Violence and Insecurity in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea

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Executive summary

This report presents the results of a study conducted in the Hela region of the Southern Highlands Province (SHP) of Papua New Guinea (PNG) over a 16-month period (October 2007 – March 2009). The study had the broad aim of exploring perceptions of insecurity, looking at the scale, nature, triggers and impacts of interpersonal and tribal violence. The main purpose of the study was to generate information for advocacy and to inform the policies and programme development of Oxfam and its local partner in the region, Hela Community Care (HCC), formally known as Community Based Health Care (CBHC).

Two types of methodology were used: participatory methods at the community level and a survey with individual victims of violence. The community level research was conducted at eight study sites located in the districts of Tari-Pori, Komo Magarima and Koroba Kopiago. Sites included communities that were experiencing tribal violence at the time of study, relatively peaceful areas and communities which had been part of CBHC’s community health and agricultural programme. Participatory action research tools were used together with interviews and focus-group discussions with community members, government and other stakeholders such as local mediators and NGOs. An interpersonal violence survey was conducted in partnership with Tari Hospital to collect quantitative data pertaining to types and causes of intentionally inflicted injuries amongst men and women. Unlike similar studies using analysis of hospital records, victims of violence were interviewed directly. This allowed the researchers to understand the nature of the violence in terms of the relationship between the person injured and the perpetrator(s), and enabled a detailed investigation of the triggers of violence. The criteria for interviewee selection and definitions of types and triggers of violence could be kept constant throughout the study, which cannot be guaranteed where hospital records are used. However, the time period covered was necessarily much shorter than studies using hospital records. During the 16-month research period, hospital data were collected on a continuous basis and the participatory data were collected opportunistically according to availability of the communities concerned.

Recent economic growth in PNG has not translated into an increase in living standards for ordinary Papua New Guineans. Unequal wealth distribution, a lack of economic opportunities and poor service delivery to the rural majority has been accompanied by an increase in criminal activities and corrupt practices, although causal relationships between these factors are hard to establish. A resource rich region, the SHP has one of the highest provincial revenues in the country, but per capita Provincial revenue is lower than the national average. SHP is one of the worst performing provinces in the country in terms of socio-economic indicators. Conflict and lawlessness have contributed substantially to this lack of progress, accompanied by corruption in political affairs at the provincial and district levels.
The last two elections have been failures with widespread irregularities and a state of emergency was declared in 2006. A deterioration of infrastructure and service delivery has contributed to a decline in health and education levels since the 1980s. Tribal fighting and violence in general has increased since the departure of the colonial administration, the development of large natural resource extractive industries nearby (such as the Porgera mine in Enga Province), and a greater use of guns after the 1990s. The instability experienced in the region has led to a growing demand for guns for security reasons as well as political gain (e.g. in the use of intimidation to influence voting during elections). Police, the courts and local leaders have not been able to contain the spread of conflict.

The Huli people living in the three study districts speak a common language. Claims to land extend back over eight-generations of both the maternal and paternal side of each family; an individual may thus acquire land in several localities, through either or both parents. The Huli are still very much bound by custom but with increasing exposure and development in the area, the modern economy and external influences are quickening the pace of change. Although the apparent triggers and the nature of conflict may be changing, many of the patterns of violence observed today are rooted in cultural norms and traditions. Hela society, like others in PNG, is fiercely egalitarian. To those who consider themselves wronged, and their kin or supporters, revenge killings are a legitimate form of redress; payback violence aims to maintain the balance of deaths and is essential to the equivalence ethic which is so central to their culture. While everyone is affected by conflicts, women in particular suffer from fear and insecurity that pervades all aspects of their lives. This insecurity arises both from group warfare and from violence in the home. The high prevalence of violence against women can also be seen in the context of traditional beliefs, which ascribe to them the power to pollute or poison men. Women may also be mistrusted due to their divided allegiance between their own kin groups and those of their husbands.

The findings from this study indicate a high rate and tolerance of violence in Tari and the wider Hela region. In the hospital survey, two to three cases presented daily and a total of 908 cases were covered. Many others do not seek care, as high feelings of insecurity lead to reduced mobility: women have restrictions placed upon them by husbands and brothers and also fear rape or sexual abuse, whilst men fear enemy attack outside their clan lands. Females made up two-thirds of all cases that presented to the hospital (see Graph (i)) and in most cases their perpetrators were known to them. Conversely three-quarters of all perpetrators were males.
Violence and insecurity in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea.  
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Those presenting at Tari hospital experienced varied forms of violence which differed according to their sex and age (Graph (ii)). In the majority of cases (78 per cent), violence experienced by females was within their own home or family, whereas males were more involved in violence outside of family relations (47 per cent). More than one-third of injuries to females involved a husband attacking his wife.

Graph (ii) Type of violence experienced according to sex

1 ‘Domestic violence’ is defined as being between spouses or co-wives; ‘family violence’ is between other relatives up to the second generation (e.g. second cousins); ‘physical violence’ occurs between more distant relatives or non-relatives; ‘Child injury’ refers to injuries to minors below 18 years of age. Categories are not mutually exclusive and so multiple types of violence may be assigned to each case. Percentages are calculated within gender groups, so data shows the proportion of male and female victims respectively affected by each type of violence.
Very few cases of tribal violence (less than two per cent of cases) presented to health services, mainly due to feelings of insecurity associated with getting to the hospital, but also because of the policy of charging a ‘fighting fee’ of K50 from victims of violence and trauma. However, community research showed that this type of violence was commonly mentioned even in communities which were not experiencing conflict at the time of the study (see Figure (i)). A large number of those participating in focus group discussions had scars from injuries inflicted during tribal fights.

Figure (i) An example of the Venn diagram used in the community research, as presented by young men and adult women from a community in Tari-Pori district. The size of the circle indicates the impact of the type of violence, whilst the distance from the group impacted on (young men or adult women in these cases) indicates the frequency.

Four out of five cases that presented to hospital involved the use of a weapon. Female perpetrators used a weapon more than males, but male victims were more likely to have been attacked with a weapon than females. A machete was the most common type of weapon used (41 per cent); guns were used in only six per cent of cases. Sticks and stones were also commonly used. 95 per cent of the 20 cases where the victim died involved the use of a weapon.

There were multiple triggers for any episode of violence. For the sample as a whole, the most common trigger mentioned was payback violence or violence as an act of retribution, followed by money and theft. In the case of female victims, common
triggers related to polygamy, spouse control and infidelity. Community research showed that men exerted high levels of control over their sisters, daughters and nieces. “Disobedience” on the part of female kin justified a violent rebuke as their “bad” behaviour reflected poorly on the strength and status of the men and could impact on the females’ bride wealth potential. Such violence was responsible for nine per cent of cases where females experienced violence within the family. Nine of the 14 cases of sorcery-related violence involved female victims. Vulnerable women who have no male kin to support or defend them tend to fall victim to accusations of sorcery, and where violence ensued, this was often condoned by the community.

The most common triggers of violence towards male victims were alcohol, theft, money problems and land disputes. The community-level research illustrated links between these factors and underlying problems: often mentioned were growing dependence on the cash economy, poor service provision, lack of economic opportunity and increased pressure on land, all of which lead to inequality and jealousy. Today, households must pay for both health care and education, costs which many cannot afford, while bride price and compensation costs are spiralling out of control, fuelling other social ills such as violence against women, and HIV and AIDS. The community level research suggested that HIV and AIDS were of concern to married women and young people. Many young men could not afford the increasing costs of bride price and so relied on opportunistic sex, whilst young women’s fear of HIV was closely associated with their fear of rape. Ten per cent of females presenting to the hospital reported rape or sexual abuse; of these 75 per cent concerned victims under 18 years of age. In 35 per cent of these cases the perpetrator was related to the victim.

Drug abuse and alcohol consumption are also destroying community relations. A lack of parental support and guidance by the clan has driven many young men to identify more with their peers than with the wider community and to become engaged in anti-social activities, further weakening social cohesion.

Land, women and pigs were the main triggers of tribal violence and are closely linked to the value system of the Huli people. Minor disputes may evolve into full-scale tribal warfare if not properly mediated. The nature of tribal warfare has changed with the introduction of guns leading to a much higher number of deaths and injuries, and greater demands for compensation with few economic means to manage these expectations. These unrealistic compensation demands fuel further conflict when they are not met.

While compensation payments were a traditional method of solving disputes, the payment of compensation (especially since the introduction of the cash economy) does not always solve problems. Underlying issues left unresolved have the potential to rekindle the conflict in future. What is not addressed today is carried forward to the next generation of children through the telling of *tumbuna stories*.
(ancestral stories) in the haus man (men’s house). This encourages inter-generational cycles of payback and perpetuates the perception that violence is an acceptable behaviour, and compensation an acceptable form of redress. Children are often raised in a violent environment both in the home and the wider community, where the use of violence is seen as a legitimate means of expressing grievances.

Tribal violence brings massive destruction to people’s lives and affects both their mental health and physical wellbeing. Displacement exacerbates other problems such as lack of education, loss of land and livelihood opportunities, increasing still further the numbers of lawless and idle young people in communities. It undermines development efforts and induces a state of dependency on others, as whole families are forced to move away to live with kin elsewhere.

The greater use of firearms (both home-made and factory-produced) in conflict has changed the power dynamics and leadership in communities and has weakened state institutions, including the police and courts, which are unable to effectively deal with security and conflict prevention. A common security concern mentioned in the community research was the ineffective law and justice sector, the erosion of leadership structures due to increasing levels of corruption, and the growing distrust of local leadership, police, and the courts. The current police service and justice system in Hela is overstretched and under-resourced, has low public confidence and police officers may suffer from a low self-esteem. In the absence of law and order, people have resorted to buying arms to safeguard their lives and property.

Formal systems of conflict mediation or dispute resolution are long, tedious and expensive. As a result, dispute resolution largely remains at the community level. In 34 per cent of the cases surveyed at Tari Hospital, steps had been taken to report, resolve or mediate the dispute by the time of interview. (Other cases may well have been addressed subsequent to the victim’s recovery). In Papua New Guinea, victims of violence may take their case to the village courts, the lowest level of the formal justice system, although in Southern Highlands Province many magistrates do not receive their pay and some courts do not function. Cases concerning serious offences should be referred to higher courts such as those at the district level. Alternatively, cases may be resolved by informal mediation processes facilitated at the village level by community mediators who work on an informal basis. Some cases are not mediated by any outside parties but are resolved between the families of the parties involved.

Of the 305 cases on which some action had been taken by the time of the survey (shown in Graph (iii)), one third were subjected to village mediation, while village courts dealt with 17 per cent of cases. Only 31 per cent of these 305 cases had been reported to the police at the time of interview, corresponding to 13 per cent of the total sample. Most disputes were resolved through the payment of compensation between parties, in which case, the perpetrator does not necessarily bear the
consequence of the offence (since his/her clansmen are expected to contribute), and justice is not provided directly to the victim (since it is paid to the family rather than the victim). The primary role of compensation is to re-establish harmonious community relations and prevent further conflict from occurring. It may have little to do with justice.

Community research in peaceful communities suggested that mediation was most effective when there were collaborative efforts between government officers and village leaders. Village leaders, the local councillor, public servants in the area, like the school headmaster, school teachers, village court officials, church leaders, and women’s groups all worked together to ensure that further conflict was prevented. NGOs such as Young Ambassadors for Peace, and Peace Foundation Melanesia, also play an important role and have assisted in the development of structures less formal than those of village courts to deal quickly with small disputes.

**Graph (iii): Action taken by victims or their families at the time of the survey (n=305)**

The results of this Oxfam study demonstrate the strong links between security and the existence of good leadership and governance and a strong civil society promoting peaceful development. Jealousy, inequality and land issues are among the key drivers of conflict, and may be associated with all types of violence, from family violence to tribal conflict. The Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project currently under construction is likely to exacerbate tensions through an influx of both cash and people into the area. Landowners inside project development licence areas will be entitled to royalty and equity payments once gas starts flowing, while those outside will not. The availability of large amounts of cash is likely to result in increased use and abuse of alcohol, and the large imported (and mainly male)

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2 The category ‘NGOs’ includes mediation actions through Peace Foundation Melanesia and Young Ambassadors for Peace. In four of the 305 cases two types of action were taken.
workforce needed for construction, may further disrupt social relations, posing special dangers for women. The planned new Hela Province (which will come into existence in 2012) has created high expectations about what these new developments will bring for the region, while the upcoming 2012 national elections are likely to increase instability further as the benefits are at stake rise.

Large volumes of LNG-related cash are already flowing into the region, both through resettlement programmes and contracts to service providers. Payments will also accrue to local and provincial government, with the expectation that these funds will be used for service delivery. If this fails to materialise, then the potential for violence aimed directly at those associated with resource extraction will be severe. In addition, the time lags between commencement of large scale construction and actual delivery of benefits to landowners (due to begin only when gas is flowing), are poorly understood by local people, leading to intense frustration.

**Key recommendations of this report include the following:**

Overall the research shows that insecurity and violence pervade all aspects of daily life in Hela, undermining all types of development in the region. It is important that both government and donors acknowledge this fact when considering the financing and implementation of programmes in sectors not directly connected to that of law and justice, whether they are targeting economic development, health or education. The recommendations given below concern possible directions for Oxfam and its partners in Southern Highlands Province to be further considered and provide valuable insights for other organisations working to address the complex issues of insecurity and violence in Papua New Guinea.

**Justice and mediation**

- Oxfam could further explore the relationship between informal justice, village courts and district mediation structures in order to better support links between community-based peace building efforts and state institutions. Collaborative peace building efforts have been identified as the best way to achieve effective mediation to resolve issues quickly. An example can be taken from the multi-stakeholder District Peace Management Teams supported by Eastern Highlands Provincial Law and Justice Department. These teams have clear roles and responsibilities, written protocols and support from the Province for their activities. Such structures do not exist in Southern Highlands Province, so Oxfam needs to identify other (and perhaps more local) opportunities for collaboration, or lobby for replication of such structures.

- In order for such partnerships to be effective, Oxfam would need to advocate for greater budget allocations to village courts, many of which barely function in the Southern Highlands. The creation of Hela Province is an opportunity to
work with the new administration to look at the reasons for low trust in the courts.

- Oxfam and its partners could advocate for a stronger role for women in the peace and justice system, in particular the instatement of at least one woman magistrate on every village court. A partner organisation needs to be found that can train village court staff on human rights and gender using well-designed and appropriate curricula.

- Minor disputes have the potential to turn violent and generate wider conflict. Thus, local mediation mechanisms which can address local problems quickly, whilst providing ‘closure’ to all parties, should be supported. One such strategy is to promote restorative justice, which seeks to provide restitution to victims and to restore relationships between offenders and victims, while also protecting their human rights. Such an approach would incorporate peace building values, skills, and techniques into broader governance and development work.

### Policing and security

- Instead of a sporadic and expensive deployment of troops brought in to quench outbursts of violence when they arise, it would be better to increase the number of regular police on the ground. The number of police personnel in Tari at the time of the study was derisory, although staffing has since improved; there is also a need to improve police capacity in terms of office supplies, equipment and vehicles to carry out day to day operations. The Hawa Correctional Services in Tari needs to be restored for detainees and is crucial for improving law and order in the region. Oxfam could advocate to the provincial level government and resource extraction companies to support improvement of policing and correctional services.

- As we have seen, a large proportion of cases of violence involve female victims. A woman’s desk at the police station and associated training for female staff when dealing with such cases would greatly improve the ability of the police to assist the victims.

- Systematic training programmes should be provided for police and other security sector actors at all levels to mainstream human rights and gender issues and to promote gender sensitive workplaces for police and village courts so that women may feel safe and seek help if they need to.

### Awareness raising and attitudinal change

- Cultural norms and values in Hela society underpin the patterns of violence described in this report. Male attitudes towards women, perceptions of
masculinity, the role of violence in socialising children and parent-child relationships are all important factors. Various initiatives exist in Melanesia to address some of these problems through programmes that focus on men or whole households, promoting behaviour change through awareness raising, discussion, role play and various other tools. HELP Resources in East Sepik, for example, runs a behaviour change programme for men and boys that could be adapted to SHP.

- Behaviour change programmes should include issues around sexual and reproductive health for both men and women including hygiene, HIV and STIs, family spacing and contraception. Such issues are common triggers of domestic violence. Targetting the whole family (albeit through separate male and female courses) helps people to understand links between gender relations and control of family size. Oxfam could look at what other actors are doing in SHP to see how partnerships can be built in this important area.

- Many questions remain as to the effectiveness of programmes which try to bring about behaviour change amongst men, and there is little information to suggest which approaches might work best. The Australia National University (ANU) is conducting research to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of a number of initiatives in PNG. Collaboration with ANU could be sought in order to evaluate and feed back any findings into future programmes implemented in SHP.

Access to services

- Payment for medical reports, which are required to take cases of violence to court, should be abolished. These reports represent a major barrier for those seeking justice through the formal system. Abolition of fees for cases of violence in hospital would also greatly improve access to healthcare for victims. Oxfam and MSF have helped to abolish such fees at Tari Hospital but they remain at many establishments, including Mendi hospital. These issues require advocacy at the national level.

- Many victims of violence require post-trauma counselling. MSF provides such services through a family support unit in Tari hospital, but they are lacking in more remote areas. Victims are often discharged from hospital only to be attacked once again. At present there are no safe houses for women in Tari, or indeed in SHP in general. Access to such refuges following attacks may provide time for aggressors to cool off and for female victims to assess their options. Security issues associated with safe houses are serious, but Oxfam should assess the possibilities.

- Investment in livelihood strategies and development of the rural sector is needed in order to improve self-esteem, generate income and foster a culture of
savings. An emphasis on money management could help to mitigate some of the side-effects of cash payments currently flowing into Hela Province. Such payments when spent quickly on alcohol, drugs, gambling and women, exacerbate violence both in the home and outside it. Oxfam’s partner in Simbu Province, Community Development Agency, has some experience in this area and could help to support partners in SHP.

