack of melanin, an organic pigment which protects the skin against ultraviolet rays. The lack of melanin makes the skin vulnerable for skin cancer and impairs the hair and the eyes, the latter leading to bad eye sight. The sun is a big problem for Albinos around Lake Victoria, because the ultraviolet rays are very strong. Worldwide Albinos have to fight against the fact of being different and the north of Tanzania is no exception. Because Albinos in this area could have black parents and black siblings, they are looked at as ghosts or spirits. In the midst of the 20th century Albino babies were often buried alive in this region.³ Albinos are still discriminated and marginalized and some Sukuma still believe Albinos are non-human. The discrimination and stigmatisation, together with the threats of skin and eye illnesses causing reading problems so Albinos stay behind at school, makes Albinos a very vulnerable group.⁴

The Albino medicine murders in the lake Victoria district were carried out in the area of Sukumaland, where the Sukuma live, a tribe originally originating from Hamitic and Bantus and with deeply rooted beliefs in the world of the occult, spirits, rituals and ceremonies in which their witchdoctor, the *Mganga*, plays an important role. Throughout history the Sukuma have migrated very often and mostly compulsory. First the British forced them to move, later they were constrained by the Tanzanian government to migrate. Above that they migrated because the availability of agricultural land deteriorated due to the increased population, less availability of fertile land and the discovery of mineral mines. The mines attract men from the villages in the area. Tired of the poverty in their living environment, they go to the mines where they, cut off from their family ties, struggle, while hoping to find

¹ H. Freeland, *In the shadow of the sun* (documentary 2012)

² International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Through albino's eyes. The plight of albino people in Africa's. Great Lakes region and a Red Cross response. An advocacy report* (Switzerland 2009)

³ R. Geigy, A. Gigon, F. Speiser, R. Tschudi, *Totaler und partieller Albinismus bei Bantu-Negerin des Ulanga-Distrikts im Tanganyika* (Acta Tropica VII, 1 1950)

⁴ E. S. Hong, H. Zeeb and M.H. Repacholi, 'Albinism in Africa as a public health issue' *BMC Public Health* (2006) <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/6/212>

the jackpot that will allow them to materialize their dreams. In this strained, dry area, with inhabitants who lost their social cohesion, and miners who, cut off from their social ties, are looking for their bonanza, Albino's were killed in order to use their body parts for medicines that allegedly would bring fortune.

The causes of those horrible events will be presented in this paper. In order to investigate the Albino medicine murders, literature has been used between 1949-2013 about the area concerning witchcraft, the Sukuma, their livelihood, migration, mining, fishing and Albino's and reports of the Red Cross and two NGO's as well as a documentary. For background purposes articles in international, African and Tanzanian media have been read. And Google earth and Google images was a great help, because it gave a clear insight of the area.

The history of Sukumaland and its inhabitants

Sukumaland is a vast area in Tanzania, south of lake Victoria. Parts of the Mwanza district the Mara Region, Simiyu Region and Shinyanga Region belong to Sukumaland. It is situated at an altitude of 4,000 feet, the soil is dry and not very fertile and the average rainfall is about 30 inches per year.⁵ The inhabitants, the Sukuma, who live in this region, historically originate from two main migration moves from the north: the Bantu people who came from the south of Lake Chad settled in Sukumaland. Some went to the Tabora area and their descendants are now known as Nyamwezi. The Hamitic people from Ethiopia, that was called Abyssinia in those days, were the second big migration into Sukumaland. They gradually colonised the Bantu along the southern part of the shore of Lake Victoria. In the area, especially amongst the Nyamwezi, hunting became an important livelihood and small independent communities were established with leaders. Those societies did have the same language but did not have a common tribal background. They called themselves 'the Sukuma', which means people of the north.⁶ Some scholars claim the Sukuma had no overarching identity, but only started to become a Sukuma tribe in colonial times.⁷

