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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON ALBINISM KILLINGS IN *UMHLABUYA-LINGANA* SETTLEMENTS OF KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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People with Albinism are often terrified as the nature and extent of this crime continue increasing. Africa is mainly dealing with this issue, and South Africa appears to be one of the countries grappling with this horrific crime. Thus, this study's main objective was to explore the Albinism killings of Umhlabuyalingana of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province, South Africa, focusing on the nature of this practice and the perceptions of community members on this scourge. This qualitative study adopted the case study research design, aided by an exploratory research objective. About Twenty (20) participants were selected in Umhlabuyalingana area, using the convenience sampling technique; they were all subjected to one-on-one interviews. The collected data were analysed using the inductive Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) method. This study establishes that albinism genocide has an adverse effect on the livelihood of people living with albinism in the community. This scourge do affects their daily lives, hugely affecting performance of their duties without fear of being abducted. Moreover, individuals closer to the potential victims also fear for the lives of their loved ones. Therefore, albinism killings affects the entire community and people closer to the potential victims/victim. For recommendation: visible and responsive programmes must be established across South Africa

Keywords: Africa, Albinism killings, Community Police Forum, Community leadership, Criminal Justice System, Exploratory study, KwaZulu Natal, Muthi, South Africa, Umhlabuyalingana settlements

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1. Introduction, background and problematisation of Albinism killings

Constitutionally, the equal right to freedom and security of all persons, irrespective of their skin colour and physical or psychological impairments remain of importance across the globe [1]. However, a tremendous rise in killing people with albinism is recently discernible, and the perpetual nature of albinism killings clashes with the constitutional mandate of various countries upholds[2]. Some studies have confirmed the extent and seriousness of this crime in recent year [3, 4]. Notably, many countries around the world are not immune to the proliferation of the albinism killings scourge [5]. A common aspect of these studies is that they shift their arguments towards understanding the broader problem, disregarding hotspots and surroundings that experience incidences of albinism killings. Furthermore, only to a minimal extent do these studies consider the views of the affected population group. Therefore, it is likely that they can make only marginal changes to the current issue.

The study's primary objective of this study was to explore albinism killings. Albinism killings have existed for decades, and as stated above, various qualitative studies have been conducted on the phenomenon [4, 6]. However, few of these studies reflect on the phenomenon's reality of this scourge. Furthermore, albinism killings have been implicitly shown in statistics, which calls for a clear presentation of the problem.

Justification for this study was supported by the necessity to entirely understand the impact of the albinism killings on the people's lives – and those who may not have experienced the incidence directly and were not born with albinism. The paper focuses – predominantly on their perception of how this crime threatens society's livelihood. To a certain degree, participants' perceptions demonstrated the extent of albinism killings. Although the study, without any further inquiry, cannot make robust conclusions regarding the size of the phenomenon, the nature of the problem is understood by the community. Furthermore, the enforcement of measures is not significant if the community notices no change. Therefore, com-

prehending the community's perception of albinism killings and that of people with albinism pertinent to the response of structures, such as community leadership, municipalities, and government, was central to this study. This study addresses Two (02) main questions: (1) What the impact of albinism killings on people living with albinism, their significant others, and the community is? And (2) The extent of albinism killings and the role of community leadership and government in responding to the situation as understood by the society.

Many countries in Africa and other parts of the world are mainly affected by albinism killings. Although statistical data seems limited, the country is still unarguably affected by albinism killings. A victim of albinism exploitation in China shared that in their country people with albinism would be hated and parents would be forced abandon children with albinism, they would be imprisoned or dyed black [7]. Another article on albinism killings reveals that one father in Pakistan received threats because of he lives with albinism [8].

Little research on this phenomenon could impact the dearth of data on albinism killings [9]. Various mythical beliefs, such as the belief that body parts of people living with albinism can be used to produce *Muthi* for fortune and healing, have resulted in a hike in the persecution of people living with albinism in African countries [10]. As shown in a report, issued in June by the International Bar Association's (IBA) human rights institute, there were over 600 recorded incidences of deaths or castrations of persons with albinism throughout 28 African nations since 2006 [11]. In 2018 albinism killings were high in Southern African countries, such as Malawi with 136, Mozambique with 45, eSwatini with 11, South Africa with 10 cases and Uganda with 8 [10]. The study, conducted by [5], insists that there are murder cases of people with albinism in Nigeria, Zambia, Swaziland, South Africa, Congo, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Namibia.