- Improved distribution and quality of services and other tangible signs of development must be provided to ensure that people across the region feel they have all benefited from development activities. Although causal links are hard to establish, both this study and others suggest that inequitable service provision may exacerbate conflict, while provision of government services has been suggested by combatants as a way of reducing tensions. Service provision has deteriorated significantly since the 1980s, but expected revenue from the LNG project may provide an opportunity for change if some money can be channelled effectively into improving essential services. In order to advocate for better service delivery, Oxfam and its partners will require a good understanding of the implications of various mechanisms proposed in recent studies to address problems of poor service delivery. These include direct funding of facilities by Central Government and, more locally, by resource extraction companies themselves.
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<td>CBHC</td>
<td>Community Based Health Care</td>
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<td>CID</td>
<td>Criminal Investigation Division</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>GOPNG</td>
<td>Government of Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>HCC</td>
<td>Hela Community Care</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>LLG</td>
<td>Local-level Government</td>
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<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
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<td>Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary</td>
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<td>Security and Community Initiative Research</td>
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<td>SOE</td>
<td>State of Emergency</td>
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Definitions

Types of violence as defined in the survey

Child injury: An injury caused to a child aged 1-17.

Domestic violence: Violence that occurred between husband and wives or between co-wives.

Family violence: Violence that occurred within the family unit within the second generation of relatives e.g. second cousins. If the violence involved family members beyond the second generation of relatives it was then regarded as ‘physical violence’.

Gun violence: The use of a gun to either intimidate or to cause injury.

Intimidation: The use of any weapon to make threats against another person.

Physical violence: The perpetrator was of no relation to the victim(s).

Rape: Sexual penetration of a victim without consent.

Sexual abuse: Indecent touching, fingerling.

Tribal violence: Injuries sustained during tribal warfare.

Triggers of violence

Alcohol: As a contributing factor to aggressive behaviour or fighting over alcohol.

Bride price: Fighting over the payment and distribution of bride price payments.

Compensation: Non-payment, inadequate or the unfair distribution of resources from compensation payments.

Control spouse: Restrictions and having some control over one’s spouse.

 Destruction of property: Damaging one’s property or garden.

Disobedience: Not following instructions or doing what one is told to do.

Drug abuse: Violence that occurs when the assailant is under the influence of drugs.
**Family pressure:** Ignoring or not taking into account the supposed authority and expectations of relatives.

**Infidelity:** Fighting that arises from suspected or actual extra-marital affairs.

**Jealousy:** Envy and resentment about material goods that others have or the relationships they have with others.

**Lack of support:** No assistance from spouse or family in carrying out responsibilities, raising children or supporting the family.

**Land:** Disputes over ownership of land or land boundaries.

**Money:** Fighting over financial demands that are not met or wanting financial support.

**Polygamy:** Living within a family with more than one wife and the politics or social dynamics involved with living in such a relationship.

**Refusal to have sex:** Refusal to have sex with one’s spouse.

**Separating from spouse:** Violence that occurs when a person has separated or is attempting to leave their spouse.

**Stealing:** Property or money taken without permission either true or suspected.

**Violence:** Support and retaliation for a violent incident.
Introduction

This paper is an overview of a study that began with the broad aims of understanding people’s perceptions of insecurity, exploring the nature of conflict and different types of violence experienced in the Hela region of Southern Highlands Province (SHP). Both interpersonal violence and tribal violence were investigated.

The issues investigated around *interpersonal violence* were:

- Types of violence experienced;
- Triggers and impacts of each type of violence identified;
- The gendered nature of violence;
- The nature of the violence itself and type of weapon used; and
- Mechanisms of mediation and conflict resolution.

*Tribal violence* was explored in relation to its links to armed violence. The main areas of study were:

- The nature of tribal violence;
- Links between tribal violence and the demand for and use of guns;
- Triggers leading to large-scale violence and conflict;
- Impact on males, females and the wider community; and
- Efforts to resolve tribal violence.

Oxfam International’s peace building and conflict reduction programme in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is attempting to improve the understanding of how insecurity affects the lives of Papua New Guineans. Its integrated research component takes a human-centred approach, working with affected people to understand their own security issues and to develop their own local solutions to their problems. This study is a part of the Security and Community Initiative Research Project (SACIR) that commenced in October 2007 in the Hela region of the Southern Highlands Province (SHP). The research gives a voice to those groups most vulnerable to conflict, and draws attention to a broadened notion of security.

The study was conducted in the light of an increasing use of armed violence in the region, associated tribal conflicts, high levels of other types of violence occurring in households and the wider community, and conditions exacerbating an existing
culture of violence. It also explored the gendered differences in experiences and perceptions of violence and conflict, and how these impacted on men and women differently. Types of insecurity experienced by men and women are very different, reflecting their relative access to power and resources (Bastick 2008: 4).

The project aimed to provide an evidence-base for local organizations working in partnership with Oxfam to reduce conflict in their own areas, and for the purpose of programme and policy development. This report will hopefully provide greater awareness of the types, triggers and impacts of violence in SHP for policy makers, development workers, the private sector and civil society, presenting a broader view of human security in light of the growing incidence of gender-based violence, tribal conflict and the increasing use of arms and insecurity in local communities.
Background

Violence in Papua New Guinea

PNG's population in 2009 was estimated to be 6.6 million, up from 4.1 million in 1990 (World Bank Development Indicators). 50 per cent of the country's population is under 19 years of age. 85 per cent of the population lives in rural communities based on the traditional village structure and depends on subsistence farming supplemented by cash cropping. 40 per cent of the population lives on under US$1 a day. Progress has been slow (or negative) against a number of key social indicators, with a low life expectancy of 58 years (2010), high infant mortality (57/1,000) and very high maternal mortality (733/100,000) (2006). Adult literacy rates for males are 63 per cent and females 51 per cent (2005). PNG ranks 148/177 in 2010 according to the human development index. The country's geographically rugged terrain coupled with deteriorating government services and infrastructure, have contributed to growing inequality and a greater demand for guns for security. “It was apparent that many people in PNG have reached a point where it seemed the only way to solve the immediate need to survive was to use an illicit firearm to take what you wanted and protect what you had” (Shorting Shooters' Association of Australia 2005 :5). The Highlands region is the worst performing in many development indicators (Januszewska et al. 2006: 5) and suffers from particularly high levels of conflict and insecurity.

Interpersonal violence

PNG suffers from many forms of violence and indeed violence is seen as acceptable behaviour and even as a way of life for some. The preamble of the constitution states that “we reject violence and seek consensus as a means of solving our common problems”. Section 36(1) goes onto to state that no person shall be submitted “to treatment or punishment (whether physical or mental) that is cruel and otherwise inhuman or is inconsistent with respect to the human dignity of the human person”. The Constitution was therefore framed to protect all human rights irrespective of customs or traditions that may be inconsistent with this principle. However, the data show that this is far from reality. The risk of violent injury in PNG is higher than most other countries (Alpers 2005: 83). In rural PNG, injuries are the leading cause of death for people 15-44 years of age (Graitcer 1992 in Winnington 2008: 44), yet most crimes go unpunished (Alpers 2005:113).

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3 In 2004 PNG was ranked 133 out of 177 nations and has thus experienced a relative decrease in human development according to this index.
Interpersonal violence takes many forms, ranging from criminally motivated attacks between strangers to fights between family members. In particular, there is a large literature on domestic violence due to the fact that PNG has one of the highest rates of this type of attack in the region (Amnesty International 2006: 5). Research conducted by the Law Reform Commission (LRC) in 1986 found that on average two-thirds of women had been hit by their partners (a conclusion supported by further research in 2009 (Ganster-Breidler 2009)), and yet the issue is not taken seriously in PNG (Makail 2000 in Lewis et al. 2008: 185). A recent study on links between violence against women and HIV showed that women who were experiencing physical violence and sexual violence in their relationships were more likely to be HIV positive compared to women who were not being physically or sexually abused by their partners (Lewis et al. 2008: 190-191). Similarly, females face insecurities outside the domestic setting in the wider community. In a report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) it was stated that “young women all over the country are at high risk of rape, gang rape and other forms of violent sexual assault” (CRC 2003 in Amnesty International 2006: 6).

In 1995 PNG ratified the UN Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women – a commitment made to ensure that the women of PNG were not denied access to and enjoyment of their rights due to gender-based discrimination. PNG is ranked 133 out of the 138 countries in the United Nations Development Programme’s Gender-related Development Index (GDI 2010)\(^4\), 119 out of 121 countries in women’s political participation, and educational enrolment for females, compared to males is amongst the lowest in the Pacific (Commonwealth of Australia 2008: 105-106). Social and cultural aspects of gender relations undermine the progress of women in all spheres of life, and leave women vulnerable to the threat of violence and abuse. Women in PNG still have a long way to go before they will fully realize their rights to life and security.

**Tribal violence in PNG**

Tribal warfare has long been practiced in the Highlands of PNG. For example, in Enga Province from 1900 to the 1950s, 86 tribal fights were reported, 58 per cent of which were mainly concerned with land disputes. Guns were not used at the time but common weapons included arrows, spears and blades (Meggitt 1977 in Alpers 2005: 92). Tribal fighting was suppressed for much of the colonial period by the administration but increased again in the early 1970s as government services deteriorated (Dinnen 1997 in Alpers 2005: 92). Today it is still a major problem in

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\(^4\) The **Gender-related Development Index (GDI)**, measures achievement in the same basic capabilities as the HDI does, but takes note of inequality in achievement between women and men. The methodology used imposes a penalty for inequality, such that the GDI falls when the achievement levels of both women and men in a country go down or when the disparity between their achievements increases. The greater the gender disparity in basic capabilities, the lower a country’s GDI compared to its HDI. The GDI is simply the HDI discounted, or adjusted downwards, for gender inequality.
many parts of the Highlands. In 2005 the media reported tribal fighting in at least six provinces. In urban centres where there are a greater number of people migrating to townships, ethnic clashes have also become a problem. Today, however, the way in which tribal warfare is fought has changed significantly due to the introduction of guns and the erosion of traditional mechanisms that manage and control how tribal violence is carried out.

Guns entered the Highlands of PNG in the 1970s, but it was only in 1986 that the first home-made guns were used in tribal fights. Factory-made guns were not used until the early 1990s. Blades and home-made guns were used for close combat. Injuries from home-made guns were common but rarely life-threatening. High-powered guns are more likely to cause fatal injuries and can kill from a great distance (Alpers 2005: 93). Other than death and injury, social disruption, internal displacement, and the destruction of livelihoods are the most obvious effects of tribal violence and retard the ability of people and communities to progress.

The law and justice sector in PNG

Despite increasing security problems throughout the country, including interpersonal violence, tribal violence, election-related violence, criminality and violence against women, the responsible authorities have been unable to address the problem and people have resorted to taking the law into their own hands.

In remote communities throughout the country, there is almost no police presence and very limited financial support to address the growing security concerns. In PNG the ratio of police officers to civilians is 1: 1000. The comparative figure for Australia is 1:439 and New Zealand is 1:692 (Goldman 2007: 80). Village courts form the lowest level of the formal justice system – the level with which villagers are most likely to have contact – yet salaries of magistrates have not increased since the 1970s and many are not paid at all.

Village courts are intended to resolve disputes arising at the village level in a manner consistent with local customary laws and practices. Their primary function is to ensure fair and appropriate mediation is carried out and peace and harmony maintained within the village and communal setting. They also have the power to make preventative orders and the authority to order a person not to fight, make or carry offensive weapons in certain places or do anything that may cause a breach of the peace. Failure to comply with a preventative order may result in a fine or term of imprisonment.

They also deal with cases of violence against women. However, the manner in which customary law is interpreted and applied in village court rulings may be highly discriminatory, effectively denying women their right to justice. Restoring ‘peace and harmony’ often means that agreements between the families of the perpetrator and the victim take precedence over punishment for the perpetrator or justice for the victim herself (Garap 2000: 163-164).
The Southern Highlands

Socio-economic status

Southern Highlands Province, and Hela region in particular, is a resource rich area that has brought significant investor interest and opportunity to PNG. Despite being a resource rich province, its social and economic indicators are extremely poor.

Box 1. Socio-economic indicators for SHP and the study areas

- The average life expectancy is 54 years for males and 57 years for females (NRI 2010: 89); equivalent figures for men and women in PNG as a whole are 55 and 60 (World Bank 2008).

- Koroba Kopiago and Komo Magarima rank amongst the 20 most disadvantaged districts in the country according to rankings given in NEFC (2004) and Gibson et al. (2005). Nutritional data suggest that stunting amongst children over five is over 50 per cent in all three districts, reaching 70 per cent in Tari district, (Hanson et al. 2001).

- The mortality rate of children under five is 84/1000. This is 15 per cent higher than the figure for PNG as a whole (73/1000), (World Bank 2008).

- Net enrolment rate (number of school aged children in school) is 39.9 per cent, lower than most other provinces (NRI 2010: 89).

- Literacy is only 31 per cent for females and 40 per cent for males, compared to national levels of 46 per cent and 57 per cent for women and men respectively (NSO 2002).

- The ability to earn cash income is low due to poor land potential and a lack of access to roads, markets and services (Allen 2007: 41, Hanson et al. 2001). Lack of cash incomes exacerbates malnutrition as subsistence diets cannot be supplemented.

- Although Southern Highlands Province is perceived to be resource-rich, its provincial revenue per head was 52 kina in 2007, lower than the national average for all provincial revenues combined (72 kina per head), (NEFC 2008).

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5 Children are considered to be stunted when their height is abnormally low for their age, indicating long term nutritional deficiencies.

6 SHP has one of the highest provincial government revenues (after to NCD and Western Province) at K40 million in 2007, a large proportion of which comes from the mining and petroleum sectors. This figure can be compared to Simbu and Gulf Provinces, which received less than K10 million each in the same year (NEFC 2008: 5, 9).
Geographical focus of the study: Hela region

The main geographical focus of this study is the Hela region which is made up of the three districts: Tari Pori, Koroba Kopiago and Komo Magarima, with a population of about 186,000 people (NRI 2010).

Figure 1: Map of Southern Highlands and Hela

In July 2009, Parliament passed legislation to make SHP and Hela two separate provinces by 2010. The new province will be a principle host of the giant new LNG project, which is predicted to double the GNP of the country (Acil-Tasman 2009); raising many social and development challenges.

Tari is the main market and transport hub of the proposed Hela Province and most government services and facilities are located there. People from this region, known as the Huli people, speak a common language and are the second largest language group in PNG. They live in separate homesteads rather than villages but have wider social obligations concerning communal activities such as bride-price and compensation payments or during tribal warfare. Traditionally, men and women lived in separate houses while younger children stayed with their mother. This has changed in recent years, however, with men and women living together in a single family home. Decisions concerning the community are made in the haus-man or the men’s house. Hela society, like others in PNG, is fiercely egalitarian. To those who consider themselves wronged, and their kin or supporters, revenge killings are a
legitimate form of redress; payback violence aims to maintain the balance of deaths and is essential to the equivalence ethic which is a recurring theme in Melanesian societies (Sillitoe 1998).

Public service provision has been on the decline since the 1980s. For example, Lake Kopiago sub-district’s formal education system is at the risk of being completely phased out with no teachers (Haley and May 2007: 8). There is no mains electricity coverage throughout Hela, further impacting on the proper functioning of existing services. Many parts of the region are still inaccessible by road.

**Conflict and Tribal violence in SHP**
The high incidence of violence in the region resulting in the growing demand and use of arms has made Hela one of the most volatile parts of the country. The region is characterized by conflict both between and within kin groups as well as deep frustrations associated with high levels of corruption, poor service delivery, a growing lack of trust in government machinery, unequal wealth and resource distribution, *raskolism* and politically motivated conflict and armed violence.

Tribal warfare re-emerged in Tari in the 1980s together with a rise in violence, criminality and a general breakdown in law and order. Coinciding with this trend has been the failure of the delivery of basic services and governance structures (Lewis 2007: 149). The district court closed for five to six years due to the withdrawal of the magistrate. Election-related violence has been particularly evident in the province. In the 2002 national elections, following rulings from the PNG Supreme Court, six out of the nine electorates in the SHP were announced as failed elections and supplementary elections were held the following year. In 2003 frustrated supporters caused further destruction by disrupting services, businesses and resource projects (Haley and May 2007: 1). In August 2006, continuing instability and high levels of corruption led to the suspension of the Provincial Government and the declaration of a State of Emergency (SOE) in the province. The PNG Defence Force and police personnel were deployed to ensure some stability in the region (BBC News, August 1, 2006).

In 2001 feuding between the *Tunjup* and *Unjumap* ethnic groups over an unexplained death in 1999, sparked violence escalating to gun battles on the outskirts of Mendi town. By the time a peace agreement was reached more than 100 people had lost their lives (Bragge 2007: 97). The fight resulted in businesses shutting down, public servants fleeing, schools being closed and the closure of Mendi Hospital for nine months between December 2001 – September 2002 (Winnington 2008: 42). With little or no suitable response from responsible authorities, people took the law into their own hands and armed themselves. Women were also abused at the time with 17 women seeking care and counselling assistance at the missionary health centre after experiencing rape and gang rape (Winnington 2008: 49). This has brought to light the changing nature of conflict.
the past women and children were not targeted during tribal fighting but this has now become a tactic of warfare to provoke and shame the enemy.

By the 1990s firearms had become widely used in tribal warfare increasing death and the extent of injury (Vail 2007: 108). In 2003 there were 164 conflict-related deaths in the Tari area and 40 more in the first eight months of the following year (Lewis 2007: 151). Inflated compensation claims due to an increase in deaths and injuries made it difficult to settle and subsequently led to further violence when these demands were not met.