The Sukuma are originally agro-pastoralists, they kept cattle and grew millet and maize in the vast, windy area of Sukumaland. Their society was built up via small chiefdoms, which were all autonomous and consisted of owners and builders. Because there was plenty of land, the Sukuma moved with their cattle, stayed at places where the grassland was green and fertile and went on whenever they needed a new, fresh pasture.⁸ Some Sukuma participated in non-farming activities. They traded with other tribes in the neighbourhood, like the Inhanzu, and centuries ago long distance trade was organised to, for instance, the coast. The profit the Sukuma got from those activities was used within the community, especially for investments in agriculture. The Sukuma who were involved in those non-farming activities, were not departed from their society, but were still part and parcel of their community and its agricultural activities. Land was owned by one family and, in case of inheritance, stayed within the family. If a family needed more land, they could occupy

⁵ R.E.S Tanner, *Crime in East Africa 4. The witch murders in Sukumaland – a sociological commentary* (Uppsala 1970) 11-12.

⁶ H.C.C. Meertens, L.J. Ndege, H.J. Enserink, *Dynamics in farming systems Changes in time and space in Sukumaland, Tanzania* (Amsterdam 1995) 11-12.

⁷ H. Cory, *Sukuma Law and Custom* (London 1953) 2.

⁸ T. Sanders, *Mobile Africa. Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and beyond. Territorial and magical migrations in Tanzania* (Leiden/Boston 2001) 27-46.

another piece in or outside the village.⁹ The Sukuma did not have a history of tribal wars and slave trade. This led to the absence of fear and might explain why they lived far away from each other in small clusters and not together in villages. Within the clusters the houses were quite far from each other.¹⁰ Outside the small homesteads the cohesion of the Sukuma culture was based upon beliefs in witchcraft, labour cooperation and ritual devotion.¹¹

We can conclude that, although Sukumaland was a relatively dry, windy area, its inhabitants could make a living from their cattle and agricultural activities by growing maize and millet and by trading with neighbouring tribes. The inhabitants, the Sukuma, originally were rooted in different tribes, but adopted the same language and called themselves Sukuma. Some scholars claim this name was given to them during colonial times. The Sukuma lived on quite huge distances from each other, in small settlements, in which the houses were built quite far from one and another. A cluster of settlements formed communities, with a leader. Within families there were strong ties and beliefs in the occult were deep.

The loss of the social cohesion of the Sukuma

The social cohesion of the Sukuma has been broken two times: first by the English colonizer, later by the government of Julius Nyerere, the first president after independence. Both damaged the social cohesion of the Sukuma. The British decided to divide Sukumaland into four districts and set up an administration via which a chief lost a lot of his direct influence towards his people: he could not follow or make up own rules and had to implement the rules of the colonizer and obey them. The second division of Sukumaland, and linked to that, of the Sukuma people, was proclaimed by the first Tanzanian government after independence. This socialist government, led by President Julius Nyerere, divided the region into four parts and set up the so called Villagisation Act, via which special villages were shaped. They were ruled corporately and parts of the agricultural crops were under control by people who were appointed by the government.¹² Another influential reason for the breaking of the social cohesion occurred after World War Two, when the cotton industry was booming in the area and they had to move to make room for the cotton or moved themselves towards the cotton field to look for work. Young people left to the field and old people stayed behind and maintained their old norms and values.¹³ A fourth obliged migration of the Sukuma was when the British initiated a Tse-Tse campaign, targeted towards the protection of cattle against the sleeping sickness.

If we look at the social cohesion of the Sukuma, we can conclude they lost a lot of it, because they have a history of changes, in political and economic ways. Throughout history they were forced to move and reconstruct their society.¹⁴ Those migrations were compulsory. The Sukuma continued to migrate, because of the lack of land or to look for work in the surrounding mines.

⁹ N. F. Madulu, *Changing lifestyles in Farming Societies of Sukumaland, Kwimba District*. (Leiden 1998) 13.

¹⁰ R.E.S Tanner, *Crime in East Africa* 4 12-13

¹¹ D.F. Bryceson, J. B. Jonsson and R. Sherrington, Miner's magic: artisanal mining, the albino fetish and murder in Tanzania. *Journal of Modern African Studies* (2010) Vol 48, 3, 353-382.

