The European Parliament,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on serious human rights violations,

– having regard to the United Nations General Assembly’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948,

– having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights which was adopted on 27 June 1981 and entered into force on 21 October 1986,

– having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted on 20 November 1989 and entered into force on 2 September 1990, and which is binding and applied without exception,

– having regard to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities of 18 December 1992,

– having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas according to NGOs and media reports, confirmed by the Government of Tanzania, at least 25 albinos, including children, have been killed and mutilated since March 2008 in the Lake Victoria zone, especially in Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara, where there is a high concentration of albinos,

B. whereas the three above-mentioned regions are not only notorious for the killings of albinos but also for the killings of people believed to be witches or wizards; whereas mere rumours are often enough justification for an angry mob to kill a person suspected of witchcraft,

C. whereas according to the Tanzanian authorities, the killings of albinos are the work of organised gangs hired by witch-doctors,

D. whereas the media in Dar es Salaam have reported the arrest of 173 people in connection with the killing of albinos in Tanzania, including a considerable number of witch-doctors and their clients,

E. whereas according to the national police, witch-doctors sell severed body parts and blood from albinos to miners and fishermen who believe that these parts can bring them luck, health and fortune,

F. whereas these killings have caused great apprehension and fear among the albino community as they now feel very insecure and are even afraid of staying, walking or travelling alone because of the potential risks,

G. whereas 36% of the Tanzanian population lives below the national poverty line; whereas access to the health care system is severely restricted, making recourse by the population to
witch-doctors or traditional healers a common practice,

H. whereas albinos constitute a minority and discrimination against albinos is a serious problem throughout sub-Saharan Africa; whereas albinism affects one in 20 000 people worldwide,

I. whereas according to a study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), nearly half of the parents of albino children felt humiliated at the time of the child's birth; whereas albino women are subject to discrimination from other women and whereas women who give birth to albino babies are often mocked or rejected and suffer discrimination at work; whereas some two thirds of parents were reported as saying that specific health interventions for albino children were expensive, and half said that their children had serious vision problems; whereas, however, 83% said that their children did as well at school as any other children,

1. Strongly condemns the killings of albinos in Tanzania and speculative trading in their body parts;

2. Welcomes the condemnations by Tanzania's President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of the killings of albinos and his promise of concentrated efforts to put an end to these crimes; stresses that these words must be backed up with actions;

3. Congratulates President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete on his decision to nominate Ms Al-Shymaa Kway-Geer as the first albino Member of Parliament, owing to her determination to fight the discrimination that she and other albinos suffer from;

4. Supports and welcomes the steps taken by the Tanzanian Government so far, such as the creation of an albino census and the establishment of a police escort service for albino children; endorses Tanzanian Members of Parliament's demand that the Government take further measures to address the root of the problem and end all discrimination against albinos;

5. Calls on the Tanzanian authorities, local government authorities and civil society in general to collaborate in order to protect all albinos; urges the Tanzanian Government to undertake immediate action, promoting social awareness and providing information related to albinism; considers that such measures should particularly be implemented in rural areas, where people tend to be less educated and more superstitious;

6. Welcomes the arrest last month of 173 suspects in connection with the killing of albinos in Tanzania; strongly urges the authorities to proceed speedily and bring those responsible before a court of law;

7. Notes with regret that an investigative journalist, Vicky Ntetema, has gone into hiding after receiving death threats for exposing witch-doctors and police involvement in these killings; urges the Tanzanian authorities to initiate an in-depth and independent investigation of these accusations made by Vicky Ntetema;

8. Expresses its appreciation and support for the work of the Albino Association of Tanzania, which assists the albino community; calls on the Commission to actively support this association and its call on academics, religious leaders and human rights activists to make the public aware that the killing of albinos is socially and morally unacceptable;
9. Calls on the Commission to support the UNDP’s efforts to promote and protect albinos in Africa;

10. Considers that the best way to protect the rights of Tanzanian albinos is to guarantee them equal access to quality education and health care, within the framework of inclusion policies, and to provide them with adequate social and legal protection;

11. Calls on the Commission and Member States to support the efforts of the Tanzanian Government, NGOs and civil society to formulate policies to address the needs and rights of albinos, based on non-discrimination and social inclusion, and equal access to employment;

12. Calls for improved training of healthcare workers and for workshops to be held for teachers and parents to encourage them to ensure that albino children are protected from the sun, as many die of skin cancer before they reach 30;

13. Insists that the Commission and the Member States do their utmost to ensure that healthcare funds reach the poorest in Tanzania; highlights the urgent need for access to healthcare in rural and remote areas;

14. Calls on the Council and the Commission to closely monitor the human rights situation of albinos in Tanzania;

15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the African Union, the Government and Parliament of Tanzania, the UN Secretary-General, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the ACP Council.