Law enforcement agencies feel overpowered by the use of guns and the widespread fighting. Resources are inadequate for the size of the population and this, combined with the dispersed settlement patterns characterizing Huli communities, make it impossible for the police to be effective. Village courts would be in a better position to deal with disputes before they escalate (Lewis 2007: 151), but unfortunately they have largely ceased to function in SHP and those that are functioning have no power to enforce rulings. Village court services have deteriorated since the passing of the Organic Law on Provincial Government and Local-level Government (OLPGLLG) in 1995, when the responsibility for funding village courts was transferred from the national government to provincial governments (Lewis 2007: 153).

Prior to independence the Huli people, like other cultures, had their own social control mechanisms for dealing with disputes. Agreements were reached by consensus and through the mediation process (Goldman 2007: 72). When consensus could not be reached then an issue was fought over, but in a controlled and ritualised manner. However, traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, changed by colonial experience and the introduction of the modern state and resource developments, have not been able to contain emerging trends in tribal fighting, which are more violent and destructive involving the use of high powered weapons (Haley and May 2007: 3). This process of change, together with the declining influence of traditional mechanisms and weakening state justice institutions, indicate that the incidence of violent conflict is likely to increase (Lewis 2007: 152).

**Existing data on Interpersonal violence in SHP**

Data on the nature and scale of interpersonal and tribal violence, and on their impacts on the lives of people in this region, is limited. There is little existing research on the scale or nature of conflict in SHP (Goldman 2007: 70). Kidu similarly suggested that much more research is needed to gain a better understanding of the

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7 The 2004 National Crime Summary, however, recorded only 38 murders for the entire province (Winnington 2008: 47-48).
changing nature and incidence of violence to be integrated into policy and practice (Kidu 2000: 35-36).

Mathew and co-workers (1996) conducted a five-year review of tribal fight admissions to Mendi General Hospital from 1990 to 1994. In a broader and more recent study, the public health consequences of violence in SHP were considered in a retrospective audit of Mendi General Hospital records from 1999-2007 (Winnington 2008). Also in Mendi district, Garap and Kai (2005) undertook Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises on issues around gun-related violence with four communities, focusing both on peaceful communities and on those directly involved in the serious violence of 2001. At Tari, the IMR Tari Research Unit (TRU) monitored mortality and its causes as part of its demographic surveillance programme; the TRU closed in 1995 due to insecurity, but did record causes of mortality at Tari Hospital before that date (Flew 2002). In this study we refer to the findings of these previous studies at Mendi and Tari in the relevant sections of the report, comparing them with the data presented here. We also give a brief overview of the main findings of those studies here.

TRU data from community-wide demographic monitoring in Tari from 1977-1983 suggest that trauma⁸ was the most common cause of death in the 15-44yrs age range, accounting for 20 per cent of mortality in that age group (Lehman 2002)⁹. Across the population as a whole, trauma-related deaths accounted for about six per cent of deaths recorded by verbal autopsy (Lehman 2002) and 2.8 per cent of hospital deaths (Flew 2002)¹⁰. These statistics relate to total trauma related deaths, many of which are, of course, accidental. Data collected from Mendi hospital in Winnington (2008) looked at causes of injuries amongst inpatients and found that where intent was stated¹¹, about 50 per cent of injury (trauma) cases were caused deliberately. To further investigate the nature of these deliberate injuries, 103 patient files were examined in detail. Of these, about 46 per cent of admissions were caused by inter-tribal fighting, 37 per cent were caused by assaults, and 17.4 per cent were domestic-related intentional injuries, results that are similar to those recorded at Mendi hospital by Mathew (1996). These data may be biased towards tribal fighting because, of the 103 patient files selected, the majority were gunshot, arrow or spear wounds. This may partly explain why our results from Tari have a lower proportion of injuries from tribal fighting.

Certainly, the majority of injury-related deaths occur outside hospitals and do not get reported (Alpers 2005: 85). It is suggested that more than 90 per cent of all

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⁸ In this case trauma includes both intentional and unintentional injuries (including homicide, traffic accidents, drowning, burns and suicide).
⁹ The death rate from trauma in the 15-44 age group was estimated to be 4029 deaths/100 000 population per year, more than 100 times that of Australia (Watters and Dyke 1996 and ABS 2004, both in Alpers 2005)
¹⁰ The Mendi data from 1999-2007 suggested that 5per cent of deaths at hospital were from trauma.
¹¹ Intent could only be determined in about 15per cent of cases that is a sample size of 363 admissions or 190 documented assaults.
Violence and insecurity in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Oxfam Research Report, November 2010

Deaths in the Southern Highlands are not reported because it costs money to register a death (Sister Gaudentia Meier in Alpers 2005). Gun violence in particular may be underreported: only 3.3 per cent of injury admissions to Mendi concerned gun violence over a seven year period and most of the victims were already stable and had recovered. This suggests that many seriously injured victims do not visit the hospital and do not obtain adequate medical assistance (Winnington 2008). The same problem goes for police records: only 16 per cent of the violent crimes occurring in the SHP are reported to the police and only two per cent of these are murder cases (Haley and Muggah 2006 in Winnington 2008: 9; Australian Financial Review 2005: 1-2).
Methods

The study used two different methodologies. The first was a participatory research approach to look at aspects of violence and insecurity in communities. The second comprised a survey of trauma cases at Tari Hospital – this study was not a retrospective analysis of existing hospital records, but relied instead on interviews with victims of intentional injury entering the hospital over the study period. The study was conducted over 16-months (Oct 07-Mar 09), during which time hospital data was collected on a continuous basis and the participatory data were collected opportunistically according to availability of the communities concerned.

Participatory data collection in communities

Selection of communities

Huli people live in single household units which are geographically scattered rather than clustered in villages. Each individual household or family grouping lives within clearly defined boundaries demarcated by well dug-out trenches. Affiliation is defined by lineage rather than by geographic proximity, thus it was difficult to define groups of people in a particular study site. The names of sites visited correspond to geographical localities as defined by national census units. These localities were usually occupied by three to four groups of people, each of whom shares a common lineage and identity, defined by collective engagement in ceremonial gatherings and activities e.g. tribal fights or bride price payments. Members of these groups may have stronger affiliations to members of the same group living far from the locality than with the other groups living at the same locality. The causes and effects of fighting are likely to reverberate through many localities, following lines of affiliation.

The participatory research was undertaken in eight communities in the three districts: four in Tari Pori; three in Koroba Kopiago and one community in Komo Magarima. Study sites included three areas that were experiencing tribal conflict and two perceived as relatively ‘peaceful’. At the time of the study, Oxfam supported the work of a local organization, Community Based Health Care (CBHC). CBHC was established in Tari in the early 1990s and was working with several communities in the three districts of the Hela region. CBHC was developed in response to poor health indicators and deteriorating living standards associated with long-term conflict and the withdrawal of government services. For this study, CBHC identified four communities where it had implemented its programme (see Table 1). The intention was to establish which initiatives were working in peaceful areas (in terms of reducing conflict and promoting peaceful development) that could potentially be used in other less stable communities (Appendix 3).
Table 1: Characteristics of study sites chosen for the community level research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>CBHC</th>
<th>Peaceful</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Tari Pori</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Tari Pori</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Koroba Kopiago</td>
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<td>Komo Magarima</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Tari Pori</td>
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<td>Koroba Kopiago</td>
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Two of the three communities experiencing tribal fighting had been displaced from their original locations, so participants were interviewed outside their home territories.

**Sampling**

Meetings were facilitated by key members in each community and the purpose of the study explained. Through these community meetings an invitation was extended to interested people to participate in the research. Of those interested 5-10 participants were asked to come forward for each of the following groups: young men, young women, adult men and adult women. Those participating totalled 53 young women, 93 young men, 114 adult women and 102 adult men.

These volunteers took part variously in 23 in-depth interviews, four pair-interviews, 19 focus group discussions and 16 participatory exercises. Those interviewed in depth were identified during the group work. Additional interviews were carried out with key informants in Government, resource companies, the police, courts and civil society organisations.

**Techniques used**

Qualitative techniques were used to gain an understanding of personal and social meanings and interpretations of security. The tools used included participatory exercises derived from participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools. The exercises involved respondents as active participants. PRA has significant relevance to community development work as an empowerment tool. The participatory and
inclusive approaches used, enabled participants to understand community perceptions of insecurity, explore their own situation, develop their own criteria of risks and elaborate their own ideas about what appropriate interventions may look like for them. The diagramming exercises included mobility mapping to explore the impact of insecurity on mobility; Venn diagrams to examine the types, frequency and gendered impact of violence; problem trees to identify the causes and effects of violence; and peace circles identifying local solutions to the main triggers of violence.

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with individuals and groups were used for deeper analysis of the themes that emerged through the diagrammatic exercises. Focus group discussions enabled the study team to explore people’s knowledge and experiences, providing rich and detailed data about people’s perceptions, thoughts, feelings and impressions, in their own words, in a relaxed setting (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Focus group discussions ‘give a voice’ to more marginalized groups, such as poor people, minority ethnic groups or women, who may be restricted from overtly expressing their security issues. They allow participants to bounce ideas off one another and further explore important concepts. Participants agreed amongst themselves on the time and location of the discussions. Focus group discussions ran, on average, for one to two hours.

In-depth interviews were selected as a research method because of the informal style of interview, and its appropriateness to the context with its focus on participants’ own lived experiences, meanings and interpretations. Many of the participants were known to the research team prior to the interview, whether informally or having participated in either a focus group discussion or a participatory exercise.

Data collection at Tari Hospital

Interpersonal Violence and Trauma Survey

An interpersonal violence survey was conducted in partnership with Tari Hospital. Interviews were carried out with victims of violence and trauma to collect their demographic details, the history of trauma, the triggers and types of violence experienced, the perpetrator, type of weapon used and whether there was mediation.

People from all three electorates in the Hela region seek health care services at Tari Hospital. Whether medical treatment was sought for violence-related trauma depended very much on their access to health care services, in terms of the physical distance as well as the potential for an attack along the way, the extent of the injury caused, and whether the victim could afford the fees charged to victims of violence and trauma. At the time of study, a fighting fee of K50 was charged for injuries.
presenting to Tari Hospital. Violence and trauma-related injuries were seen to be deliberate and therefore required a higher fee than other hospital charges.\textsuperscript{12}

Patients seeking treatment at Tari Hospital for violence and trauma-related injuries were referred for interview. Given the sensitive nature of the study, each case was interviewed in a private and comfortable space for the victim. The process involved asking the patient basic questions and filling out a form either prior to or after they received treatment from the hospital depending on the severity of the injury. When the patient was not able to speak given the severity of the injury, a guardian was interviewed with the consent of the victim.

Participants were identified by two local research assistants as victims presented to the outpatient department at Tari Hospital. The local research assistants approached people presenting and discussed the purpose of the survey and whether the patient was willing to participate in the survey. Most patients were willing to share their violent experiences, although there were a small number of cases where patients were reluctant to talk about the violence inflicted on them either because their experience was too sensitive to discuss or the situation was too tense and did not allow for the research assistants to speak to the patient or any of the relatives that accompanied the victim to hospital.

A total of 1118 interviews were completed over the 16-month study period of which 908 cases were patients that presented to Tari Hospital for medical assistance. Of these, 69 per cent were female \((n=625)\) and 31 per cent \((n=283)\) male. 11 per cent of all cases seen were children less than 18 years of age \((n=95)\), 23 per cent were of young people 18-25 years of age \((n=207)\), adults made up 64 per cent of cases \((n=584)\) and two per cent of those interviewed were above 55 years of age \((n=22)\). The remaining cases (19 per cent of the total) were recorded opportunistically by the local research assistants in communities outside of the hospital. This report only discusses those cases that were collected inside Tari Hospital for reasons of consistency and in order that the study might form a replicable baseline for future comparison.

**Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was sought with all participants that were involved in the research. A statement of information was given to all participants informing them about the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits and potential outcomes of the research. Informed consent was established in a relaxed, often lengthy and casual discussion prior to formal interviews taking place. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of information they gave and it was explained that any identifying information would be concealed in published results. Permission was sought to

\textsuperscript{12} The fee for treatment has been reduced to the normal outpatient fee of K2.00 since September 2009. The challenge now is to maintain these fees. Medical reports were still obtained at a cost of K150.00.
record in-depth interviews and focus group discussions by digital or tape-recording. Every participant was informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without reason or justification. This was particularly important for participants presenting to Tari Hospital who were often in a rush to leave or unable to have lengthy discussions. Participants were also informed of the sensitive or personal nature of some of the issues that may arise during discussions.

**Data analysis**

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed. Data analysis involved initially reading, rereading, discussing and taking notes from the data (interviews and field notes) collected during in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participatory diagramming. This helped to identify the emerging themes, unanticipated findings, gaps in the data, and work towards overcoming some of the methodological barriers. The next stage involved applying a code to segments of text which identified a specific theme or issue to consider. This was managed using the software Atlas-ti 4.1 (Muhr, 1997). Subsequently, the data for each identified code and theme were extracted from the transcripts, and analyzed separately, giving rise to new sub themes, understandings and a more detailed analysis of the data. By identifying how commonly themes occurred in the data, it also became clear whether these tended to emerge in specific populations (young women for example) or more generally across groups.

Male and female youth who had participated in the research assisted in the analysis of the diagramming exercises and presented the findings back to their communities, allowing the young people involved to grow in confidence and participate in the affairs of their community, but also as an ethical consideration that this information be shared with the participants of the research. This process allowed for the findings to be verified and validated by cultural interpreters. It involved identifying common themes, highlighting differences between groups and developing a diagrammatic representation of the community to then be presented and further discussed by the community. This allowed the community an opportunity to consider and talk about ways to address the main triggers of violence and other conflict-related issues.

Data from the interpersonal violence survey at Tari Hospital were inputted using the software Epi Info. This package was also used to support statistical analysis.

**Limitations of the research**

The research was conducted to get an impression of the extent and nature of violence that was being experienced in cases presenting at Tari Hospital and also in...
a number of communities. The hospital data underestimate the full extent and impact of injuries and violence because it excluded people who did not seek healthcare services. It therefore does not provide quantitative estimates of the frequency of violence in Hela.

The interpersonal violence data were collected during weekdays from 8:00am to 4:30pm. It was difficult to capture cases that appeared during weekends and after hours. Recruitment after hours was attempted but some cases were missed or not recorded. It was also not possible to capture every case of violence and trauma that was brought to Tari Hospital. Data on accidents and injuries were also collected from inpatient/outpatient records to identify the number of cases missed by the study team and to ascertain the percentage of trauma injuries presenting to Tari Hospital. However, it was not possible to identify which injuries were accidental or a result of violence as this information is not given in hospital records. To avoid payment of the high hospital fees attached to cases of violence, patients often lied about the cause of their injuries. Some of these patients were not therefore referred for interview; in other cases they consented to be interviewed as the research assistants approaching them were not hospital staff. Despite these difficulties, the data presented certainly represent the large majority of intentional trauma cases at the hospital during the study period, and permit analysis of type and causes of violence which would not have been possible using hospital records alone.
Results from the study

Demographics of victims

On average between two and three cases per day were referred for interview at Tari Hospital including both outpatients and inpatients. In Mendi between 2000 and 2007, on average 30 patients with injuries were admitted to hospital per month, or one per day (Winnington 2008: 2); this figure includes non-intentional injuries but covers inpatients only. The majority of victims at Tari Hospital were from Tari Urban LLG (36 per cent), and on the peripheries of Tari Urban (Tebi LLG 16 per cent and Huli LLG 14 per cent).

Concerning the gender of victims of trauma, Winnington (2008) found that between 2000 and 2007, 40 per cent of inpatient admissions at Mendi Hospital were female and 60 per cent male (i.e. all trauma cases admitted to hospital, intentional or not). The Tari findings, which include both inpatient and outpatient victims of intentional injury, suggest very high levels of violence against women. Women made up more than two-thirds of all violence-related trauma cases presenting to Tari Hospital.

Graph 1: Proportion of people presenting by age and sex for all deliberate injuries
Types of violence experienced

In terms of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, the three most common types of violence that presented to the hospital were as follows:

- Family violence (violence between other family members): 39 per cent (353/908)
- Domestic violence (between spouses or co-wives): 29 per cent (267/908)
- Physical violence (violence between non-relatives): 33 per cent (299/908).

The majority of participants knew their perpetrator; only nine per cent of all subjects did not know their assailant(s). Females knew their assailant in 94 per cent of cases, (mostly as a result of domestic violence and family violence) whereas male victims knew their assailant in 84 per cent of cases. Three-quarters of all cases involved a male perpetrator.

Tribal fighting accounted for 1.2 per cent of the total cases. This is much lower than levels recorded in studies at Mendi. This is because those cases analysed at Mendi were for inpatients only, so serious injuries were more likely to be sampled. Secondly, injuries such as gunshot wounds, spears and arrows were purposefully selected in order to look specifically at injuries related to group fighting. Lastly, the Mendi study was conducted over a longer period, during which time a few large tribal fights took place that could have significantly altered the statistics.

\[^{13}\] In Winnington’s study of hospital records at Mendi, for the 46 violence related admissions for which both intent and cause was recorded, 46 per cent were related to inter-tribal fighting, 19.6 per cent were caused by within-tribe fighting, 17.4 per cent were domestic-related assaults, 8.7 per cent were caused by police or prison authorities, 6.5 per cent were caused by gangsters or raskols and 2.2 per cent (one case) was as a result of violence related to elections (Winnington 2008: 45). Another study at the same hospital in the early 1990s suggested that in most years around 25 per cent of all trauma cases were caused by tribal fights (Mathew 1996).
Graph 2: Type of violence experienced according to sex

Graph 2 illustrates some of the types of violence experienced by men and women treated at Tari Hospital. It should be noted that here ‘type of violence’ includes types categorized by identity of the perpetrator, identity of the victim, and type of assault. These categories are not mutually exclusive; one case may involve multiple types of violence. There was one case of child injury involving the use of a gun, and also cases where guns were used by men to intimidate their wives as a form of discipline and control. For a detailed report on gun violence refer to Appendix 2.