¹² N. F. Madulu, *Changing lifestyles in Farming Societies of Sukumaland, Kwimba District*. (1998, Leiden) 33.

¹³ R.E.S Tanner, *Crime in East Africa* 4. 12

¹⁴ N. F. Madulu, *Changing lifestyles in Farming Societies of Sukumaland*. 9

The deterioration of fertile land in Sukumaland

Available fertile land in the Sukuma region is decreasing. This is due to climate change, which means higher temperatures and less rain, an increase of the population and mining activities. Mining consumes a lot of land. In 1998 for instance large scale miners were given hundreds of acres of land on which small farmers worked. All farmers had to move out. The little fertile land that remains for agricultural purposes is threatened by vermin, lack of tools and workers and low crop prizes. The lack of workers occurs, because the Sukuma work in the mines instead of in their fields. Mining started slowly in the eighties in East Africa, one of the reasons being that Asia needed minerals for industrial purposes. In the north of Tanzania there are many mines, most of them being open pit mines. Diamonds and gold are two of the minerals which are found here. The mines have caused huge migrations within the region from especially people who leave their village, where the agricultural land is scarce and dry. The majority of the migrants is young men, on average 24 years old, who take their first steps towards mining via stories of friends and relatives. At their first mine they approximately stay 67 months, at the following mines 37 months. In 1998 and 1999 the government implemented a law via which small scale mining was made possible and Primary Mining Licences (PML's) were given out and gave the right to explore a mine during five years. The PML's are difficult to obtain and most go to the mining companies. This led to more drifting miners, looking for this one piece of unclaimed land, where the jack pot might be found.¹⁵

As a result of the amount of people living near the mines, other businesses pop up in the neighbourhood, like workshops of bicycle repair, bars, restaurants, shops and so on. An example. Mabuki is situated between Mwanza and Shinyanga. It is an area with open pit gold mines in which big companies and small scale miners work. Looking at the developments within the area, the acres of fertile land for the Sukuma is deteriorating.

The deeply rooted spiritual beliefs of the Sukuma

The belief in powers which are not to be seen, heard, smelled or felt and the conviction that all good or bad things happen to a person have a reason, because they occur via ways one can't scientifically perceive, were originally deeply rooted in the Sukuma society. In other words, bad things happening in one's life always have a spiritual cause and can be stopped by rituals or ceremonies. The Sukuma believe spirits can be asked for help and become, for their sake, hostile to others. Besides that the spirits protect them and rituals are needed in order to be protected. Asking for health and happiness is not regular and prayers for health and happiness are done mostly in religious initiation ceremonies.¹⁶ In 1960 H. Cory investigated the religious beliefs and practices of the Sukuma. He was allowed to be part of an initiation and obtained information about the structure of occult beliefs within the society. He says witches are part of the society. They can use their powers for the good or the bad and are held responsible for misfortunes, like accidents, illness, droughts and storms. Making medicines from herbs, other vegetarian sources and fresh meat or blood has been a tradition for a long time. An example: Cory describes the *Tambiko*, an initiation rite in which a cock is killed, partly eaten, partly used to make medicine and 'read' whereas

¹⁵ D.F. Bryceson, J. B. Jonsson, 'Rushing for Gold: Mobility and Small Scale Mining in East Africa. *Development and change*. (The Hague, 2009) 249-276

¹⁶ H. Cory. 'Religious beliefs and practices of the Sukuma/Nyamwezi tribal group.' *Tanganyika notes and record* (1960) No 54. 14-26

the parts of the animal will be looked at and, depending the colour or shape, causes of problems will be translated by a *Mganga*. For instance: if the skin of the shanks are removed and they have an intensive colour, it means that a present or former lover is involved in the problem. Concerning the use of human beings for medicines Cory states in 1949 in 'The ingredients of magic medicines': "The witch's principal method of aggression is the use of magic medicines made from human and vegetable ingredients linked to both the victim and the desired results."¹⁷