It remains a challenge, that the presentation of albinism killings is imprecise. The literature does not reveal the true nature of this crime in reference to the current state of albinism killings in the National (South African), African and Global platforms, such as Tanzania, Kenya and Burundi [9]. However, it should remain unquestionable, that South Africa is among the countries experiencing high albinism killings [5], and it has limited identifiable measures for combating albinism killings [12]. In the presence of the legislation, the Constitution, 1996 and the Criminal Justice System (CJS), people with albinism are still experiencing abuse to the extent that others are murdered in South Africa. It is interesting to note, that various studies analyse the albinism killings from the perspective of other African countries; however, this paper looks at albinism killings from a South African perspective. Further, it intends to examine how albinism killings in South Africa are perceived in local communities. [13] argue that there is still a shortage of statistical data concerning albinism killings. The lack of statistics on albinism killings makes it challenging to understand the magnitude of this crime and communities' victimisation resulting from its existence.

Unfortunately, little has been done regarding response to minimise this scourge nationwide. As highlighted above, [12] provides that there is little noticeable evidence of the reaction of South Africa to the violence, exerted on people with albinism. According to [14], the rights of people with albinism have been disregarded for many years, which has resulted in discrimination, harmful behaviours, and trafficking actions against them, particularly in various parts of Africa. The issue remains shocking despite establishing relevant laws against albinism killings in Africa [3]. In the work of [14], it is argued, that albinism may be attended to; however, insufficiencies in implementing policies that address the killings are much more blatant.

Notably, the country's documented action, namely the Ekurhuleni Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Albinism, 2013, has yet to produce decent results [12]. This document holds significant impressions that can yield sustainable results in combating the prevalence of crime of this nature if implemented. It is noteworthy, that although South Africa has not reached alarming levels as it is with other African states, an increase in albinism killings has been recently witnessed [12].

This heinous crime has menaced many citizens in South Africa; nevertheless, its true nature remains elusive, which is attributable to the failure of South African structures to be responsive to albinism killings. [15] highlight that attacks, endured by people with albinism, lack reporting. This concerns whether this is the actual state of albinism killings or if there is a high number of undocumented incidents. Most significantly, in terms of statistical evidence, albinism homicide has been implicitly publicised, which calls for a clear-cut presentation of the problem. If recommendations could be appropriately implemented, it is envisioned, that the response to albinism killings of many structures, including community structures, police, and the government of South Africa, may be bettered. Also, the safety and security of people living with albinism and the safety of their families may be improved significantly.

The study explores the extent and experiences of people with albinism killings in Umhlabuyalingana settlements. A few instances of persons living with albinism being killed or disappearing were reported and are linked to *Muthi* making by traditional healers. The study aims to understand the impact of albinism killings on the peace and security of people living with albinism. The study further seeks to comprehend participants' perspectives regarding the government's contribution to combating albinism killings; notably, participants were Umhlabuyalingana dwellers who have witnessed or heard of the albi-

nism homicide incidence. The idea behind selecting Umhlabuyalingana lies in the noticeable killings of people with albinism.

2. Literature review

2. 1. Nature of Albinism killings: Provincial focus [KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga], Sub-Saharan African Nations and Tanzanian lessons

When the concept of ‘albinism killings’ unfolds, Africa appears to be vastly affected by this phenomenon, manifested in the escalating incidents in media coverage. In recent years, the African continent has been experiencing a multitude of albinism killings, with Tanzania, Malawi, and Burundi among the states that are immensely affected. Interestingly, South Africa has also endured albinism killings, with KZN and Mpumalanga (MP) experiencing higher incidences. These provinces have had many reported incidents among those of Phumzile Mpunzi, who was murdered in Phelandaba, Manguzi, the area in the Northern part of KZN, for *muthi* (African traditional medicine) making purposes. Another incident involved a young person, kidnapped in Empangeni, KZN, to be sold to the traditional healer in Manguzi for a similar purpose [12]. This presents a question; Are albinism killings in South Africa becoming uncontrollable? In South Africa, traditional healers have been part of the brutal killing of persons with albinism for *muthi-making* purposes. The chairperson of the KZN Albinism Society, speaking during KZN World Albinism Day, was sceptical about the response of the Criminal Justice System of South Africa to this plague of Albinism killings [16].