Types of violence by gender

Here we discuss further the Tari Hospital data disaggregated by gender, drawing on results of the PRA exercises in communities to complement or elucidate the data. Participants experienced different forms of violence according to sex and across age groups.

For female victims the majority of deliberate injuries were a result of the following types of violence, categorized by the identity of the perpetrator:

1. Domestic (39 per cent)
2. Family (39 per cent)
3. Physical (23 per cent)

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14 Percentages are calculated within gender groups, so data shows the proportion of male and female victims respectively affected by each type of violence.
In terms of frequency of attacks, females were similarly affected by family violence and domestic violence. Of the cases presenting, ten per cent involved injuries to female children and eight per cent involved rape. No female victims presented with injuries afflicted by tribal violence.

PRA research carried out with communities, however, indicated that women are affected by tribal violence and that there are stark differences in the gendered impact of tribal violence:

“We don’t kill women. We only beat them up. Whether it’s the sister or mother we hit them with the stick to provoke our enemy. So they’ll feel the pain and go. Naked we send them to their people for their brothers and fathers to see. We send them away, forcing them to go themselves to their people. ‘Ok, here comes your daughter or your sister’, that’s what we say. This will provoke them so they’ll come and fight “with us.” Gun violence victim, North Koroba.

Tribal conflict puts women at even greater risk of being raped either by the enemy or other men in neighbouring communities or with the displaced people they live with, because they no longer have their male kin to protect them. Although no cases of rape relating to tribal conflict presented to Tari Hospital during the period of the survey, the community research clearly indicated an increased incidence of violence against women during times of tribal warfare. A religious sister reported that during tribal fighting in Mendi she examined 17 girls and one woman for rape during one month alone (Meier 2003 in Dinnen 2004: 11).

In the case of male victims the types of violence in terms of perpetrator were:
1. Physical (54 per cent)
2. Family (38 per cent)
3. Domestic (9 per cent)\textsuperscript{15}

11 per cent of cases involved victims who were children. All 11 cases of tribal violence involved male victims.

For male victims, violence inflicted by a non-relative was more common than for any of the other types of violence defined here (54 per cent). A male was two and a half times more likely to be a victim of violence perpetrated by a non-family member than a female. The victim did not know the perpetrator in 29 per cent of these cases (45/154). Gun violence, murder and tribal violence were more closely associated with male victims than female victims.

Less than two per cent of cases that presented to the hospital were a result of tribal violence and of these, about one quarter involved the use of guns. Tribal violence, although rather insignificant in terms of hospitalized cases, is a serious cause of

\textsuperscript{15} Excludes ‘Child Injury’ where perpetrator is not identified in Graph 2
insecurity for many in the Hela region and this was reflected in the community research. Figure 2 shows types of violence as described during the PRA exercises in a community experiencing conflict at the time of the study. It can be seen that for young men, tribal violence is by far the most significant security threat both in terms of frequency and impact. It loomed large even in communities that were not experiencing conflict at the time of the study.

Figure 2: An example of the Venn diagram used in the community research presented by young men and adult women from a community in Tari-Pori district. The size of the circle indicates the impact of the type of violence, whilst the distance from the group impacted (young men or adult women in these cases) indicates the frequency.

PRA exercises conducted in communities showed that many young men who sustained injuries from tribal violence (mostly from gun-shot wounds) were unable to reach the hospital or other health services due to high feelings of insecurity of enemy attack either on their way to hospital or for fear of being attacked while in hospital. The lack of security personnel within hospital premises to guarantee victims their safety leaves many doubtful of their security and susceptible to being attacked while undergoing treatment. Because of this, there were a large number of absconded cases\textsuperscript{16} and often victims brought close clansmen or relatives to safeguard them while in hospital.

Many injured during fights did not visit health services at all; others who could afford the expense sought distant services in Mount Hagen, Mendi, Wabag, and

\textsuperscript{16} Referring to patients who left the hospital before they were officially discharged.
health facilities provided by resource projects in Porgera and Nogoli. Even in these places they still feared enemy attack.

**Marital status of victims**

The results shown in Graph 3 suggest that the proportion of married women in the sample treated for injuries at Tari Hospital was more than double that of married men. Married women are by far the largest category of victim.

**Graph 3: Proportion of people presenting by sex and marital status for all deliberate injuries**

![Graph showing marital status and proportion of people presenting for all deliberate injuries.]

**Triggers of violence**

Triggers of violence differed by gender, age and marital status. More than one reason was cited as a trigger for violence in more than half (492/908) of all incidents. The top three triggers for the sample as a whole were: violence (20 per cent)\(^{17}\), money (13 per cent) and theft (11 per cent).

\(^{17}\) This means previous violence acting as a trigger for new incidents.
Table 1: Most commonly cited triggers by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females (%)</th>
<th>Males (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violence (16)</td>
<td>Violence (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money (15)</td>
<td>Alcohol (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infidelity (12)</td>
<td>Stealing (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamy (11)</td>
<td>Money (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing (9)</td>
<td>Land (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control spouse (8)</td>
<td>Destruction of property (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience (8)</td>
<td>Verbal abuse (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family pressure (6)</td>
<td>Infidelity (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of property (6)</td>
<td>Drug abuse (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy (7)</td>
<td>Jealousy (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Triggers more commonly associated with female victims than with male victims:
- Control over spouse (Risk Ratio 3.1; chi squared value=9.3, p<0.002)
- Family pressure (Risk Ratio 2.9; chi squared value=7.0, p<0.008)
- Polygamy (Risk Ratio 2.8; chi squared value=12.0, p<0.001)

Triggers less associated with female victims than male victims:
- Alcohol (Risk Ratio 0.3; chi squared value=51.3, p<0.000)
- Land (Risk Ratio 0.5; chi squared value=7.9, p<0.005)

**Violence or payback**

Previous violence was a common trigger for all forms of violence experienced and refers to payback: violence as an act of retribution. The lack of faith in formal institutions that govern conflict and the inability of local leadership to mediate

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18 Here a risk ratio of 3 means that the trigger is 3 times more likely to be associated with a female victim than with a male victim.

19 Here a risk ratio of 0.3 means that the trigger is 3.3 times more likely to be associated with a male victim than a female victim.
disputes, has seen the rise of social conflict, violence and insecurity, as people use revenge to deal with grievances. “This has resulted in a degree of tolerance for violence in the community and the legitimization of the use of violence as a valid tool for resolving disputes, including within the home” (Amnesty International 2006: 21-22).

Hela custom and the relationships upon which it is built are reciprocal in nature. Support and help are offered when needed upon the understanding that it will be reciprocated. Support can be in terms of providing man-power or supplying guns and other resources such as cash, pigs and food. Reciprocity is also central to retaliation against a perceived wrong. This may not always be achieved by violence but may also be realized in other ways, such as stealing (in particular pigs), rape or harassment of female relatives, and the destruction of property. Parties provoke each other, challenging or daring the other party to retaliate as a way to incite further violence. This may happen by using parables to send provoking messages, refusing to pay compensation, trespassing, and victimizing women to provoke their male folk.

While the strength and value of family and tribal affiliations can be a source of stability, it can also fuel violence. A man cannot watch while a person affiliated to them is being attacked. They have a social obligation to intervene. Alliance and comradeship must be protected in the face of trouble. This was not only with their clansmen but extended to other social groupings they identified with. For example, one young man said “if one of the young guys who hangs around with us is confronted and bashed up by someone while we are together, we are prepared to die with him”. The dispute no longer involves two individuals but is deemed to be an attack on the group. An attack against a group member challenges the strength, power and identity of the social grouping. The factors driving the pursuance of claims through fighting include group reputation and group machismo (Goldman 2007: 75). The speed with which payback is carried out is also a measure of strength and prowess and necessary to avoid perceived public disgrace and humiliation. However, in clubbing together, a safety-net is provided for those who commit the offence or instigate the trouble. Their actions are not chastised but instead are tolerated making such behaviour acceptable in society.

With encouragement from family and by mobilizing support, even minor disputes may evolve into large scale violence. “Any descent unit member, kin or affine, could become a legitimate target for retributive homicides” (Goldman 2007: 72). Hence, payback and support lead to further insecurity. Payback killings are likely when there is a murder or death following violence, unless compensation is paid. It then becomes difficult to identify the initial trigger of the fight when minor disputes lead to further problems taking on different forms of violence.
Money
Money was a common trigger across all the different types of violence that were experienced. It was a trigger for 18 per cent of domestic violence cases and 15 per cent of family violence cases. A lack of economic opportunities for young people and the increasing dependence on a cash economy, have led to young men engaging in criminal activities such as hold-ups and thefts, and to young women accepting money and gifts as bribes from men with money who are often employed and married, causing family problems. In the community research, adult women saw the increase of cash flow in the region to be problematic if people did not know how to manage their money properly. When money was not spent wisely or not distributed fairly between husbands and wives, within the family, or amongst households in a clan, it created conflict. The unequal distribution of wealth was particularly apparent in the distribution of resource benefits, much of which was invested in Port Moresby, the country’s capital or other urban centres. There is little circulation of this wealth in the province itself. “SHP does not suffer from a lack of money but from the inequitable distribution and reinvestment of that money” (Lewis 2007: 162). There were complaints that the money was not enough to distribute to the clan or family. One adult man in Tari said “Brothers fight with each other. Mothers fight each other. Sisters fight each other. Such scary situations that never happened before are caused by the company. The payment is a source of trouble.”

There was an apparent lack of understanding and trust in the processes involved with getting payments to beneficiaries. People felt that they were not receiving the amounts to which they were entitled due to leakage. In areas that were benefiting from payments made by Barrick Gold, when these grievances were not addressed, people took their frustrations out by felling the power pylons. The loss in production costs per day was estimated to be at $US 1.2 million (Lewis 2007: 162). Respondents were aware of the effect that the destruction of even one power pylon had on the entire operations of the company and said they did it as a way to get the attention of the company.

In addition to the increase in cash circulation, employers such as Curtain Bros and Médecins Sans Frontières have established themselves in Tari, creating new job opportunities. Those missing out on jobs or cash benefits were often envious, and this jealousy is exacerbated if wealth is not shared as expected according to social
relationships. Those individuals who are deemed to be better off are expected to share their income with other members of the family (Lehmann et al, 1997: 13-14).

Stealing

Stealing was mentioned as a common trigger of violence by all groups. The root causes of stealing were seen to be related to the effects of tribal violence and the decline of law and order in communities. Stealing was a result of tribal fighting when people became displaced from their land and did not have any land or resources with which to sustain themselves and their families. Lack of access to cash was also an impetus for stealing. All groups identified young men as common offenders, because they were deemed to be ‘hungry, lazy and roam around aimlessly having nothing to do’. During focus group discussions, adults and local groups consulted were concerned and suggested that young men needed to be more active in developing their own food gardens, but they were not motivated and preferred spending time with their friends gambling or attending social gatherings. Limited land availability was also seen as contributing to stealing.

Land

During the community research, all groups mentioned land ownership and disputes over land boundaries as major triggers, particularly for large-scale violence. Land is highly valued because of its significance to livelihoods and also because individuals identify with their clan and heritage through land. In the hospital survey, injuries resulting from land disputes made up ten per cent (35/344) of all cases of family violence. Increasing monetary value placed on land combined with large family sizes has resulted in two major changes perceived by local mediators and elders: firstly, the number of land disputes occurring has increased, and secondly, disputes are now more likely to occur within clans and families rather than between clans as was previously the case. There were fights over land within polygamous families between brothers and step-brothers. In one incident three brothers fought over land. The eldest one cut his two other brothers. One was cut to the bone, and the other brother’s muscle was cut. (Community Health Worker, Komo Magarima). “Population growth has exacerbated pressure on land and put people in close proximity with each other increasing the number of land disputes” (Vail 2007: 108).

In Hela, land use rights are held by men, although these may be inherited through both the maternal and paternal side of the family. Land is acquired through the genealogical history of a person. Such histories are passed orally through the generations. Huli people value their family blood-ties, travel frequently to maintain these relationships and may maintain residence in different places (Lehmann et al., 1997: 12). Because of this, a person may inherit land in these different places. The
community mapping exercise showed that Hela people are very territorial. Deep drains or trenches are built for security, privacy and the clear demarcation of land boundaries. Beyond these boundaries participants increasingly felt a sense of insecurity. This was indicated by crosses that they placed on the map. In the event of trespassing, a pig must be killed and given to the ‘owner’ of the land.

Land disputes arise through disagreements over ownership, or when land boundaries are crossed during house or garden building. Sometimes land is ‘lent’ to another person for temporary use, but the ‘lessee’ sometimes refuses to return the land when required by the rightful owner. Cases were cited of forceful land grabs made when a debt or outstanding compensation payment was not settled.

Land mediation is challenging; one land mediator stated that assailants may use guns to intimidate land owners. In such cases mediators themselves fear for their lives and are unable to arbitrate effectively. According to one Tari Police Officer, these factors have led to a loss of faith in formal court processes when dealing with land issues.

“Now at this present stage, when resources are coming up now they are fighting about who owns the land, and they are going back the eight generations to find out who is from that area. When they found out and say ‘no, you are not from there’ they dispute until they fight about where the resource area lies.”

Land mediator, Tari.

People lacking kin support may be forced off their land by people who have the money, pigs, guns and the manpower to influence the decision-making process during mediation. Single women and widows are particularly vulnerable. The study showed land disputes to be one of the top three triggers of violence against widows.

Jealousy and envy
Disparities between the ‘haves and the have nots’ underpin much of the violence related to money and stealing. In addition, jealousy was cited directly as a trigger in six per cent (59/908) of cases that presented in the hospital survey. People were envious of others and sought to harm them or their property as a result: “They instigate problems with the intent to ruin other people’s lives because they are well off.” (Adult women, South Koroba). One informant mentioned that unless wealth is distributed fairly, anyone who attempts to earn a livelihood or start a business will be seen as a rival and perceived as having an ‘unfair’ advantage. Those who are not responsive to the demands of reciprocity are perceived as being selfish and individualistic and may be ‘punished’. Young men stated that “we plan to steal, rape girls, and destroy people with money, because we are angry at these people.
Those of us that are poor are poor, and those that are rich are rich. They do not think of us, we feel sorry for ourselves because of this.”

As Lewis states “Growing up without traditional clan support mechanisms but surrounded by trappings of modernity can lead to growing dissatisfaction and resentment. Youth alienated from traditional mechanisms for addressing grievances tend to be more likely to resort to spontaneous violence or criminality.” (Lewis 2007: 159).

Drug and alcohol abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse have weakened social cohesion in many communities in and around Tari and were a contributing factor in cases of violence against women and children. Drugs and alcohol use was identified as a trigger in 14 per cent (129/908) of all incidents (9.7 per cent alcohol and 4.5 per cent drug abuse). During the community research all groups mentioned alcohol as a trigger of small-scale violence but adult women claimed that it could have wider impacts if not properly dealt with at the time. Alcohol caused problems in the family when money was spent on buying beer instead of household items, leading to increasing incidents of domestic violence. Alcohol fuelled aggressive and destructive behaviour. Males under the influence of alcohol were a nuisance in public places like markets. They released frustrations and negative feelings they had towards others when they were drunk.

Marijuana consumption is a growing problem throughout the Highlands of PNG and is reported to be associated with violence and psychological disturbances (GOPNG and UNICEF 1999 in Bradley 2001: 10). “It has serious implications for the mental health of our youth, who create their own fantasy world with false empowerment from abuse of alcohol and drugs (mainly marijuana) combined with guns and violence.” (Kidu 2000: 38). Adult men were concerned that the intake of marijuana was destroying the lives of many strong young men who have the potential to be productive members of society. Unoccupied youth with limited education and economic opportunities were regarded as a pressing social concern. Under the influence of drugs they fought with their parents, when they were hungry they stole, were destructive and were a cause of insecurity for women. This was said to be part of a bigger problem of the growing lack of respect shown to older people of authority including village leaders. “Positive behaviour among peers and towards elders is not practised by many of the younger generation.” (Walters 2007: 123).
Feelings of marginalization contributed to a frustrated youth population in some areas, who felt the need to retaliate against a society they no longer felt a part of. “They just don’t care, because they have nothing to lose.” (Mediator, Tari).

**Issues relating to women**

Issues relating to women were seen to be another cause of violence. This could include retributive violence following rape or sexual abuse of a female relative, non-payment of bride price, or failure to return the bride price to the husband’s family following a divorce.

Women were also seen to instigate violence by provoking their brothers or husbands to fight. In one case of domestic violence, a man killed his wife when they argued and fought about the man marrying a second wife. After his mother’s death the son went to live with his mother’s sister. His aunt constantly reminded him of the death of his mother saying “your father was the one that killed her. And you have let your father go scot-free, like a hero. What is wrong with you?” Until one day the boy picked up his gun and went and shot his own father.

**Sorcery**

Nine out of the 14 cases of sorcery-related violence recorded in the hospital study involved female victims\(^{20}\). Of these, two cases involved widows. Further discussions in the community suggested women who have no male kin living close by to support them, often fall victim to sorcery accusations. The interrogation and torture of people accused of sorcery as a means of chastisement was sanctioned by the community.

\(^{20}\) Nationally, it has been reported that women are six times more likely to suffer violence from sorcery accusations than males (Sydney Morning Herald June 19 2003).
Table 2: Types and triggers of violence by marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trigger</th>
<th>Single (%)</th>
<th>Married (%)</th>
<th>Separated (%)</th>
<th>Divorced (%)</th>
<th>Widowed (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>(19)</td>
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<td>(19)</td>
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<td>(23)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
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<td>Alcohol</td>
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<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(23)</td>
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<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infidelity</td>
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<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Polygamy</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>(23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
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Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single (%)</th>
<th>Married (%)</th>
<th>Separated (%)</th>
<th>Divorced (%)</th>
<th>Widowed (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
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<td>(42)</td>
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<td>Family</td>
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<td>(38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child injury</td>
<td>(36)</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Relationships between triggers and types of violence

In this section we look at how triggers of violence vary according to:

- The *type* of violence as categorized by the relationship between perpetrator and victim
- The *form* taken by the violence, including child abuse, sexual attacks on adult women and tribal violence.