Sukumaland has a history concerning witch killings: during colonial times accusing someone of a witch was prohibited and it was against the law to be a witch. For the Sukuma those new laws against their strongly, deep rooted beliefs, were offensive. But they could not defend themselves or do anything against it, since the colonizer was the ruler. During this time the Sukuma area was hit by a severe drought and ceremonies with rainmakers had been taken place without any luck. The conviction in reasons for bad luck, made the Sukuma point at alleged witches as being responsible for the draught. In 1962 they took law into their own hands and started to kill witches.¹⁸ Those killings were not linked to medicine murders, but the killing of Albino's between 2007-2009 were directly and clearly targeted towards the making of medicines. The victims were men, babies, children, women and men. Some were attacked on the street, some dragged from their houses at night. In the international press as well as the African and the Tanzanian press there are a lot of stories about the attacks and they are all about groups of men who wanted to have parts of the Albino, like legs, arms, hands, hair and blood and sell them for big money. There is a common ground in the press as well as the literature and reports that Albino those body parts were used for medicines, which could be put into charms in order to protect the user of the charm or to give him or her wealth or luck. The main buyers were the miners . Within the literature found, there is no referral to Albino killing in the past. An oncologist and the most important Tanzanian expert on skin cancer Dr Jeff Luande, who has been advocating for Albino's and their rights for many years, said the killings came from nowhere.¹⁹

Until now we have encountered the north of Tanzania in this essay. Sukumaland, to be more specific, a dry, overpopulated area with inhabitants, the Sukuma, with ancient roots from Congo and Chad, who went to the north of Tanzania and formed a group with the same language, but not from the same tribe. In history they lost their social and political structures due to forced migrations which changed the power of chiefs and degenerated their values and norms. They have strong beliefs in powers of spirits and rituals that are necessary to keep the spirits happy, to protect oneself and - according to Cory, only in religious initiation ceremonies - to ask for prosperity. An area with a horrible recent history of Albino killings in which miners play an important role as customers of medicine for charms. Medicine containing Albino parts.

Present life of the miners and the villagers in Sukumaland

The mining in Sukumaland not only puts pressure on the availability of land, but also has a huge impact on the people in the villages as well as on the fortune seekers: the miners. The majority comes from Sukumaland, in the Mwanza area almost 50% and in Shinyanga

¹⁷ H. Cory, 'The ingredients of magic medicines', vol. xvi, no. 3, Africa (1949)

¹⁸ R.E.S Tanner, *Crime in East Africa* 4 28

¹⁹ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Through albino's eyes* .

area almost one third originate from Sukumaland.²⁰ Most are young men who, in order to look for a better, more materialized life, leave their well-known secure, living environment and step into the uncertain, harsh life of miners. Mining is gambling, because one never knows when and where the fortune can be found. The knowledge about where to go is based on stories from other miners, so a good social network is very important. Every time a miner goes to another site, he hopes for good luck and if he is not lucky, he can, if he has the means for transport, go back to the site he is coming from. Or, if he can afford the transport, he goes back home empty handed. But mostly he will try over and over again, searching for new sites, trying his luck, because going back with nothing is not an attractive option: the miner left home because of scarcity of land, work and food. The insecurity of income is not the only uncertainty of mining, the mining life knows many threats, like accidents, illnesses, physical attack and family separation.

Originally mining was a temporary job and the extra income from mining was used for agricultural purposes for the family. Throughout the years the goal of, especially the younger miners, is to set up businesses and build big houses. This younger generation is more inclined to stay at a mining site for a shorter time, because they are more targeted towards good and quick earnings in order to prosper within a short time. The gap with the family and with the roots of the community is at the beginning not very big, because on average the first mine is not very far away. Once a miner is part of the mining society, he will choose for mines much further away. In the wake of the miners community, groups of entrepreneurs follow, resulting in bars, prostitution and drug abuse.²¹ The migration of men, and some women, has a huge influence on the villages in Sukumaland, where there are not enough labourers to work on the little agricultural land that is left. In the villages children always helped on the land and still do, but in the old days they used to work during holidays or after school. Because of a lack of young people the children nowadays also go to the markets to sell their agricultural products and these markets rotate from village to village, hence they miss school.²²

If we look at the current situation of the area and its inhabitants we find miners, deprived from their family and community, exposed to the harsh, insecure working life of mining and its seducing lifestyle with booze, drugs and women. They take all this for granted, because they believe one day they can materialize their dream of finding the jackpot and invest their money into businesses and houses. And we find villages with hardly any fertile land and a lack of labourers to work on the little land that is still available.