Except for the incident of Phumzile Mpunzi, the MP High Court in Middelburg sentenced three men to life in prison for the murder of a teenager living with albinism Gabisile Shabane [17]. Another incident involves a 34-year-old lady whom the Ingwavuma Regional Court, punished after the court heard how she contacted a traditional healer and promised him she could arrange an 11-year-old albino child from her neighbourhood [18].

Estimations, made by the United Nations (UN), indicate that since 2000 around 80 people living with albinism in Tanzania have been killed [19]. Statistics, cited in [20], reveal that in the past decade, 27 Sub-Saharan African nations have recorded about 200 homicides and over 500 attacks on persons with albinism. [20] shows that figures up to \$ 75 000 can be priced at victims’ body parts after the homicide. With the large migration of Western and East African migrants into South Africa, there is also concern that people living with albinism would be slaughtered for rituals [5]. Even recently, albinism killings have been witnessed in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan. The departed UN independent specialist on the rights of people with albinism, Ikponwosa Ero, confirmed that killings of persons with albinism surged during the COVID-19 crisis, as some poor people have turned to witchcraft with hopes of acquiring fast money [21].

In South Africa, reporting may not be as in other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, affected by albinism killings; however, albinism killings are present in the country, as some studies suggest [12, 22]. The stagnant reporting may adversely affect the statistics of albinism killings. A few incidents, mentioned above, show that South Africa is immune from albinism homicide in Sub-Saharan Africa; one notable incident is the traditional healer in MP, accused of killing two children with albinism [23].

Due to persistent albinism killings, affected people and their significant others live in fear and feel unprotected. The nature of this crime calls for a clear response from the government and relevant stakeholders. [24] note that South Africa does not have consolidated legislation on disability; however, it has a variety of policies and legislation regulating disability-related matters. The author reveals that since the advent of democracy, little transition regarding disability has occurred in the legislation. [24] further give thought to the Social Assistance Act (No. 13 of 2004), the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998), and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (No. 4 of 2000) that, according to the author, do not provide a precise definition of disability. This automatically reflects adversely on the journey, taken by South Africa towards making life easier for legally disabled people. This study argues the existence of impartiality, law insufficiency, and injustices, directed towards people with a disability, particularly those with albinism.

2. 2. Selected experiences on victimisation from people living with Albinism

Selected experiences and fears of the potential victims of albinism killings in Africa are listed and discussed. As seen in the literature, victims of albinism killings could be anyone with albinism, and the incident may happen at school, in the community or any other place in society.

– Juma skipped school due to fear of being persecuted

The proliferating incidents of killings of people with albinism forced Juma to stay at home because her safety was not guaranteed at school [25]. Her stay at home adversely affected her life; significantly, her education was compromised. Juma said:

“When the killings began, my teacher asked me to stop coming to school.”

This shows the severity of killings of people with albinism, experienced in Africa, whether inside school premises or in other places in societies, which calls for vigilantism of the stakeholders in any place at any given time in communities to ensure the safety and livelihood of people with albinism. Another 14-year-old potential victim in Malawian school fears being persecuted anytime on the way to or from school [26].

– **A 15-year-old girl must always be indoors at school to increase the level of safety**

The below verbatim emphasises the need for people and young children to receive much attention and protection.

“The environment here is not nice,” remarked a 15-year-old girl with albinism who attends that secondary boarding school [25]. She said, *“we are not permitted to remain outdoors since the school lacks enough security. Courses typically end at 2:15 p.m., and we must be in our dorms by 2:40 p.m.”*

– **Lucy, a 12-year-old child whom her parents abandoned**

Parents have abandoned or assaulted their children in several situations. Lucy, a 12-year-old girl, now attends a prestigious boarding school due to a grant from an international Charity [25]. Lucy's mother informed her that her father had left her before ordering criminals to murder her. The child said, *“my mother told me my father refused me. I do not want to go back [to my hometown] because my father sent the thieves to get me.”* This incident shows that even family members victimise people with albinism.

2. 3. The theoretical underpinning of Albinism killings

Justice Theory: The knowledge presented by John Rawls

Principles of justice should be chosen under certain conditions, such as that the conditions aim to show equality among human beings as moral beings, creatures with a feeling of good and a sense of fairness [27]. The basic premise behind Rawl's theory is that political and civil rights must be preserved, and all persons with comparable qualities and efforts must be given an equal chance [28]. The following are the vital elements of social justice [29]:

Institutions are not ends but mean. Politics are subordinate to the following ethics: (a) One of the principles of harmony is that common goods cannot be opposed to individual goods, nor individual set-up against the common goods. A right improves duties and is one term of a moral relation; (b) Moral freedom; (c) Social and political freedom; (d) Equality, (e) Personal justice; (f) Equal pay for equal service; (g) The assignment of property should be so conceived as to secure freedom for the individual and power for the community; (h) Social and personal factors in wealth; (i) Individual organisation, and; (j) Democracy.