**Domestic violence**

Domestic violence was a common form of violence and a common reality in the lives of many married women. More than one third of injuries to females involved a husband attacking his wife. Table 3 shows the principle triggers of domestic violence, both for female and male victims. Polygamy was the most common trigger of violence for female victims, followed closely by infidelity. Disobedience and attempts to control the spouse are also significant triggers of domestic violence. Control over one’s spouse was responsible for 17 per cent of all domestic violence cases against women and related particularly to a woman’s freedom of movement, what time she was home, her decision-making powers, and who she interacted with socially. Women felt powerless to overcome the restrictions placed on them by their husband for fear of violence.21

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21 The triggers identified here are similar to those found in larger, PNG-wide studies on domestic violence. Large studies carried out by the Law Reform Commission in the 1980s (see Bradley 2001) found that common triggers of domestic violence included sexual jealousy/infidelity, a wife’s failure to perform her duties, and alcohol and money problems (the latter two being more prevalent in urban areas). Factors emerging from other studies include gambling by women and drug abuse by men (Bradley 2001: 10). A study commissioned by Caritas...
Table 3: Common triggers for domestic violence according to sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triggers</th>
<th>Female (242/267)</th>
<th>Male (25/267)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamy</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infidelity</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control over spouse</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to have sex</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The triggers recorded highlight the nature of gender relations that underlie societal attitudes, norms and power structures that contribute to violence and insecurities in the lives of many married women. Men framed triggers of violence within the domestic realm as related to female disobedience. There is a clear division of gendered roles and responsibilities, for example, it is the woman’s responsibility to take care of pigs. Men said women were responsible for the lighter tasks, were lazy and therefore deserved to be beaten. Women thought otherwise, saying the bulk of the workload was carried by them: they perceived a lack of support from their husbands in terms of money, sharing of the workload, and time spent with the children. This problem was particularly highlighted in polygamous families when

Australia in 2006 found that wife bashing was a form of discipline or corrective measure when she was disobedient, or did not perform duties as expected of her, when she brought embarrassment to the husband or did not show respect for his relatives, and underlying this was the man maintaining his authority or control over his wife (Eves 2007: 23-25). In an article by the only female parliamentarian, Dame Carol Kidu, causal factors leading to domestic violence included: abuse of customary practices like bride price and polygamy, alcohol and drug abuse, resentment and jealousy (Kidu 2000: 36). Rapid socio-economic change and increased poverty combined with a lack of communication between spouses leads to a lack of trust. These changes, combined with the widespread acceptance of violence as a means of settling marital conflict underlie the more obvious causes of domestic violence (Bradley 2001: 10-11).
the husband only supported one wife and neglected his other wives and children. There was jealousy amongst co-wives when their husband gave more time, resources and support to one wife.

Polygamy is part of Huli culture and was common in all sites that were visited. Of the total number of cases presented to hospital 112/908 (12 per cent) of victims were living in a polygamous family (93 female and 19 male). Police reported a high number of assault cases triggered by polygamy or infidelity. The practice of polygamy was said to affect family relations between parents and their children, among step-children, and with in-laws. 13 per cent (36/267) of domestic violence cases were between co-wives and in almost all of these cases, weapons were used. In one case a man was about to marry a third wife when the second wife killed the first. The deceased was a mother of two young children who were subsequently cared for by their aunt.

In nine per cent of cases, women were beaten because they refused to have sex with their husbands. A study by NRI showed that half of married women were forced into sex by their husbands (NRI 1993 in Bradley 2001: 112). Often when women refused sex, their disobedience was physically and verbally punished, with men using the excuse that women provided poor quality food, or were not working hard enough as a reason for violence. Married women that were consulted said they refused sex because of their fear of contracting HIV and AIDS when aware that their husbands were unfaithful. Men felt that wives were trying to control them and responded violently when their wives raised concerns about HIV. Due to adulterous behaviour and the practice of polygamy two respondents took the bold step of leaving their husbands. Not many women were able to do this. Women also refused sex when they were still breastfeeding and did not want to have another child. Men became suspicious of their wives’ involvement in extra-marital affairs when their wives refused to have sex with them or suggested the use of family planning methods, making it very difficult for wives to negotiate for safer sex or family planning.

Family violence
Males and females were similarly affected by family violence (39 per cent female; 38 per cent male). Half of all cases of violence against female children and single women were experienced within the family realm, inflicted by a relative or family member, most often by male relatives (brother/step brother 37 per cent, father/step father 20 per cent, cousin 20 per cent and an uncle 19 per cent, and a). In Huli culture, much importance is placed on the brother-sister relationship – a woman should be able to rely on her brothers and male relatives to protect and support
her\textsuperscript{22}. Women who have no brothers are more vulnerable and have little support against, for example, an abusive husband.

Women experience a high degree of surveillance by family members. When females did not behave as expected by their family members they were beaten (11 per cent of all female victims of family violence were injured for this reason), whereas males did not feel that pressure as much (three per cent)

\begin{quote}
“If we are disobedient and go to discos or watch movies at the local theatre, or move around of our own free will, or have boy-girl relationships with men and they see us, then they will beat us... our fathers and brothers, even our people if they see me misbehaving and roaming around in Tari, they will beat us... because we are under them. If we misbehave and do all sorts of bad things, others will gossip, saying ‘your sister is doing this; don’t you take care of her’. They will say all sorts of things to our fathers or brothers. From the embarrassment they will cut us. This is Huli culture, so we respect them and stay under them.”

Young woman, Tari.
\end{quote}

Disobedience was a trigger in nine per cent of cases where females experienced violence within the family (Table 4). Men of all age groups in this study agreed that when women were ‘lazy and don’t work’ they were disciplined by their male kin; brothers if they were unmarried and husbands if they were married. Women who are ‘bik hets’; which implies stubborn, uncooperative and disobedient get into mischief and therefore deserve to be subjected to violence. For example, young women were not allowed to openly flirt or be seen to have relationships with men. It was deemed disrespectful to her male kin.

\begin{quote}
“We take our custom into serious consideration when our sister is caught flirting with a man. Our sisters are not allowed to flirt with men in our sight. Consequently, we beat them. We hit them because they don’t show respect for us in our sight. They provoke us when flirting takes place in our presence. We get angry about it. Other men are going to criticize the brothers and immediate male relatives of the woman who flirts. Some men may say ‘a woman is usually under men and why is she being allowed to flirt around’?" Young men, Tari.
\end{quote}

Male kin are responsible for their women folk and women are generally expected to subordinate themselves to the needs of their families and clan. Male kin are responsible for shaping their sisters and ensuring they are ‘good women’ that will bring bride wealth to the family, and in marriage have children and work in the gardens and raise pigs for exchange and other social transactions. While some young female participants said they became rebellious towards this form of control, others interviewed believed that it was only right that they remain under the

\textsuperscript{22}Six percent of assaults on men occurred as retribution against the assailant of a female family member.
authority of their male folk, but that this had changed. “Our life before was good because we lived under the control of our fathers and brothers” (Young woman, Tari).

Table 4: Common triggers of family violence according to sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trigger</th>
<th>Female (246/353)</th>
<th>Male (107/353)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family pressure</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of property</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polygamy also triggered violence in the wider family, going beyond spouses and co-wives: this violence occurred between step-brothers and step-sisters or step-parents and their step children. More males (17 per cent) than females (four per cent) were the victims of alcohol related violence perpetrated by family members.

Physical violence (violence between non-relatives)

Drunken brawls were a major trigger of violence outside the family affecting males. The community research revealed that physical violence was mainly related to alcohol, gambling and stealing and was often seen to be a minor problem. The category of trigger labelled here as ‘violence’ is also common: this implies that the violence is triggered by previous aggression by one or both of the parties involved.
Table 5: Common triggers of physical violence according to sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triggers</th>
<th>Female (145/299)</th>
<th>Male (154/299)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infidelity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gossip</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of property</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Child injury**
Ten per cent of all victims interviewed at Tari Hospital were under 18 years of age (95/908): 32 per cent male and 68 per cent female, including one male and one female infant. Female and male children were similarly affected by violence (female ten per cent and male 11 per cent) when compared to other age groups in their gender group.
### Table 6: Common triggers of child abuse according to sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trigger</th>
<th>Female (65/95)</th>
<th>Male (30/95)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family pressure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infidelity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in Table 6 indicate that money was a common trigger of violence against female children: money was used as a way to persuade them to have sex with men. Many male children experienced violence because they had stolen (20 per cent). Orphans or children neglected by their parents and close relatives have less family support and experienced shortages of food, leading them to steal. They were beaten as a result. Adult women raised the concern that there was negligence on the part of parents when they had too many children and were not able to offer the support and discipline children needed.

### Sexual abuse and rape

The survey showed that rates of rape and/or sexual abuse of children were quite high, often by people known to them and, in 35 per cent of cases, by those related to them. 74 per cent (14/19) of cases of sexual abuse and 70 per cent (33/47) of rape cases involved children (aged 1-17 years). The survey showed that these were usually children who either had only one parent or had no responsible adult supervising them at the time of the incident. Sadly this was also the case in Port Moresby General Hospital where nearly half of all sexual assault victims that sought medical treatment were girls under 16 years of age, and a quarter were less than twelve years old. The majority of perpetrators were their own family members (Port Moresby General Hospital 1985 in Bradely 2001: 112). Police reports in Tari confirmed that sexual abuse of minors between 7-14 years of age was a growing concern in the region. Many of these cases are not dealt with by the police due to a shortage of resources and manpower (Police Officer, Tari Police Station).
Research carried out in communities revealed that rapes occurred during tribal fights as a way to provoke the enemy. They could also occur opportunistically during hold-ups and other criminal activities. As mentioned, no such cases were reported to Tari Hospital. 11 per cent of perpetrators of rape or attempted rape cases were under the influence of drugs (5/47). Adult women observed that people wasted time and resources on gambling and alcohol and thus were unable to pay for the bride price, thus instead of marrying, they often forced women into sex. Young men reported the only way to have sex was by raping a woman because ‘all women these days want to be paid’ (Jenkins 1995 in Lepani 2008: 155).

Young men who were interviewed said ‘bride price today is very expensive. Unemployed young men cannot afford it. Parents will not give their daughters to a man who cannot give some form of payment. Those that have money “are paying at a higher price making it difficult for us to compete” (Young man, Tari). As a result they involve themselves in high risk sexual behaviour.

Community exercises showed that women’s freedom of movement was restricted because of the fear of rape and/or sexual assault. This was particularly the case when women were unaccompanied. When women went to the garden, the water source or to school they had to be accompanied by their male relatives because of the fear of being raped or harassed. This kind of risk was highlighted by the United National Secretary General in his report ‘Keeping the Promise’, who said that girls were at high risk of sexual abuse when unaccompanied (United Nations Secretary General 2010: 12). The fear of being raped is accompanied with the fear of contracting HIV and AIDS.

“They may harass us or rape us on the road when we are on our way to school. Sometimes they can even be men from this community that we know of. They say teasing comments that make us scared… When this happens we turn back home and don’t go to school or tell our parents to escort us to school. They come with us and leave us at school.” Young woman, South Koroba.

In some cases, however, the legal definition of rape differed from cultural definitions. In Hela society in the case of young women, rape was classified as any sex out of marriage, whether consensual or not. Because no bride price has been paid and kin have been excluded from the decision-making process, the act is disrespectful and contrary to customary and community laws. Rape or consensual sex with a boyfriend was seen to compromise a woman’s sexuality, and was understood as the ‘theft’ of a woman’s sexuality from her clan or family group. The important question is then whether compensation is paid to her family for the ‘theft’, whether a marriage ensues and bride price is paid, or whether warfare is threatened by the girl’s relatives.
Tribal violence

Triggers associated with tribal violence in Huli society related strongly to their value system. In all the community consultations, land, women and pigs were identified to be the main triggers of violence. These factors are closely tied to identity, status and wealth in a clan or community. However, it was also mentioned that tribal fights could erupt at any time from other minor grievances. Even the slightest dispute not promptly and effectively settled has the potential to incite further violence and payback eventually triggering a tribal conflict involving growing numbers of supporters from each side. If this leads to a death, the violence escalates, fuelling the demand for arms. Participants from the three tribal fighting sites studied said that fear and anxiety were a daily reality affecting every aspect of their lives. Even during the PRA exercises and discussions men were armed and kept watch while others took part in the research. Those that took part were unable to give their complete attention to the exercises as they were wary of their surroundings.

Even when the underlying trigger of the conflict has been settled through mediation and compensation, the build-up and chain of triggers may not have been adequately addressed which may still leave disgruntled parties to ‘wait for another day’ to settle their grievances. A detailed report on tribal violence, its links to armed violence, triggers and its impacts can be found in Appendix 1.

Use of weapons

Weapons were often used in violent encounters and also served to threaten and intimidate. A retired mediator shared his experiences under colonial rule stating that during that period interpersonal violence was mostly with fists and sticks, while the use of weapons such as bushknives was uncommon. Now he observes that bushknives and guns are widely used in violent confrontations. In the hospital survey, four out of five injuries involved the use of a weapon. In these cases, weapons of choice were: bushknives, otherwise known as machetes (41 per cent); sticks (35 per cent); and stones (11 per cent). A gun was used in six per cent of cases (by male perpetrators in all cases). The most common weapon used by female perpetrators was a stick (46 per cent of female perpetrators used one), while male perpetrators preferred to use a bushknife (46 per cent or (240/526)).
95 per cent of the 20 cases where the victim died (where 14 victims were male and 6 were female) involved the use of a weapon. In cases of individually perpetrated acts of violence, females used a weapon more than male perpetrators (92 per cent females and 86 per cent males). Male perpetrators use bladed and blunt weapons with similar frequency. Female perpetrators used a blunt weapon more than bladed weapons (Table 8).

**Table 8: Type of weapon used by sex (note: totals add up to more than 100 per cent as more than one weapon may be used in any one case)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bladed</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Males were attacked with a weapon more than females, 84 per cent female and 94 per cent male (Chi squared value=15.2; p<0.000). For example, when a husband and wife fought, the wife was quick to resort to a weapon. The husband used his fists and then if the wife was too strong, he would resort to beating her with a weapon, usually a stick or bushknife. Other weapons used in cases of domestic violence

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23 Some cases involved groups of perpetrators, these are not included here.

24 Bladed weapons include machetes, knives and axes. Blunt weapons include sticks, stones, footwear, umbrellas and other objects. Percentages are calculated within gender groups, so data shows the proportion of male and female perpetrators respectively using each type of weapon.
were iron pipes, axe handles and axes. Compared with female victims, male victims were 50 per cent more likely to be attacked with a bushknife. In over three-quarters of all incidents in which a gun was used, the victim was male (15/19).

Guns were used in 19 (two per cent) of the cases recorded at Tari Hospital and were associated with group fights more than with individual attacks. The hospital study showed that guns were used in a variety of ways: murder or attempted murder; intimidation; in family disputes; for physical violence; and in cases of tribal violence. The community study particularly showed that gun violence is synonymous with tribal warfare and murder. Guns were also used as a means of intimidation, with participants describing this type of gun use in both domestic and family disputes.

**Conflict mediation and resolution**

There were several factors that determined whether mediation was carried out and what avenue of mediation was used, including the seriousness of the injuries sustained; whether a medical report could be obtained; the availability of the offender and victim; whether the situation was still tense or not; and the extent of support the victim received from their relatives in pursuing the matter. Usually the victim consulted his or her people when deciding whether to pursue a case or not. Women particularly relied on the support of their kin to help them through the mediation process.

66 per cent of cases did not have their cases mediated prior to coming to the hospital either because they sought treatment first, or because decisions on whether mediation was to be carried out were pending. It was, therefore, not possible to determine the proportion of total cases eventually mediated.

In cases of domestic violence, women were threatened by their husbands and feared taking them through the mediation process. However, when the violence experienced reached unacceptable levels, the wife’s family intervened. In Huli culture as long as a woman’s bone was not broken, violence against a woman by her husband was not of concern to her family. A woman’s flesh belongs to her husband while her bones will always belong to her people. When a bone is broken or fractured her family have the right to intervene and press for compensation. Women who presented to hospital with injuries from domestic violence stated that mediation would be carried out in the event that the x-ray revealed broken bones. “I came to get an x-ray first; if my bone is fractured then I will pursue the matter with the police or village leaders” (Female victim of domestic violence, Tari).
Mediation\textsuperscript{25} had been carried out for 34 per cent of cases (305/902) at the time of the study. This figure refers to steps taken prior to the victim presenting to hospital and includes also simply reporting cases to the police. During mediation both parties told their story, after which the source of the problem was identified and compensation negotiated. Men are in charge of mediation at every level. Cultural barriers impede women from actively participating in mediation processes and peace building efforts. Their role is confined to making contributions towards compensation payments and praying for peace. In July 2000, amendments to the Village Court Act made mandatory the presence of at least one female magistrate, but this is yet to be properly implemented.

The types of mediation sought by participants were: police, village courts, informal village mediation, restorative justice by mediators trained by Peace Foundation Melanesia (PFM) and the Young Ambassadors for Peace (YAP), and mediation carried out among the conflicting parties themselves. YAP and PFM have assisted in the development of structures less formal than those of village courts to deal quickly with small disputes, whilst Peace and Good Order Committees (PGOC) have been set up by the Provincial Government at the district level to mediate larger conflicts. Lastly, land mediators (located at the district level), deal with land disputes.

The PGOC comprises 5-15 members, with three to four members from each council ward. In cases of significant conflict, members from each council ward are called together to mediate and make decisions on compensation payments, taking into consideration the number of people that have died, how the fight started, and concerns raised by both parties. Decisions are then given as court orders to the respective parties for compensation to be made. A period is given to settle the payment. If a party fails to make the payment, the court order is further enforced by the district court and a warrant of arrest is issued to the police to take appropriate action. This does not always happen in reality.