The Albino killings

The Sukuma have a deeply rooted belief in the spiritual world and make use of rituals and ceremonies in which medicines are used. The use of human remains for medicines is known, as Cory stated in 1949.²³ The killing of witches in 1962 and between 1970 and 1988 and the killing of Albino's between 2007 and 2009 show that the trust and believe in the occult world is still very alive. Up to day in the small communities they have small houses for spirits. Concerning those strong beliefs, Sukuma are no exception; in many sub Saharan societies searching for non-scientific causes of misfortune of one self and the fortune of

²⁰ *Study of migration of youth in mining areas in Tanzania Geita Gold Mines, Shinyanga Diamond Mines, Kahama Gold Mines* (Terre des Hommes, 2012)

²¹ D.F. Bryceson 'Rushing for Gold' 262

²² N.F. Madulu, *Changing lifestyles in Farming Societies of Sukumaland* 27

²³ H. Cory, 'The ingredients of magic medicines'.

other people, using medicines, rituals, and charms for protection or to attack someone else in a spiritual way, is part of life. We should not isolate this kind of beliefs from the rest of the world, because all cultures and subcultures have their own beliefs, whether it is the Indian tribes in the Amazon, Pentecostal followers, Hindus or Catholics: they believe in miracles, predestination and spirits or one or more gods, they have their rituals, whether it is a prayer, a baptize or an initiation and they have images of their beliefs and religion, like amulets and crosses. Amongst the Sukuma spiritual beliefs are very alive and the rituals and medicines used in order to find reasons for all kinds of negative events in life, are still used. But amongst certain groups within this society, in which the social fabric is lacking more and more throughout the years, those spiritual beliefs changed into horrific excesses and lead to the escalation between 2007-2009. In the literature about the killings of fifty Albinos in north Tanzania in this period, in reports of human right organisations, newspapers about court cases and interviews with police and about reactions of the government, everybody points at the miners of Sukumaland as the buyers of the medicine in which Albino body parts allegedly were mixed. Some also mention fisherman in Lake Victoria as buyers, but they are not stated as the main buyers. The fishermen suffer in the region from the competition of big fishing industries who started to come to Lake Victoria since the introduction of the Nile Perch in the eighties, which has resulted in the export of Nile Perch Fillets.²⁴ The reason for the miners as well as the fishermen to buy the medicine is the conviction of the strength of Albino made medicine, that would help them to have their nets full of fish and, for the miners, to find the jack pot they are dreaming about. In the literature found there is not a lot of proof about the fishermen using Albino medicine or about their tribal background. The apparent motive will be a struggling life in the sense of catching enough fish to make a living. For the miners the motives are more obvious. They, brought up with deeply rooted spiritual beliefs, deprived from their community ties with its values and norms, thirsty for a bonanza, and exposed to a new, compared to village life, quite confusing and insecure life, decided to turn to the most inhuman worthy, selfish act: buy Albino medicine.

