



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 12 March 2024

Challenges faced by village courts on sorcery accusation-related violence

Sorcery Accusation-Related Violence (SARV) is one of the worst forms of violence across different parts of Papua New Guinea (PNG). However, the extent of the harm caused by SARV is unknown because most cases are not reported to relevant authorities. Even when the cases are reported, the fragmented nature of data in the country makes obtaining a reliable account of reported cases difficult.

The National Research Institute Issues Paper No. 47, titled "*Addressing sorcery accusation-related violence in the village court system of Papua New Guinea*" by Mr. William Kipongi, PNG National Research Institute and Professor Miranda Forsyth, Australian National University highlights some challenges that Village Courts face when working on SARV cases.

The authors highlighted that the challenges faced by Village Courts include the following:

- Pressure to exceed their jurisdiction;
- Inadequate community or police support;
- Risk of physical assault;
- Low legal literacy; and
- Doubts and confusion as to how SARV can be addressed.

Upon the myriads of challenges faced by Village Courts, they have adopted several strategies to deal with SARV cases such as the following, according to the authors:

- Mediating between parties;
- Use of preventative orders;
- Issuing orders for high levels of compensation;
- Using multiple sources of moral authority to prevent SARV; and
- Working collaboratively with coalitions of state and non-state actors.

District Courts should consider supporting officials of Village Courts to boost their morale so that they can effectively deal with SARV cases in the country.

The Publication and Media Release can be accessed on the PNG NRI website <https://www.pngnri.org>.

Also, follow discussions and updates on our social media platforms:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pngnri>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/pngnri>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-research-institute-of-papua-new-guinea-nri/>

For enquiries, please contact Samuel Kehatsin on Tel: 326 0061 or Email: Samuel.Kehatsin@pngnri.org

Authorised for release by:

Dr. Osborne O. Sanida
Director, PNG NRI