Land cases are difficult to mediate as people rely largely on knowledge of genealogical histories to trace claims. Given the high value placed on land, disputes may turn violent rapidly and so require swift mediation. There is much potential for bribery as both parties raise their payments for the hired mediators.

\textit{“One party paid K500 to hire a mediator. The other party paid over K1000 and asked them to talk in their favor in relation to the land dispute. Now everyone complains that they paid a mediator and his men K1000 to talk for them. Ahh! Ahh! I said they might kill me when people are saying that they pay us money to talk for them so I left the job.” Former land mediator, SHP.}

\textsuperscript{25} Here we are using the word ‘mediation’ to refer to all actions taken by victims or their families following the incident, even though actions such as reporting to the police or taking the case to court cannot strictly be defined as ‘mediation’; rather the various actions taken are all efforts to seek justice or resolve the case in some manner.
Graph 5 below presents a breakdown of mediation types used by those who had sought mediation at the time of the study (in four cases more than one type of mediation was taken).

The most frequent type of mediation used was village mediation (36 per cent) followed by cases being brought to the police to be resolved (32 per cent). Twelve per cent of respondents tried to resolve the problem among themselves (within the family).

**Graph 5: Types of mediation used by victims (n=305)**

![Graph showing mediation types](image)

**Village mediation**

Village mediation was the most frequent form of mediation used to resolve conflict both in the hospital survey and the community study. It consists of a public gathering held in the community and led by village leaders, at times including village court officials and/or ward councillors. This form of mediation was effective when there was a high degree of trust and social cohesion (see paragraph on leadership and social cohesion below). A consensus was sought, requiring negotiation back and forth and identification of the root cause of the problem. When the problem could not be resolved through village mediation it was then referred to the formal justice system. At times village court officers were consulted which made the decision more legitimate. If both parties could not reach a consensus because one party was not satisfied with the outcome of the mediation, then this often provoked violence.

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26 ‘Police’ refers to cases reported to the constabulary; it does not imply that police were involved in mediation per se.
Village mediation, apart from exposing the problem and bringing the problem to the attention of the rest of the community, also publicly humiliated the perpetrator(s) forcing them to take some responsibility for their actions through the payment of compensation. However, this burden was usually carried by the family and the clan. The payment of compensation, therefore, did not directly reprimand the offender and often the victim benefited very little from this payment. Its relevance, however, was seen in its capacity to settle the dispute and prevent further conflict from occurring.

**Leadership and social cohesion**

Village mediation to a large extent depended on the strength and credibility of local leadership structures. Strong leadership was equated with effective and fair mediation, community mobilization skills, and unbiased decision-making, resulting in decisions which were adhered to. In the 1980s traditional leadership gave way to younger ‘educated elites’ who seemed knowledgeable about modern institutions of governance and were better able to interact with resource companies (Lewis 2007: 152). Today, emerging leaders prove their warring prowess and authority through the use of a gun. The introduction of guns has become a part of ‘big man’ culture linked to socio-economic obligation, status and prestige (Alpers 2005: 34). Individuals and clans gain power and status through the ownership of guns.

The presence of such leaders, and their attendant gun caches, offer community members some protection from attack and instil a sense of security. “People with guns are like an umbrella and everyone comes underneath. The small trees underneath don’t know what the big tree is facing. The big tree has the power to protect the community, its pigs, business and property” (Adult man, Tari). However, this was not always the case. In some instances new forms of leadership were based on fear, intimidation, criminality and instability. The emergence of a new trend of leadership together with the possession of guns has weakened traditional practices and norms of conflict resolution. Community members also observed that leaders were accepting bribes and therefore could no longer be trusted.

> “Leader, they are biased. Those that have money and pigs they support them. And those of us that don’t have money, and we don’t have any background they are not fair with us, that is why we are not happy and satisfied with their decision. So they take sides, the leaders in the village. They don’t solve it fairly so that they put an end or dissolve the problem….That is why we have ill-feelings towards leader men, because you are a leader man, you must take into consideration both sides and solve the problem. If you want to take sides because you are taking bribes, that’s when we young men get angry, and make more trouble.” *Young man, Tari.*

A common complaint during the community research was the lack of respect shown to village leaders and customary authorities, particularly by male youth.
Violence-prone young men are placing less trust in both state and traditional structures of authority (Lewis 2007: 158). When there was mistrust in leadership and processes of mediation and when all sources of mediation were exhausted without a favourable outcome, there was payback and more violence. Village mediators feared retribution when one party was not satisfied with the outcome of the mediation.

**Compensation**

The research shows that local mediation activities largely involved settling the dispute through dialogue, mediation, and always through the payment of compensation. The payment of compensation has become an inevitable part of the mediation process. Even the most minor dispute results in some amount of compensation being demanded. Declining effectiveness of the police, courts and other law enforcement agencies of the central government, jealousy, and exaggerated expectations have contributed to this increase in compensation claims. As one participant confirmed “now that there is no law and order, even if two young boys are playing and one cuts his leg and blood flows, compensation is demanded.” Compensatory exchanges validate ‘custom’ and govern relationships (Goldman 2007: 74). Village leaders take the lead to make the compensation decision. A general consensus was reached by those who hear the case and the parties involved. The amount to be paid depends on the nature of the problem and injury or destruction caused.

However, the payment of compensation did not always solve the problem. Any unresolved issues relating to the conflict had the potential to rekindle the conflict in future. Compensation, therefore, did not necessarily provide closure on specific issues that were the basis of the compensation payment. Goldman describes such disputes as ‘multiple claim affairs’ (Goldman 2007: 73).

Failure to pay compensation occurred for a number of reasons, such as limited resources, an insufficient offer, or an unrealistic claim.

> “Those of us that don’t have a lot they charge us large amounts of money and pigs to compensate. They give us like 2-3 days to come up with these things but within that time if it is not brought, it can result in violence again. It gets to the point where they will cut you for not having these things ready. Unreasonable compensation decisions made by leaders cause more problems.” **Young man,** Tari.

The pressure put on others to provide support for compensation was immense and many demands were well beyond people’s means. Local economic structures support the payment of compensation to resolve all types of disputes, although participants recognised compensation did little to prevent the offender from causing further trouble. Both male and female adults complained of the chronic depletion of their resources due to paying compensation for their male children’s
misdemeanours. Adult women complained that “if we were not paying pigs and money for trouble, our lives could have been better off”.

When a demand for compensation was not met outside the formal system the victim resorted to more formal means of mediation as a way to make the compensation claim more legitimate. When this also failed, payback was unavoidable. Typically, violent remedy options were employed when ‘talk procedures’ failed or compensation payments were delayed or deemed inadequate (McLeod 2002: 11). Delayed compensation payments can also lead to the ‘creditor’ taking over the land of the debtor, a move that was confrontational and a serious determinant of violence.

In the case of tribal violence, compensation is paid between tribes for the first person that died, triggering the tribal fight. Compensation for subsequent deaths resulting from the fight are not made between warring parties but are instead made within each side by the ‘owner’ of the fight to the relatives of the deceased who had fought in ‘their’ fight. This means that, although insecurity is reduced once compensation for the first man that died is paid to the opposing side, even when this payment is made, the absence of compensation for subsequent deaths within tribes; means that losses are not equalised, and tensions will continue to exist (see also Appendix 1).

**Royal PNG Constabulary**

Of the 305 cases where some kind of mediation or reporting had been undertaken at the time of the survey, over 30 per cent were reported to the police (corresponding to about 13 per cent of the total sample). However, the current police service in Hela is overstretched and under-resourced. Low self-esteem within the force itself and low public confidence have all contributed to the deteriorating security situation in Hela. At Tari police station there were only ten male police officers to cover Criminal Investigation Division (CID), traffic and prosecution. The presence of a Police Station Commander in the area to manage the station was intermittent during the study period. The cases that were most often presented to the police included murder, sexual abuse, arson and assault. The CID unit had just one officer to cover the 10-15 cases reported per day. Police felt overpowered, outgunned and outnumbered. In the absence of a strong policing service people have resorted to arms to safeguard their lives and property. Mobile squads brought in for short-term deployment are not providing sustainable solutions. When they leave, the situation reverts to lawlessness. This was the case during the 2003 State of Emergency (SOE)

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27 The ‘owner’ of the fight or papa bilong pait is the person that initially triggers the fight - usually the person who makes the first killing that leads to the tribal fight. On the opposing side, the ‘owner’ of the fight is the person that takes up arms in retaliation, announcing there will be payback and calling for the tribal fight to ensue.

28 Since the time of the study numbers of police in Tari have increased significantly to support security for the LNG project.
in which army troops were deployed to SHP. During community discussions participants said they felt safe during the SOE but when it ended, feelings of insecurity returned. Such interventions although they offer a short- to medium-term solution to contain conflict are only a ‘band-aid’ solution.

Lack of capacity to care for offenders serving their time combined with the superficial ‘strength’ of reactive policing have contributed to popular distrust and fear of the police. Women were afraid of going to the police for help for fear of being raped. A 2004 Government commission review of the RPNGC found that the lack of discipline in the system has led to a lack of trust, leading to a preference for matters to be resolved outside the formal justice system (Amnesty International 2006: 31). Many respondents in both that study and this one questioned the authorities’ credibility, trustworthiness, and legitimacy because police in their activities had little regard for human rights, the rule of law, or due legal process. Counteractive measures and the use of force have become normal police practice and a way of displaying power and control in their dealings with the public. Thus, when there was police presence people were observant of the law, but without it respondents claimed that people were quick to take advantage of the weak law and order situation.

There were also inherent problems of administration and a lack of capacity and accountability. A large number of cases were left unattended. A source from 2007 cited the existence of 162 outstanding murder cases in Hela alone (Moya 2007: 177). Both victims and the community at large were reluctant to assist police in their investigations, many fearing retribution. One police officer confirmed that this applies in particular to cases of tribal violence.

There was little confidence that police would guarantee the safety of offenders while in police custody and many remained in the police jails for days. The police did not have the capacity to transport criminals from Tari to Bui-lebi prison in Mendi. The impact of this was felt throughout the region. A mother fearing for the life of her son, said she was willing to pay compensation for her son’s wrongs to avoid him going to jail, “I have pigs and money, forget it if he goes to jail, the police will beat him up and he may die or lose weight, or his skin may turn yellow.”

**Village Courts**

Village courts have been seriously neglected, having had no adequate supervision and a reduction of resources since the passing of the OLPLLG in 1995. A Village Court Project in 1999 involving the Attorney General’s Department Institutional Strengthening Project and the Village Court Secretariat, followed by an AusAID assessment in 2002 saw a large number of training programmes carried out across the country by 2004. However, the issue of administrative support and allowances still need to be addressed (PNG Justice Advisory Group 2004: 1-3). In Tari the non-
payment of village court officials has led to illegitimate practices and illegal payments for services, fuelling conflict. People felt they could not trust formal structures to make fair and equitable decisions.

“The magistrates were not paid properly and they refused to hear cases and do their work effectively. As a result, people did things of their own accord. Any ordinary person could talk for another person and trouble escalated at the same time.” Young woman, Tari.

When this happened village court officers felt powerless, particularly when guns were owned by conflicting parties. They felt that the police were in a better position to uphold the law, and make arrests but the police had their own problems and were strained in their capacity to meet the security needs of the population at large. Anecdotal evidence suggests that village courts often go beyond their jurisdiction to mediate serious criminal offences that should be left to higher courts (Amnesty International 2006: 54). This was also the case in Tari, where village courts dealt with serious criminal offences such as murder, rape and cases of gun violence that should be dealt with by the higher courts. Most of these disputes were disposed of through the payment of compensation, so perpetrators often escaped prosecution. Many feared that prosecution accompanied by long terms of imprisonment imposed by the higher courts would result in further violence. In light of this Huli custom has directly influenced and changed the justice system (see also Goldman 2007).

17 per cent of those cases presenting to Tari Hospital that were mediated were brought before the village courts (51/305). When cases could not be properly mediated at the village courts or by land mediators they were brought to the attention of the District Court in Tari. District courts mainly deal with land issues, unsettled debts, and child maintenance cases, especially in polygamous relationships or following divorce. At this level, perpetrators of assault were often released or referred back to village courts. The district court also issues court orders instructing a specific amount to be paid to the complainant within a given period, usually two or three weeks. If this is not adhered to, then a warrant of arrest may be given to the police. District and village courts deal with cases involving compensation claims of K8000 and below, taking into consideration the demand made by the complainant and the validity of the case. Above this figure, cases are usually referred to higher courts. It seems that compensation payment has become part and parcel of the formal court system.
Formal vs. informal dispute resolution mechanisms

Of the 305 cases that were reported or mediated, in the majority of cases (52 per cent) victims opted for mediation outside the formal justice system. One reason stated for this was that criminal justice processes were expensive and time-consuming. Interviews with justice sector representatives revealed a lack of capacity, direction and investment into the sector. Strategies and recommendations developed in collaboration by sectional heads were rarely implemented. A lack of operational resources (no electricity, photocopy machines, telephones, fax machines, computers or a proper filing system) has resulted in the introduction of user fees. In addition to these fees, a medical report is also necessary as evidence for police and village court hearings. Without this report victims could not pursue their case in court or report the matter for investigation by the police.

“Rape victims, we send them back to the hospital to get a medical report. So as with wilful murder and all other offences, we send them back to the hospital. Without a medical report we won’t do anything. The judge too will not accept the witness statements and story without evidence. He’s going to throw out the case. Even if a man is killed in town and we get the story without the medical report attached, the judge will throw out the case. That’s why we must have a medical report all the time.” Police officer, Tari.

At the time of the study medical reports could be obtained from Tari Hospital at a fee of K$150.00, which made it difficult for some victims to access law and justice services. The cost of medical reports is high in order to generate much needed funds for the maintenance costs of the hospital. The hospital has justified the high cost on the grounds that money would be recuperated by the victim after the conflict was mediated and compensation paid. However, this did not always happen and for many victims, seeking justice through formal means was just too difficult and expensive leaving them little choice but to resort to less formal avenues for mediation.
Graph 6: Types of mediation used by sex (n=305)$^{29}$

Graph 6 shows the frequency of mediation types by sex. 36 per cent of females and 29 per cent of males had their cases mediated (before hospitalisation). Males were slightly more reliant on public or more formal courses of mediation such as police, village courts and village mediation, (96 per cent, compared to 79 per cent of females that used these services). 15 per cent of females tried to resolve the issue amongst involved parties, compared to four per cent of males.

Comparisons with the past indicate a general decline in law and order since independence in 1975 and a more serious breakdown after 2000 following politically motivated and widespread violence in the lead up to the 2002 National Elections. There was a general acceptance of and frustration about the chronic inadequacies of both the local and formal systems to respond effectively to conflict. For most participants there was a perception that neither informal nor formal structures could be relied upon, as an adult man claims:

"We have ruled out village leaders’ intervention because it is ineffective. Informal structures are breaking down and leaders are losing control. We report the matter to the police when we are attacked but they don’t do anything. The police don’t take any action. If this is how the police are going to operate, we told ourselves that this is not good enough. It has been going on like this for a long time so it’s not worth going to the police at all." **Adult Man, Tari.**

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$^{29}$ Percentages are calculated within gender groups, so data shows the proportion of male and female victims respectively using each type of mediation.
Similarly, young men interviewed claimed that their disobedience was fuelled by the ineffective and unresponsive informal and formal authority structures, increasing lawlessness and limited opportunities to participate in society: “When we have problems we take drugs, we rape girls, and we attack people for nothing. It is because there isn’t anything for us and we don’t have the law.” There was nothing holding them back from committing these crimes. This study showed that even formal agreements and legal documents such as statutory declarations, peace agreements, preventive orders and court orders were not always substantial or enforced, severely reducing their legitimacy as a legal directive.

**Mediation by type of violence**

**Graph 7: Proportion of violence cases mediated for all deliberate injuries**

Rape and sexual abuse were mediated more often than other forms of violence. This was because rape and sexual abuse are considered to be a serious violation in Huli culture. The rape of a woman is a violation to her entire family and blood line, and is worth fighting for, if not settled through mediation and compensation. Rape or similar abuse of a sexual nature was therefore not easily ignored. 55 per cent of rape cases and 58 per cent of sexual abuse cases were mediated. Although rape is a criminal offence, of the rape cases that were mediated or reported, only 46 per cent of cases were taken to the police; 39 per cent of cases were taken to village mediation to be settled outside the formal justice system and 15 per cent to the village court.

31 per cent of domestic violence cases had been mediated at the time of the study, the majority of which took place outside the formal system (60 per cent); 38 per cent
were taken to village mediation; in 14 per cent of cases mediation was carried out within the family; and eight per cent with PFM/YAP. Similarly, in a study looking into the different forms of domestic violence experienced by PNG women and their HIV status, most women who experienced domestic violence did not seek formal services but relied on the support of their family and social support networks to address their grievances (Lewis et al, 2008: 195). This study found that the first point of contact for women experiencing domestic violence was usually their fathers and brothers, followed by village leaders. Female participants and victims of domestic violence said because of the payment of bride price, domestic violence cases were seen as a private matter and therefore did not require public mediation.

Graph 8: Proportion of violence cases according to mediation structure

Graph 8 presents data on mediation by type of violence. The majority of mediations that took place among conflicting parties themselves involved family violence (64 per cent) and domestic violence (31 per cent). 53 per cent of cases taken to police were due to physical violence, followed by family violence (27 per cent) and domestic violence (22 per cent). Three of the 14 cases of tribal violence were mediated; two by village leaders and the other by police.

Less formal systems, such as ‘restorative justice’, community-based justice, community policing, peace mediation and conflict prevention/resolution, supplement PNG’s village court system. They were developed upon the realization that formal law and justice services were not effectively reaching rural communities. These less formal mechanisms play a valuable role in preventing conflict. They work to mend social relationships through mediation and conflict resolution. Organizations such as PFM and YAP train mediators from the non-formal sector in conflict resolution and leadership skills so that they are better able
to address their own problems at the community level before it escalates into violence.