The decision to buy those medicines, for which unbelievable brutal cruel murder is performed, does not come out of the blue. The witchdoctors, so called *Waganga's* play a role, by convincing the miners of the power of this medicine. Moreover there are more types of *Waganga*; the *Mganga* who is not properly, traditional trained and who, like the miner, wants to get rich and advertises himself in bars. It is believed that those non bona fide *Waganga* were behind the Albino killings, but they could not be identified and excluded from the *Waganga* business, because in the decentralised society of Sukuma it is not possible to, in a law full way, easily distinguish fake from real *Waganga*.²⁵ There is another trigger which could lead to those medicine murders: Nollywood movies. These are made in Nigeria and very popular in many African countries. Witchcraft and superstitious beliefs are an important ingredient in those movies. Within societies with deeply rooted ideas about the occult, those movies could have influence. Ikponwosa Ero of the organisation Under the Same Sun, which protects the rights of Albino's claims that there is "likely a correlation" between the Albino killing and the movies of Nollywood.²⁶

²⁴ M. H. Jangu, 'Healing environmental harms: social change and Sukuma traditional change and medicine on Tanzania's extractive frontier.' (conference on engaging anthropology in development, Ouagadougou, 2010)

²⁵ D.F. Bryceson, 'Miner's magic: artisanal mining, the albino fetish and murder in Tanzania' 374

²⁶ Human Rights Council on the Attacks and Discrimination Against People With Albinism. *Exploring the Role of Nollywood in the Muti Murders of Persons with Albinism* (2013)

Conclusion

The brutal inhuman medicine murders of fifty Albinos between 2007-2009 in Sukumaland in north Tanzania was an act on a marginalised group who have been and are discriminated because they are different: they are Africans with a white skin due to a lack of melanin. They were and are looked at as spirits, as not from this world and until around 1950 new born albinos were not welcome and buried alive. In view of skin cancer the white skin is very vulnerable to sun, therefore Albinos avoid too much sunlight and stay more often inside than their neighbours. Furthermore they are often kept inside in order to prevent discrimination acts against them, like shouting and plaguing, by neighbours. Because of their 'hidden' lives, they are not strongly or well organised and are an easy target for excesses. There is a parallel between Albinos and single old women, both groups being isolated and marginalised and victims of brutal killings. Old women were accused of being witches and killed in 1962 and between 1977-1978, Albinos were killed for medicine purpose between 2007-2009. Both waves of killing took place in or near Sukumaland, in the north of Tanzania and are connected to its original inhabitants, the Sukuma tribe. This tribe does not have very deep uniform roots and lost the little social cohesion they had, several times. First of all they do not originate from the same area or tribe, but are a mixture of the Hamitic from Ethiopia and the Bantus from Lake Chad. They called themselves Sukuma²⁷. They even might have become a tribe much later namely, as some scholars say, at the beginning of colonial times. In daily life there was not a lot of togetherness between them, because they lived with their own family, quite far from each other. Clusters of those distant huts formed a community, led by leaders. The little social cohesion they had, disappeared several times, because they compulsorily had to move during the booming of cotton in the area and in colonial times because of a tse tse campaign. Those migrations scattered the community. Moreover they were divided by the British due to their divide and rule politics, and during Nyerere's programmes of socialism. Those two last ones not only caused scattering, but also cut deep into the small lines of leadership, whereas the British as well as Nyerere each introduced a different leadership model, often with different leaders. The Sukuma never stopped drifting: the last decades they roam for land, because there is not enough fertile land due to climate change, overpopulation and mineral mining in the area.

The Sukuma became split up, dispersed, geographically as well as socially. There was one characteristic they could keep and take with them: their beliefs in the world of spirits, their rituals and rites performed by *Waganga* (witchdoctors). The *Waganga*, always find allegedly causes for things happening and they offer rituals or medicines to beat misfortune, and sometimes to get fortune. But in the disintegrated community of the Sukuma it is not possible to distinguish fake from real, well trained *Waganga* and there is no law to stop the fake ones.²⁸

Around 2007-2009 the booming of the mineral mines in or near Sukumaland, caused a migration from the villages within this area to the allegedly promising mineral mines. Allegedly promising, because mining caused a lot of problems and often does not yield what was dreamed of. Working in the mines caused tension and stress because all miners are looking for their bonanza and mine accidents and physical violence are common. Moreover working in the mines lead to disintegration, because ties with family and the community

²⁷ H.C.C. Meertens *Dynamics in farming systems Changes in time and space in Sukumaland*.