Among the principles, offered by the Justice Theory, is that everyone should have the same rights to the most comprehensive fundamental freedoms, as broad equal liberties for all individuals [30]. These authors state that this is the most fundamental right that should be available to everyone (Human Rights). This means that justice will be accomplished by protecting equal freedom for all persons (In the context of equal rights) and is the concept of equal rights, which is inversely proportionate to the load of responsibility that everyone bears. This premise is central to the concept of Rights and Freedom.

People living with albinism, towards a particular extent, are disregarded under the constitution of the republic of South Africa (United Nations Human Rights of the High Commissioner) [21]. In general, social justice is described as the equal allocation of power, resources, and community duties to all individuals, irrespective of their race or ethnicity, age, gender, ability status, sexual orientation, or religious or spiritual origin [31]. According to [32], the critical values that underpin the definition of social justice are collaboration, equal access, cooperation, inclusion, and equal opportunity. The use of this theory in this paper lies in that under government and related stakeholders, people living with albinism must be protected and provided with the necessary rights. Additionally, enacted legislation must not disregard the people living with albinism.

An article by [33], entitled *“people with albinism need urgent protection”*, proposes that government should work on ensuring that people living with albinism get more protection from violation of their rights, predominantly their slaughter due to stereotypes Table 1.

From Table 1, it can be deduced, that possible activities to reduce the surge of albinism killings exist. As the social justice theory suggests, like other citizens, people living with albinism deserve enough services, and if necessary, their protection must be ensured in societies. Identifying and controlling the victims could be required, which could be the better way to ensure justice in the lives of victims, potential victims and communities [34]. Another study by [22] emphasises that the livelihood of people with albinism is not normal because they know their hunt. This implies that their protection is compromised if the relevant structures show no effort against albinism killings. As much as the Justice Theory received vast support and approval, it has been criticised by other scholars. [35] argues that this theory failed due to the critical use of conceptualisation as an inquiry tool. Moreover, [30] opine that three of Rawls's fundamental principles cannot be achieved simultaneously in practice since one clashes with another.

Table 1

Responses to albinism killings

Activity level and type	Individual	Group/ Community	National	International
Identity (or control) the perpetrators	Report to police	Village leaders investigating locally	Register all and ban some traditional healers, Police training	Interpol investigation
Punish the perpetrator/ enforce law		'mob justice'	Arrest suspects and put on trial	
Provide protection	Family escort, stay at home, 'restrain at home', Bury body in the house	Community security	Police distribute cell phones	
Remove to safer place	Seek asylum in police station, move to other regions, move to relatives or boarding school	Build special school, provide scholarships to boarding schools, Red Cross camps for internally placed persons	Move children into boarding schools	Award refugee status
Public awareness	Cultural and supporting events, organised by celebrities, publication of children's books	Media coverage, Movies screenings	Issue government statements	Media coverage
Provide services to affected	Donations of cell phones by citizens	Skin care health services School companies		Sponsor injured woman with albinism for operation and house
Research	Post-graduate students theses	NGOs and PWA groups surveys and needs assessment	Develop register of persons with disabilities	Collaboration between UN, UNICEF, International NGOs and local partners

Source: [34]

3. The aim and objective of this study

The study aimed to explore the Albinism killings of Umhlabuyalingana of KZN Province, South Africa.

To accomplish the study aims, the following, 02 objectives guided this study:

1. To explore the nature of Albinism killings in the Umhlabuyalingana Municipality.
2. To assess community members' perceptions of albinism killings in Umhlabuyalingana Municipality.