“One small thing is a big problem already. If we don’t attend to it at the first stage, now that’s danger. They are not thinking. Life is more precious. Life is important. The destruction that will occur is a big thing. This is the attitude for us in the highlands. Even for a chicken, they will want to kill a person. Even there is a pig and the pig goes and puts his nose in someone else’s garden, he wants to kill another person. And the pig is happy and alive and we are just going to die for nothing. What is this?” Mediator, Tari.

Staff from PFM and YAP stated that there needed to be a change in people’s mindset and attitudes. People are not able to think rationally through the consequences of their actions. Development cannot take place without a mindset change, so they have also tried to incorporate some aspects of this into their training. They target key people in the community who are passionate and want to make a difference in their respective communities and also encourage women to participate in peace building efforts. Interviewees mentioned dealing with minor cases on a day to day basis. This form of mediation has also been carried out for tribal violence with relative success.30

Non-governmental groups believe the real issues and social inequity that trigger violence and disharmony are not being addressed. Interventions are mainly being directed at a response to conflict and not actual prevention of conflict. For these issues to be addressed, local groups and community-based organisations should be utilized as they are already on the ground. They believe that unless groundwork is carried out with communities to help prepare people, then development initiatives will fail.

There are many other examples of groups working in their own areas to address prevailing issues faced by their communities, and in doing so directly or indirectly reduce violence and conflict, restoring normalcy to the lives of people. Some examples of these initiatives that the study team spoke with include: Tari District Women’s Association, Hela Women’s Rights Movement, Wabia Care Centre, youth groups, church groups and Community Based Health Care (part of which has re-established itself as a new organisation, Hela Community Care). As they are based in the community, they are in a better position to respond to the needs of community members and thus, should be utilized in interventions. Preliminary findings fed back to study sites through a peace exercise and subsequent discussions have led to the development of community initiatives targeting the key issues that contribute to violence and conflict.

30 For example, large-scale conflict mediated in the Lai Valley in the Enga Province by YAP where the two opposing parties were brought together and peace brokered. In 2008 a similar initiative was undertaken by YAP in which over 20 warring clans were brought together for mediation and peace agreements signed.
Conclusion

Lack of security was broadly understood by study participants and was closely associated with the following:

- An ineffective law and justice sector;
- Ineffective and corrupt formal and informal leadership structures;
- Frustrations associated with poor service provision and inequitable distribution of wealth and resources;
- Lack of social and economic opportunities;
- Increased population and pressure on land;
- An increasingly marginalized youth population.

Insecurity is also associated with internal displacement due to tribal fighting. The fuelling effect of retributive violence and mobilized support is condoned by a tradition of generation stories that provoke payback and conflicts which may span several generations. Hela society, like others in PNG, is fiercely egalitarian. To those who consider themselves wronged, and their kin or supporters, revenge killings are a legitimate form of redress. Payback violence aims to maintain the balance of deaths and is essential to the equivalence ethic which is so central to Huli culture.

While everyone is affected by conflicts, women in particular suffer from fear and insecurity which pervades all aspects of their lives. This insecurity arises both from group warfare and from violence in the home. Women made up two thirds of violent trauma victims and in almost 80 per cent of these cases the injuries were caused by a husband or other family member, reflecting the traditional role of women and their comparatively low status in Huli society. The high prevalence of violence against women can also be seen in the context of traditional beliefs, which ascribe to them the power to pollute or poison men. Women may also be mistrusted due to their split allegiance between their own kin groups and those of their husbands.

Patterns of tribal conflict have changed since the introduction of guns. An increasing presence of guns in participating communities both alleviated feelings of insecurity in a context of limited protection from the state, but also contributed to such feelings as it undermined traditional leadership qualities and structures. The presence of guns increases the demand for more weapons and affects law and order, and mediation processes as leaders, police and the courts feel disempowered by the growing presence of guns in the community.
Although it is difficult to judge from this study what proportion of disputes are subjected to any type of mediation process, there is a clear need to strengthen both formal and informal dispute resolution mechanisms so that early intervention can prevent disputes from turning violent. Such mechanisms need to balance the cultural context in which they operate and the needs of the individuals and victims, particularly the women and young men and young women that fall victim to solutions that uphold communal rights over those of the individual in the interests of community harmony.

Violence is a daily reality for many men and women in Hela. People vent their frustrations through violence, as both state and traditional law and justice systems have deteriorated. Both perceived threats and actual episodes of violence severely restrict people’s freedom of movement, affecting access to even the few basic services which do exist. Conflict and violence not only undermine social cohesion at the local level, they also exacerbate poverty, which is itself an underlying cause of conflict. The study results have demonstrated that there are strong links between security, essential services, health and livelihoods, leadership and governance and a strong civil society in promoting peaceful development. Policy and programme interventions must therefore take a multidimensional approach to peace building that recognises these links and is based on local realities in order to create the conditions for peace building and development.

Government is seen to be distant and irrelevant, leading to growing expectations that resource companies and other sources of external support should meet people’s development needs. Thus, the issues discussed in this report must be seen against the backdrop of the large LNG project currently under construction, anticipation of the creation of Hela Province, and the upcoming 2012 national elections. As the stakes increase, these elections threaten to be even more violent than those of previous years. These three factors will stimulate a demand for arms and the increased cash currently flowing into the region will be sufficient to finance these demands.

This report has found that jealousy, money, land issues and frustrations over poor service delivery are amongst the key drivers of conflict. In various ways these fuel all types of violence, from domestic violence to family violence, to tribal conflict. Large volumes of cash are now streaming into the region, both through resettlement programmes and through contracts to service providers. More funds will flow to landowners as royalties once gas starts flowing. Far larger volumes will be provided to government at various levels, with the expectation that this will be used for service delivery. If this fails to materialise, then the potential for violence aimed directly at those associated with resource extraction will be severe.

Royalties calculated at two per cent of the well head value are to be shared between landowners, LLGs and Provincial Governments affected by the project. In addition, equity benefits will also be available to the stakeholders involved (PNG LNG Umbrella Benefit Sharing Agreement 2009).
In addition, the time lags between commencement of large scale construction and actual delivery of benefits to landowners (due to begin only when gas is flowing), are poorly understood by local people, leading to intense frustration (PNG Church Partnership Programme, unpublished report).

Whether individuals will be able to manage the large amounts of funds coming into the region responsively is a question requiring more research, but there is evidence of increased problems already. For example, in June 2010 two men were killed in Komo after a drunken brawl they had after buying alcohol with funds they had received from the company (Pers. Comm., Hela Community Care representative); it has also become increasingly difficult for company staff to work in the field. Increased in-migration and mobility of men in particular, is likely to lead to higher rates of HIV and AIDS, increased domestic problems, drug and alcohol consumption and land disputes. The implications of this for security and development of people and communities in Tari need to be carefully considered. Managing both existing insecurities and new resource developments in Hela is perhaps one of the country’s biggest challenges to sustainable development and progress.
Implications and recommendations

This study has looked at many of the types, triggers and impacts of interpersonal violence in Hela, highlighting those factors which underlie the culture of violence and conflict in Hela society. The nature, causes and effects of insecurity in the Southern Highlands vary widely, and there is a corresponding variation in the most effective means by which insecurity can be addressed. Often a range of steps is required in different degrees, such as strengthening the rule of law, building an effective security sector, reducing poverty and improving governance. Improved understanding of the social and contextual realities of people in Hela can help to identify what might be required to create the conditions for peaceful development.

Key recommendations of this report include the following:

Overall, the research shows that insecurity and violence pervade all aspects of daily life in Hela, undermining development in the region. It is important that both government and donors acknowledge this fact when considering the financing and implementation of programmes in sectors not directly connected to law and justice, whether they are targeting economic development, health or education. Other recommendations given here concern directions for Oxfam and its partners in Southern Highlands Province to be further considered and provide valuable insights for other organisations working to address the complex issues of insecurity and violence in Papua New Guinea.

Justice and mediation

- Oxfam could further explore the relationship between informal justice, village courts and district mediation structures in order to better support links between community-based peace building efforts and state institutions. Collaborative peace building efforts have been identified as the best way to achieve effective mediation to resolve issues quickly. An example can be taken from the multi-stakeholder District Peace Management Teams supported by Eastern Highlands Provincial Law and Justice Department. These teams have clear roles and responsibilities, written protocols and support from the Province for their activities. Such structures do not exist in Southern Highlands Province, so Oxfam needs to identify other (and perhaps more local) opportunities for collaboration.

- In order for such partnerships to be effective, Oxfam would need to advocate for greater budget allocations for village courts, many of which barely function in the Southern Highlands. The creation of Hela Province is an opportunity to
work with the new administration to look at the reasons for low trust in the courts.

- Oxfam and its partners could advocate for a stronger role for women in the peace and justice system, in particular the instatement of a woman magistrate on every village court. A partner organisation would need to be found that can train village court staff on human rights and gender using well-designed and appropriate curricula.

- Minor disputes have the potential to turn violent and generate wider conflict. Thus, local mediation mechanisms that can address local problems quickly, whilst providing ‘closure’ to all parties, should be supported. One such strategy is to promote restorative justice that seeks to provide restitution to victims and to restore relationships between offenders and victims, while also protecting their human rights. Such an approach would incorporate peace building values, skills, and techniques into broader governance and development work.

**Policing and security**

- Instead of a sporadic and expensive deployment of troops brought in to quench outbursts of violence when they arise, it would be better to increase the number of regular police on the ground. The number of police personnel in Tari at the time of the study was derisory, although staffing has improved significantly since. There is also a need to improve police capacity in terms of skills, office supplies, equipment and vehicles to carry out day to day operations. The Hawa Correctional Services in Tari needs to be restored for detainees and is crucial for improving law and order in the region. Oxfam could advocate to the provincial level government and resource extraction companies to support improvement of policing and correctional services.

- As we have seen, a large proportion of cases of violence involve female victims. A woman’s desk at the police station and associated training for female staff when dealing with such cases would greatly improve the ability of the police to assist the victims.

- Systematic training programmes could be provided to police and other security sector actors at all levels, to mainstream human rights and gender issues and to promote gender sensitive workplaces for police and village courts so that women may feel safe and seek help if they need to.

**Awareness raising and attitudinal change**

- Cultural norms and values in Hela society underpin the patterns of violence described in this report. Male attitudes towards women, perceptions of masculinity, the role of violence in socialising children and parent-child relationships are all important factors. Various initiatives exist in Melanesia to address some of these problems through programmes that focus on men or
whole households, promoting behaviour change through awareness raising, discussion, role play and various other tools. HELP Resources, for example, runs a behaviour change programme for men and boys that could be adapted to SHP.

- Programmes should include issues around reproductive health for both men and women including hygiene, HIV, family spacing and contraception. Such issues are common triggers of domestic violence. Involving the whole family (albeit through separate male and female courses) helps people to understand links between gender relations and control of family size. Oxfam could look at what other actors are doing in SHP to see how partnerships can be built in this important area.

- Many questions remain as to the effectiveness of programmes that aim to bring about behaviour change amongst men, and there is little information to suggest which approaches might work. The ANU is conducting research to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of a number of initiatives in PNG. Collaboration could be sought in order to evaluate and feed back into any programmes implemented in SHP.

**Access to services**

- Payment for medical reports, which are required to take cases of violence to court, should be abolished. These reports represent a major barrier for those seeking justice through the formal system. Abolition of fees for cases of violence in hospital would also greatly improve access to healthcare for victims. Oxfam and MSF have helped to abolish such fees as Tari Hospital but they remain at many establishments, including Mendi hospital. These issues require advocacy at the national level.

- Many victims of violence require post-trauma counselling. MSF provides such services through a family support unit in Tari, but they are lacking in more remote areas. Victims are often discharged from hospital only to be attacked once again. At present there are no safe houses for women in Tari, or indeed in SHP in general. Access to such refuges following attacks may provide time for aggressors to cool off and for female victims to assess their options. Security issues associated with safe houses are serious, but Oxfam should assess the possibilities.

- Investment in livelihood strategies and development of the rural sector is needed in order to improve self-esteem, generate income and foster a culture of savings. An emphasis on money management could help to mitigate some of the side-effects of cash payments currently flowing into Hela Province. Such payments when spent quickly on alcohol, drugs, gambling and women, exacerbate violence both in the home and outside it. Oxfam’s partner in Simbu Province, Community Development Agency, has some experience in this area and could help to support partners in SHP.
Improved distribution and quality of services and other tangible signs of development must be provided to ensure that people across the region feel they have all benefited from development activities. Although causal links are hard to establish, both this study and others suggest that inequitable service provision may exacerbate conflict, while provision of government services has been suggested by combatants as a way of reducing tensions. Service provision has deteriorated significantly since the 1980s, but expected revenue from the LNG project may provide an opportunity for change if money can be channelled effectively into improving essential services, rather than benefitting individual claimants alone. In order to advocate for better service delivery, Oxfam and its partners will require a good understanding of the implications of various mechanisms proposed in recent studies to address problems of poor service delivery. These include direct funding of facilities by Central Government and, more locally, by resource extraction companies themselves.
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Appendix 1: Tribal warfare

Tribal fighting was traditionally regulated and managed according to strict rules of conduct. Like many other parts of the Highlands, in SHP there have been changes to the traditional rules of tribal fighting and engagement: over the past twenty years, old men, women and children have been increasingly targeted (Garap 2004: 5). In Tari, male participants described the use or practice of ‘steal kill’, where men seek revenge for a death outside open battlefield confrontation, where they hide and conduct a surprise attack or take advantage of social gatherings to identify a target and make an attack. Similarly, the Mendi study showed that such guerrilla warfare techniques have also been used in other parts of SHP during tribal warfare (Mathew 1996: 118).

Preparations leading up to a tribal fight include the collection of weapons and the mobilization of resources to acquire firearms and ammunition. Those involved in the fight solicit support through past alliances or from their ‘eight-generation’ of relatives both from their father and mother’s side. Guns and bullets are also provided by friends and family to help support them in the fight. Due to the existence of kin-based allegiances through both maternal and paternal lines, and the spatially disbursed nature of land and house ownership, alliances may be complex and shifting in nature. Individuals may feel an obligation to share guns and ammunition with various other groups with whom they are allied (Alpers 2005: 34). Young men and strong adult men fight. For young men fighting is a chance to exhibit skill and strength. There is a sense of excitement and delight experienced when they engage in tribal warfare. Fighting is ‘a participatory, inclusive activity’ in “a rural development vacuum where men and youths have no organised, productive outlet for their energies” (Vail 2007: 109). Even though there may be a perception that killing is wrong, if a member of a clan was killed, payback is something that a young man looks forward to, as one young man expressed: “We never like to kill another man but if our fathers and brothers were killed and if I see the enemy, especially when I am holding a gun, I will be happy”.

During fights, houses are burnt, whole villages destroyed, food gardens ravaged, health and educational facilities are destroyed, and people flee for their lives and relocate to other places for safety. It can be many years before it is safe for them to return.

Armed violence in tribal conflict and its impact

According to the community research, guns were perceived as an introduced and relatively new phenomenon that were originally used for hunting. Tribal fighting or violence in general moved into a new phase with the introduction of a more
advanced type of gun compared with those used previously for hunting. As more people became aware of the immediate impact of guns, they were assimilated as a mode of fighting. During discussions, participants spoke about two types of guns – home-made guns produced using pipes, springs and other locally sourced materials, and factory-made, high-powered imported weapons, such as SLRs, M-16s etc. Compared with other types of weapons traditionally used in tribal warfare (bow and arrow, spears, knives), guns have made fighting and killing easier.

Participants described the course of action in which these weapons were used in combination.

When a man carrying a gun was shot or injured he handed the gun loaded with bullets over to another man to continue fighting, while he was taken to safety. When a man on the opposing side was shot, men with bush knives pursued the victim who had been injured to kill him. This is to preserve their bullets. Bullets are crucial to a fight and are used with care as the guns are useless without them. Participants stated that a conflict often started with home-made guns but as the fighting persisted and worsened, it gradually led to the demand for more powerful weapons. Home-made guns were used to cause injury, followed by pursuit of the victim, while factory-made guns cause greater injury and often death, and have a greater range. More men were killed with factory-made guns compared with any other weapon in a tribal fight, giving an advantage to groups that had more high-powered weapons. “When we fired, we killed men with it; it was very easy and we killed a lot of men with the gun” (Adult man, Tari).

A key factor in determining whether one tribe was more powerful than its enemy was the type of guns (factory/home-made) they had acquired, which was commensurate with the number of men they killed. If one group had an advantage over another in terms of weaponry, they pursued the fight to avenge the number of deaths on their side. The knowledge that their enemies owned guns was a deterrent that encouraged further acquisition of arms. A vicious escalation of violence ensues.

**Figure 3: The link between insecurity and the demand for arms**
As more men are killed, both sides acquire more arms to fend off their enemies. The side that kills more men remains in a high state of alert as “the other side has four dead and the other side has ten dead so they [the side who has more dead] want to get this figure up to halfway or three quarters. Even though they have said they have stopped fighting, they are still standing.” (Adult man, Tari). The fear of being attacked was experienced by men and women of all ages alike. The psychosocial impact of armed violence was seen in the way young men armed themselves when moving in an area of potential enemy attack or when there was knowledge of enemy presence. People felt they were forced to arm themselves because of the fear they have of their enemies. With the high level of insecurity, young men claimed “we will be armed with our guns as long as we are alive. It is only when we die that we will be rid of our guns and they will be forgotten.”

Guns were hired mainly from Nipa, Mendi, Porgera, Mount Hagen, Komo and Nogoli from clans or individuals who were known to have guns. Since 2002 a former Tari District Administrator noted that guns hired from Mendi were being used in parts of Hela (Alpers 2005: 96). For one year they were hired for between K800 – K5000 with pigs depending on the type of gun that is given, and the length of time that it would be used. Guns were also available for hire, with one gun reaching up to “ten mother pigs with K4000-K5000 cash. That is for one year.” (Young man, Koroba). An agreement is reached for the gun to be returned in due course. However, not all gun owners provide guns for hire, and a strong element of trust has to be developed prior to an arrangement.