²⁸ D.F. Bryceson, 'Miner's magic: artisanal mining, the albino fetish and murder in Tanzania.'

were gone and the miner had to reshape himself into a new culture where his colleagues were also tensed and stressed and, since they are looking for the same jack pot, probably not trustworthy. Working in the mines also means seduction of alcohol and drugs, which is available in the many shops and bars around the mines. Working in the mines means often bad living conditions concerning environment, clean drink water and good sanitation facilities.²⁹ Within this unsafe, harsh, unsecure environment, excluded from family ties, people tend to hold onto deeply rooted beliefs and for the miners the occult world is still alive. Non bona-fide *Waganga* popped up in the mining area, and they linked with the occult traditions of the Sukuma by offering them fortune with their medicines. And the miners were looking for fortune, they were so desperate that they even said yes to the *Waganga* highest offer of the most expensive, most brutally obtained medicine, which promises the best result: medicine with human parts. Not only were the Sukuma manipulated by the offer because of deeply rooted beliefs, but they were also triggered by the movies from Nigeria in which witchcraft is a common part. Moreover the miners were influenced by their urge for wealth and material and by the use of alcohol and drugs. Fishermen are also mentioned as buyers of the medicines for which Albino's were killed, but in the literature there is not a lot of information about them, despite the fact that they struggle, because of the competition of big fish industries who catch Nile perch for export.³⁰ Some scholars also mention global capitalism as reason for the Albino killings, causing destabilisation of communities and disturbance of the culture.³¹ There is no doubt it is one of the reasons for the disruption of the area and its inhabitants, but this does not automatically mean that people who want to be part of global capitalism and do not succeed, will ask others to kill in order to obtain medicine for success.

What remains is the question who actually killed those Albino's? This is difficult to answer, because the killings are covered by secrecy: nobody wants to blab about his or her neighbour or family member. And the police has too much work, prosecutors are weak, police and government are corrupt.³² This has resulted in the shocking figure which says that since 2000 of 72 documented Albino killings, only five are known to have resulted in successful prosecutions.³³ There has only been one court case, in 2009, where three men were prosecuted and hanged. The police comment after this court case was that they had more than ninety people under arrest, because they were involved in the killing of Albino's or the selling of their parts. Amongst them were four police officers.³⁴ The way justice settled the murders is highly frustrating and incredible disappointing, especially because the Tanzanian government at first did a lot of firm promises. Yes, they did execute a very sad small amount of the perpetrators. They gave a seat in parliament to an

²⁹ *Study of migration of youth in mining areas in Tanzania.* (Terre des Hommes)

³⁰ M. H. Jangu, 'Healing environmental harms: social change and Sukuma traditional change and medicine on Tanzania's extractive frontier.'

³¹ D.F. Bryceson, 'Miner's magic: artisanal mining, the albino fetish and murder in Tanzania.'

³² 'As Tanzania's Albino Killings Continue, Unanswered Questions Raise Fears'. *National Geographic*, 2013. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/10/131011-albino-killings-witch-doctors-tanzania-superstition/>

³³ *Persons with Albinism.* Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights. (2013)

³⁴ 'Three men to hang for Tanzania albino murder'. Reuters (2009) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/09/23/ozatp-tanzania-albino-sentence-idAFJOE58M0IE20090923>

Albino and set special Albino schools and Albino camps, where the Albinos are protected. The EU, who condemned the Albino killing strongly, praised the government for its measures.³⁵

After firm reactions and strong words from the EU and the Tanzanian government it seems justice is still not done and will not be done. The psychological wounds of the families of the Albinos and of the attacked Albinos who still live, will not be healed, but remain painfully open and raw.

- D.F. Bryceson, J. B. Jonsson and R. Sherrington, Miner's magic: artisanal mining, the albino fetish and murder in Tanzania. *Journal of Modern African Studies* (2010) Vol 48 3
- D.F. Bryceson, J. B. Jonsson, 'Rushing for Gold: Mobility and Small Scale Mining in East Africa. *Development and change*. (The Hague, 2009)
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