4. Materials and methods

This qualitative study solely relied on one-on-one interviews and participant observation techniques to grasp and make sense of non-verbal communication because they play an enormous role in the process. Exploratory design underpinned the study's conduction and qualitative approach, and exploratory methods helped disclose new knowledge and understand society's implications and perceptions regarding the scourge of albinism killings. This study opted for a convenience sampling method to select 20 participants from *Umhlabuyalingana*. The adoption of this technique was based on the fact that one of the authors is from Umhlabuyalingana, and the study population was close to hand. Before data collection it was vital to obtain informed consent from all the selected participants; thus, they were all furnished with the internal [University approval letter] and external [Traditional leaders/Ward Councillor approval letter]. This ensured that these participants are giving mandates to form part of this study voluntarily, with a disclaimer to withdraw anytime. Furthermore, the obtained ethical clearance was used to obtain permissions and adhered to the ethical considerations, as well as offering respect for these participants to conform to human dignity, data storage and dissemination of findings. Importantly, the Informed Consent Forms were signed, and participant's rights and confidentiality were maintained.

Using the inductive Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) method to analyse and make sense of the collected data was of cardinal importance to analyse the collected data systematically [36]. The data anal-

ysis took the following route: Themes were classified, coded most thoroughly, and recorded recurring ideas as happened. Most importantly, ethical clearance to conduct this study was sought to ensure that the study adhered to ethical considerations. In addition, gatekeepers from the councillors and traditional leaders (*induna*) were obtained to access *Umhlabuyalingana* Municipality before collecting data from focus groups and individuals.

5. Results and discussions

The implications of the literature and utterances of the victims or albinos are found to be massively contradicting. The literature has portrayed the albinism killings as a manageable problem in South Africa compared to other affected African countries, such as Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia. As aforementioned, people living with albinism are not feeling protected. They are still living in fear daily, fearing for their lives and the lives of their acquaintances living with albinism. Shamefully, the law is imprecise regarding the prevention of albinism killings. In the data analysis, 02 identified study themes emerged: the nature and extent of albinism killings in the study area and selected experiences of members of the community on albinism killings.

5. 1. Nature of Albinism killings in Umhlabuyalingana, KwaZulu-Natal Province

In the responses to the posed question on whether participants have witnessed or heard of cases related to albinism killing appears that the albinism cases in the study location and South Africa entirely are not as it is in other African states, such as Tanzania and Kenya. Nevertheless, fears and cases related to albinism killings in South Africa are still there. The following excerpts justify the prevalence in *Umhlabuyalingana* and the surrounding area.

"I have heard about two (02) incidents. The one is about the woman I was telling you about previously. The second one is about a traditional healer who refused to buy someone living with albinism from the perpetrator in my area. This crime is not well-reported because we have no proper channels, and sometimes people fear being identified by perpetrators; therefore, we cannot be sure of the actual size of this problem." **(Participant 9)**

Another participant shared about two cases and other cases of disappeared people living with albinism in the area and surrounding.

"Here in our community, we have witnessed cases of albinism killings; someone was killed, someone who was in love with her sold her out to people who promised the boyfriend money if he gave her to them. A pastor was involved in this case where a woman was brutally stabbed, and we did go out to look for her and found her dead; it freaked us, and we have heard of other cases of people living with albinism disappearing." **(participant 4)**

Yes, I've heard about the incident of albinism killings. And I've also seen the incident. One woman who was part of the community was killed because I was part of the community forum, so we had to search for this woman. And in our search, we were lucky to find this woman's body, brutally killed. As a community forum, we were able to apprehend perpetrators." **(Participant 7)**

Cases of albinism killings in the study area and surroundings are seemingly frequent, judging from the participants' verbatim. Almost all participants have shared two or more incidents they know of or heard about in the study area or surroundings. Although the prevalence of albinism killings may be understood to be lower in *Umhlabuyalingana*, reading from the responses. This crime is the most violent criminal offence that affects the harmonious livelihood of people living with albinism and communities' peaceful life. [19] demonstrate the seriousness of albinism killings by revealing that a victim's body may trade for up to \$ 75 000 (about R1344082.50).

The data discover different sentiments and knowledge of incidents in the study and surrounding areas. Most participants have mentioned more than two incidents, and some have seen them with their naked eyes. In contrast, others have heard of the incidents in their *Umhlabuyalingana* and other areas around *Umhlabuyalingana*. However, it is somehow impossible to measure or estimate the prevalence of albinism killings in *Umhlabuyalingana* because albinism killings are vague. Besides, statistical data is lacking, and most studies have not cited enough statistics data in South Africa. In particular, the response of participant 1 above includes that underreporting has falsely demonstrated the incidence of albinism killings in *Umhlabuyalingana*.

In this regard, [15] maintains that it should not be disregarded, that the imprecise prevalence of albinism killings in the study area and South Africa may be influenced by underreporting. The participant mentions that people may fear being seen by the criminals who perpetuate albinism killings; he says this affects how people outside the study area comprehend the prevalence of this heinous crime. Also, the participant mentioned that access to proper channels and ensured informants' safety might assist in better estimations of albinism killings.

Besides the fact that people with albinism may be prey to traditional healers, participant 4 above revealed an incident of a person living with albinism who got killed in an intimate relationship in their ar-

ea. According to the participant, the lover of the victim was promised money for this deal by the traditional healer. This incident shows that dangerous people are in the community. Sometimes, close or intimate people to the potential victim of albinism killings may play a huge role in their victimisation. Suppose people trusted with the lives of people with albinism can sell them as commodities. In that case, the combat requires massive attention from all relevant stakeholders, as their safety is not guaranteed at any given point. Therefore, their security is compromised inside their house premises and many places outside their homes.

The lack and invisible mechanisms of protecting people living with albinism are highly worrisome indications of failure or neglect of the livelihood of these people and their peace – nothing gives hope as interventions will be rediscussed after another incident happen again. It is expected, that government create separate writes and measures to help stabilise the protection of people with albinism. The findings of this study indicate that it impacts everyone in the community of Umhlabuyalingana, including people with no albinism condition. Sadly, most sufferers are potential victims [37] who can be perceived anywhere in the country. This is due to the mythical stories about the skin of people with albinism in Africa.

5. 2. The community members experiences on Albinism killings at Umhlabuyalingana, KwaZulu-Natal Province

The continuous strike that communities receive of persecution of community members with albinism compromises peaceful life in societies. The main question, posed under this theme, is how albinism killings affect the welfare of society in the study area and surroundings. Responding to the question, participants almost had similar sentiments about the effect that albinism killing incidents have on the livelihood of people in communities. Participants offered the following regarding the livelihood of the society due to albinism killings:

“After these incidents, they live in fear; even we, the community, are not living peacefully. Another incident involves a woman with albinism whom strangers hunted, and the community had to intervene to protect her swiftly. Therefore, their families are constantly in fear in the community.” (Participant 1)

“People living with albinism would be afraid of going freely in the community because they know that perpetrators of albinism killings target them. And the family easily panic, especially if their family member living with albinism is outside the household premises.” (Participant 2)

Similarly, participant 3 commented on the fear of unpleasant livelihood for people living with albinism and the intimidation of harmony in the community. The participant said:

“Within the entire Umhlabuyalingana municipality, albinism killings disturb our peaceful life because we always need to keep an eye on people with albinism. It becomes a challenge if you are so close to someone living with albinism because you think they can be killed anytime. They cannot disappear for a day; it then intimidates their privacy, and society’s livelihood is somehow threatened.” (Participant 3)

Answering the question, most participants mentioned “living in fear” of everyone in communities, including people who do not live with albinism. Lack of protection and safety of members of communities was among the responses, which was against what the Constitution enshrined about the protection that all people deserve [1]. Seemingly, they believe that if they still have members living with albinism, they will always remain potential victims, as criminals strike anytime. They thought that perpetrators hunt people living with albinism, and it can be normal if communities (particularly community forums and ward committees) do not work together and act swiftly if an incident of albinism killing happens.

From the presented verbatim expressions, it emerges that the occurrence of albinism genocide has an adverse effect on the livelihood of people living with albinism in the community. Not only do the involved victims become affected by the incident, but the community’s livelihood is also entirely impacted. The expression above stresses the argument in other studies that sufferers and potential victims can not live freely as criminals strike at any time [10]. Notably, the incidence of albinism killings affects society, not only the victims. An article by [38], entitled “*in parts of Africa, people with albinism are hunted for their body parts. The latest victim: a 9-year-old boy*”, revealed that people with albinism hide for their safety from perpetrators who hunt to slaughter them, which is not enough because regardless of their hiding, they still fear for their livelihood. Also, the responses conquer with the claim in the article by [21] that people with albinism are not living everyday life like people with no albinism.

Study recommendations

Based on the study findings, protecting people with albinism must be prioritised. The stakeholders ought to work on developing visible and accessible measures for grappling with albinism killings in South Africa. Therefore, the study suggests the following recommendations for policymaking and establishing relevant measures.

Recommendations to understand the actual nature and extent of Albinism killings in Umhlabuyalingana, KZN Province: Researching more on albinism killings in the study area and South Africa can illuminate the actual extent of albinism killings. As things stand, underreporting and lack of research does not provide the true nature of this crime in South Africa. A few notable cases in the study area and other places in Africa may indirectly reflect the severity of albinism killings in South Africa.

Recommendations to respond to experiences of Albinism killings at Umhlabuyalingana, KZN Province: The shared experiences of albinism killings show that its existence affect livelihoods. Therefore, South Africa should be considered a member under various international treaties, including clauses condemning albinism killings. Moreover, visible and responsive programmes must be established in South Africa. Albinism killings must be taken seriously in the country because South Africa is not proactive, and the incidents of this crime are likely to continue at an alarming rate. Moreover, conducting more research in South Africa on albinism killings is paramount to ensure the establishment of programmes and measure the size of this crime in the country.

The limitations of the study

The encountered study limitations were as follows:

- Because of the nature of this study, the study results discussions might not offer socially acceptable solutions.
 - Actual victims are not questioned since they fall beyond the purview of the research, which is a glaring drawback.
 - This study was limited to one municipality, which could preclude the generalising of findings.
- The results may not illustrate the problem outside these the study area or South Africa entirely.

Prospects for further research

Future research studies should be extended to understand the problem throughout South Africa and elsewhere: The existence of albinism killings in the study area shows that the country may be experiencing albinism killings silently in some provinces. Apart from that, many people living with albinism may be potential victims every day. Therefore, more research is needed to understand the extent of this crime in the entire country, particularly in the following provinces; MP, KZN and Gauteng.

Research on measures and the legislation of albinism killings: Measures and laws are always significant moves towards the fight against phenomena. Very few studies have been identified on the legislation of albinism killings, but those laws are not specific. More research must be conducted on laws, and recommendations should be made to stop albinism killings in South Africa.

Research on the use of normative legal acts to respond to albinism killings: To act as a deterrent to albinism killings in Umhlabuyalingana, KZN Province by creating legal consequences against the alleged well organised criminal networks. This should be aligned to the impact, norms and values of the Constitutional foundations and legislative frameworks, such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 [Looking closely at Section 11– *Life - Everyone has the right to life* – of Chapter 2 of Bill of Rights and other relevant Sections], the Criminal Procedure Act (No. 51 of 1977), Medicines and Related Substances Act [Previously Drugs Control Act] (101 of 1965), Traditional Health Practitioners Act (No. 22 of 2007), South African Police Service Act (No. 68 of 1995) and the Law of Evidence Amendment Act (No. 45 of 1988), as well as notable decided cases on this subject from the Southern African Legal Information Institute (SAFLII). This will possibly prompt potential criminals to choose to obey or violate the law after calculating the associated gains and consequences of their respective actions, based on general and specific deterrence proponents of combating, investigating and preventing albinism killings holistically.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that although we can insinuate that albinism killings are not high in the research area, the literature review proves there is a shortage of legislation and programmes for albinism killings. A proactive strategic plan is always viable in responding to and curbing crime. The fact that there is no visible legislation on albinism killings – or any other critical measure means that communities and, particularly, potential victims are protected under the constitution whatsoever. This would lead to a proliferation of the incidents as perpetrators may feel less likely to be apprehended. Also, the small number of identifiable cases of albinism killings should not relax the combat and communities because the few cases indicate that albinism killings are there, and criminals may strike at any given time if the chance avails. Moreover, people with albinism require enough protection in the Republic of South Africa constitution. As the social justice theory emphasises, equal resource distribution is key [31]; people living with albinism must be catered for the same way other people receive support from relevant structures.

The safety and protection of people with albinism are highly compromised by the lack of cooperation of structures at the community, municipal and government levels. At least if potential victims and their families witness the existence of influential stakeholders grappling with albinism killings in the country, i.e. in the study area, it may bring hope that someday this crime would stop. Though most people living with albinism are believed to disappear and have been trafficked by traditional healers and their acquaintances, the data reveals that some incidents happened because people close to victims sold them to buyers, which according to the literature, are mostly the traditional healers. The issue of albinism killings is a severe human rights issue that requires intensive research to understand its prevalence and create proactive measures to reduce it and ensure the victims' protection.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in relation to this paper, as well as the published research results, including the financial aspects of conducting the research, obtaining and using its results, as well as any non-financial personal relationships.

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Data availability

Data will be made available on reasonable request.

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