Often warring groups purchased guns with the help of employed relatives living in urban centres or those working for resource companies. Through income generating initiatives, people purchase bullets. Men go to Mt Kare to find gold to earn some money to buy bullets. “Some of the young men sitting in this room are leaving tonight. We are going to go and come back. If we go up there and if we have about K100, K200 or K300 we return to buy bullets.” (Young man, Tari)

The risks associated with the proliferation of guns were not lost on all communities, however:

“There was talk about buying two or three guns, but if we buy them and give them to young men, they will become ‘heros’. So we said forget it. Let them use home-made guns…. We thought of buying guns but when we saw that our own people were not behaving well, if we were to give them the powerful gun they would want us to bow down to them. So we thought no, we shouldn’t buy the gun.”

Adult man, Tari.
Handling a high-powered weapon ascribes a sense of power and responsibility and if it was used for individual gain, such as forcing people off their land, the weapon would be seen as a threat instead of a means of providing security.

**Arms reduction strategies**

In 2005 the Government commissioned a Summit on Gun Control that involved a process of community consultations in light of the increasing misuse of firearms in the country. Since the report on these consultations was released and its recommendations presented to Parliament, no action has been taken. The PNG Coalition to Stop Gun Violence was established in 2007 in light of the lack of Government action following the Gun Summit. The coalition is a nationwide network of civil society organisations committed to reducing the demand and availability of arms and assisting victims. The coalition has lost some momentum in its efforts of late, but moves are afoot to revive it, in expectation of more violence around the 2012 elections.

During discussions with female participants we learnt that women were entirely against the possession of guns and suggested the confiscation of all guns. They believed there would be complete freedom if guns were taken out of circulation. This could only happen if there were resolution amongst tribal enemies. There was consensus from the community study, that guns will only be abandoned when there is law and order, threats of violence are reduced, livelihoods improved and people are ‘kept busy’, basic services restored, and church activities are strengthened as the church is seen to have a wide influence.

Some guns were surrendered during the SOE. Most of the weapons surrendered, however, were home-made guns. Adult men expressed concern that even with a widespread gun surrender, the knowledge of making a gun remains, ensuring that a gun can be easily reproduced if necessary. There was a perception, however, that gun surrender activities have left people more vulnerable to attack and in a weak defensive position. Many did not want to part with the factory-made guns saying “we spend so much money on these. We hire them from Porgera and from those who have guns, and now you want to take them away from us; very sorry, these are our security” (Adult man, Tari-Pori).

**Triggers of tribal violence**

**The value of land, women and pigs**

In Hela, large scale violence resulted from three main triggers: land, women and pigs; all of which are valuable in Hela society. During a PRA exercise, participants
ranked the order of triggers of violence in terms of frequency and impact (scale of violence). Land was the main trigger for tribal violence in almost all instances. There is a high value placed on people’s land as this establishes the roots and foundation of a tribe, clan, community and family. It gives a sense of belonging and identity to people and is the source of their livelihood in terms of food and natural resources (e.g. water; trees to build their houses, fences and for firewood; and land for planting gardens). Women are also of value, but land is paramount because women live and work on the land. Pigs are valued as a means of exchange, are essential for bridewealth and are significant in the restoration of peace when settling disputes. Although women raise pigs, men have a large influence in determining when and how they are used.

“Land is where a man will get his food from, where he will stay and live and take care of his family. It gives him a background, a place of belonging, women too. Pig is important in society because it is where he gets his money from. A man who has lots of pigs, money and land is considered of high status in the village. That is why these three things are important.” Adult man, South Koroba.

Together these reflect a man’s wealth and his standing and status in the community and are worth fighting for in Hela society.

“The decision whether to fight or not; whether it is a worthy cause or not, starts in the haus-man (men’s house), “We say should we fight or not? Will we solve the problem? We do these kinds of discussions in the haus-man and then we fight’” (Adult man, Tari). Some communities are guided by the older men when making a decision whether to fight or not. While in other communities elderly men no longer have the power to influence younger men. Adult men observed that young men were quick to resort to violence without rationalizing and considering the consequences of their actions.

The culture of ‘tumbuna stori’
Pay-back violence was a common feature and a perpetuating factor in the cycle of violence. Reports by Amnesty International discuss this link between payback and tribal violence (Amnesty International 2006: 22). Young men said, when hearing
stories of their enemies passed on through their oral history (often referred to as the ‘tumbuna stori’ or ‘generation stories’) this would encourage them to provoke conflict with their ‘traditional enemies’, for example by killing the enemy’s pig.

This research suggests that regardless of whether compensation is paid, the story of each death is passed from adult to young men in the haus man, increasing the potential for payback. As one young man explained, “they are coming to pay us compensation for the death of my brother, but it doesn’t matter. I know what has happened. At some time, in the future we will kill one of their men as payback. My other brother doesn’t want me to, he doesn’t want us to fight anymore, but I will do it”. Despite the transition of time these matters are not laid to rest and continue to affect social relations between villages, clans and tribes (Weiner 2002: 3-4). Issues of insecurity for men, both young and old, were found to be closely associated with tribal boundaries and inter-generational tribal conflict.

“Because of the haus man system even if compensation is paid, we still have enemies because the ‘tumbuna stori’ still exists. The story of our fight will be told to our children and later generations so they will always be our enemies. Fathers will tell their children that he killed or injured men, so he is your enemy; I killed someone in that fight, so don’t venture there as they may attack you. These are the kinds of stories that will be handed down through the generations. It has always been like that.” Young man, Tari.

Cemeteries provide a physical reminder of a fight and those that died. In Huli society people value and have a deep sense of respect for the dead, and where the bones of the dead are buried. A lot of time and money is spent building graves made from permanent building materials and painting them in bright colours. In communities experiencing tribal fighting, the mapping exercise showed that cemeteries were amongst the first and most prominent features included on the map by participants. This physical recollection incites the need to payback. Interestingly, in a relatively peaceful community the cemetery was not identified as a common feature in the mapping exercise.

**Tribal violence impact**

In the sites visited where tribal fighting had occurred, the fighting had a significant impact on the participants’ criteria of risk as expressed in the Venn diagrams. All other types of violence appeared minimal when compared to the effect that large-scale warfare had on them. These impacts were expressed in different ways. During discussions with all groups, we learnt that affected people were in a constant state of anxiety and felt threatened, both internally by the relatives of the deceased and
externally by their tribal enemies. The psychological and mental health implications of this deserve more attention.

Displacement

Two of the communities visited were displaced due to tribal fighting, leaving them dependent on the goodwill of extended kin. People faced many problems when they were displaced. Extended periods of displacement affected the food security and health of the host family as well as those of the displaced people. For women in particular, this was an overwhelming burden. With little or no support from men who were for the most part occupied with providing security for the tribe against possible enemy attack, they were still expected to provide food for the family. Food in the new gardens they made was stolen, pigs entered their gardens and yet they could not complain as they would be told to leave. They had to avoid conflict or a confrontation with the host community as much as possible.

In frustration, women blamed their husbands for the loss of lives and the hardships they faced during tribal conflict as it was the men that chose to fight. Women and children had to deal with the situation as best they could. Their state of dependency also left them vulnerable to acts of violence and chastisement by the host community.

The host community and families also felt the burden of having to cater for extra people. When making a garden, collecting firewood and materials to build a house, digging a drain, fetching water, putting pigs on the land – in all these activities the displaced had to be sensitive to the land and people they were living with. The hosts bear with them for the first few months but after that they openly express the discontent they feel for having them for too long. “They tell us, ‘those of us from here we did not fight this fight, so why have you come here. We have fed you how many years you were with us, and now we are tired of you; of entertaining you. You have spoiled our place, and there are too many of you; just go back (to your place)’. This is what they tell us” (Adult man, Tari).

People experienced poverty and found their psycho-social health affected and their quality of life largely deteriorated. “My husband got so worried and depressed when the tribal fight occurred because men were killed. He was seriously concerned and thought hard about how the fight should be stopped. He was very concerned and distressed so his mind was affected. He was so distressed to the extent where his state of mental health was affected so he went to Port Moresby to seek medical treatment. So I am on my own at home “(Adult woman, Tari). Unpaid compensation payments contributed to worry, fear and anxiety and an uncertainty about the future.
Displacement has caused many families to separate and has affected community cohesion and local leadership structures. Tribal violence has forced many people to migrate to other townships and urban centres for safety and to access better services causing an expansion of unplanned settlement in those areas.

**Access to basic services**

In Tari and indeed the Hela region, violence and conflict have severely affected service delivery to many parts of the region. Ongoing violence and tribal conflict has destroyed communities and existing basic services. Tari Hospital serving 250,000 people was without a doctor until 2008. The Hawa Correctional Services in the Tagali LLG has been closed since 2001 after an outbreak of tribal conflict in the area. After the closure of the Tari district court services in 2002 due to election-related violence, magistrates did not want to come to Tari for fear of their lives. The court house was without a magistrate for five years until 2007 when one magistrate returned. A hostile environment has made it difficult for services to function: government workers have fled or are reluctant to work in the three districts of Hela due to the high security risk involved in working and living in these areas and also the inability to access good services for their families. Many businesses would like to expand into the area, and educated people would like to settle in their villages and have a normal life, but they fear tribal violence. This insecurity has caused many to migrate to other centres to access services and look for job opportunities, while those that remain continue to live in a spiral of conflict from which they cannot escape.

Schools and health facilities are seen as an asset to the enemy and are thus often destroyed during tribal fights. Many of those missing schooling for this reason now feel that they are too old and it is too late to go back to school, while some of those interviewed were still interested in continuing their education. A mother shared her experience with her son who desperately wanted to continue his education but was not able to, due to security threats. Eventually he was able to find a school outside the province. Below she tells the story of how the mental health of her son was affected through this experience.

“I get anxious and worried when I feel afraid. I get worried about what is going to happen to me. We often do not sleep at night. We stay awake till day break. We feel restless when we recall what has happened to us. We stay awake till we feel very sleepy. Sometimes we don’t feel like eating. There are times when we don’t feel like eating when we are afraid and worried. We think too much about what our lives will be like in the future. We think about what will happen to us in future. We think a lot about when we will ever settle down peacefully. We worry too much about the future and our head really aches.” **Adult woman, Tari.**
“When he was with my people, his cousins and my sister in-law, they saw that the boy changed.

“He did not eat. His trousers did not fit him. He lost weight, even though they ate good food and lived in a good house that belonged to the company. Good house, but he was not happy, they saw it. He was not happy. He did not play. One of my cousins asked him, ‘What kind of problem do you have’? The cousin asked him, ‘you must be worried about school, or if you have a problem I will bring you to Hagen and we will go to Hagen’. And he said, ‘yes, I am really worried about my education’.

“They found him a school and within a week only the boy changed. The trousers that were loose changed, his skin changed, there was fat in his face (laughing). They said there was light in his face. They saw him and asked, ‘What happened to you?’ and he said ‘I wanted to commit suicide, but I controlled it’, because he was worried about his education, he wanted to suicide, or if not over-dose with medicine. Because he was thinking ‘why are they fighting, why is dad in this tribal fighting area?’ He said he was worried about this.” Adult Woman, Tari.

This was once a school where children lined up to attend assembly. The school was destroyed in a tribal fight.

Tribal fighting has spoiled the future of many school-aged children. Young people interviewed said ‘their guns are now their pencils’. Young women expressed grave remorse at not being able to complete their education due to the need to fulfil family and clan obligations of marriage so that their bride wealth could be used to source compensation demands by their tribal enemies as a result of the conflict.
Young women ran away to avoid marriage or entering into a marriage that they did not fully consent to.

Adult women expressed particular concern that their children were not in school and not being educated. They expressed distress that their children were at home while other children were moving to higher grades. They were concerned that their children missing school would cause more problems and trouble in the future.

Even when families were able to access school where it was relatively safe, they could not afford to pay for their children’s school fees because they had to think about paying compensation for the lives that were lost in the fight. Money and resources that could go to the payment of school fees were used to meet other social and communal obligations. People could afford to pay for guns, bride price and compensation but could not afford to meet their parental responsibilities. The ‘common good’ took precedence over individual needs and expectations, whether this be in terms of contributing towards buying guns to protect their land, or compensation payments because of the reciprocal nature of social relations. The priority was to solve the issue at hand, and inevitably prevent the outbreak or continuation of conflict.

Compensation for deaths

Payback for a death was likely unless the issue was mediated, with the reasons for the death made known and compensation paid. In a tribal fight the instigators or

“They got married early. They got married early because their fathers told them, ‘We are going to pay compensation for the men that died and we don’t have pigs and money so get married’. But they said ‘We don’t want to get married, we want to go to school’. But their fathers and brothers told them ‘No, you want to go to school but who will become your security and you will learn, who will take care of you at school, no one will come and take care of you. You will die. If you get married your husband will take care of you’. So they married early.”

Adult woman, Tari Pori.

“Concerning money, we save money and plan to pay for our children’s school fees. We save money for school fees and if we had five (5) children and if all the five (5) children are in school, we try our best and put all our effort to save money for their school fees (someone coughs) but when someone kills a man or causes trouble and brings their problems to us, they charge them a lot of pigs and money for compensation. We have to help them with all the pigs and money we have and some of our children cannot go to school and they do nothing.”

Adult woman, South Koroba.
‘owners of the fight’ (*papa bilong pait*) were expected to take the onus to lead the peace process and pay compensation. Relatives of the deceased who fought in support of the ‘owner of the fight’ expected some form of retaliation as well as compensation for the death of their family member(s). Internal dissent was a major source of insecurity, and claims for injury and death compensation were the responsibility of the owner of the fight and his kin.

Frustrations were directed at the owner of the fight by the relatives of the deceased if he did not avenge the death of those that lost their lives in ‘his fight’ or if he did not meet their demand for compensation for those deaths. If these demands were not met, there was potential for more violence. Relatives of the deceased were provoked to behave violently and aggressively towards him but were careful not to kill him because if he died he would not be able to compensate the deaths. His immediate family members were also blamed for the deaths. The group at large was aware that they must help him pay compensation if there was to be peace. Their displaced positions and loss of land make it difficult to mobilize resources to pay compensation.

Consistency in compensation for deaths arising during fighting is important. Payment of compensation for the initial death is paid between warring parties, but this is not the case for subsequent deaths, which are compensated internally by each side. Therefore, although peace may eventually be made, an imbalance in loss of life between sides remains without redress, and may fuel further conflict in the future.

There are three stages of the compensation process when it involves the death of a person in Hela: bel-kol, taupa and api. Bel-kol is paid first before taupa and api which is the actual payment of compensation. Compensation can also be paid in another manner where both parties share the responsibility of paying compensation for the first man that was killed, as a genuine effort towards peace and reconciliation, rather than a desire for wealth.

In a tribal fight that took place during the research period, the PGOC increased the compensation payment for the killing of an innocent man to an unrealistic amount. The payment was delayed because the opposing clan was unable to meet the demand set, and as a result, the conflict had yet to be settled. After another tribal fight, the demand made for a death was K50,000 and 250 pigs. The PGOC after careful consideration reduced this to K25,000 and 120 pigs as a court order. Compensation was paid and the matter settled.

Compensation paid within fighting groups is negotiated between the owner of the fight and the relatives of the deceased. Distribution is made to the immediate family and to both the mother and father’s people; one clan is represented by one stick to which money and pigs are attached. The number of marks on the stick indicates the number of pigs to be paid. Compensation also has to be paid to allied lineages for their deaths and injuries sustained during the fight.
Although relatives of the deceased would like very much to exact payback for the men that have been killed in the fight, the majority of respondents who had been affected by tribal violence, said they were content with settling the conflict through the payment of compensation in order to avoid further violence and hardship. They have felt the results of the fight and do not want to continue fighting. However, even after the existing generation die, the debt will remain either for compensation to be paid to the next generation or for pay-back to be sought, as the story is passed on to the next generation of children.
Appendix 2: Gun violence

This study has shown that only a small proportion of victims of violence reporting to Tari Hospital suffered from gun-related injuries. Assault involving bush knives and axes resulted in significantly more trauma admissions to Mendi Hospital than assaults involving firearms (Winnington 2008: 45). In Mendi Hospital too, there were only 81 admissions (4.2 per cent) over a seven-year period (Winnington 2008: 48). The reality is that rates of gun-related injuries are certainly much higher than these studies show (Alpers 2005: 83). Most gun injuries are not reported and many go untreated. At the three sites visited which experienced ongoing conflict, it was found that a large number of young men had gun wounds that remained untreated.

Guns have been used increasingly both in incidents of violence and to intimidate. The extent of injury from gun violence depended on the type of gun used. People were able to differentiate between wounds sustained from factory-made and homemade guns:

“When a man was shot with this type of gun (factory-made), the place where the bullets went into the body looked very small and the part where the bullets came out looked very huge and the flesh was ripped apart. I saw this kind of wound on dead bodies. Those men who are killed with homemade guns, where the bullet penetrates the skin, you see blisters all over the body of the dead person. You would normally see one big hole where the bullet penetrates the body and you don’t see a big hole and flesh being ripped apart where the bullet comes out.”

Adult man, North Koroba.

Participants were also competent in differentiating the sounds of a home-made weapon from a high-powered weapon as well as between the different types of factory-made guns.

“The factory-made gun is short barrelled. It is small and short. They have it. One is an 18-round. The other one is a 16-round. They also have a 5-round. They have a magnum pistol which is small and short and has a magazine. They own one of them too. They are carrying it around now.” Young men, Tari.

This detailed familiarity suggests a proliferation of guns. Ownership and access to a factory-made gun is restricted to a select few, and is primarily used in tribal conflict and to protect property or the clan from potential attack. Because of widespread fear, people felt they were forced to arm themselves, “because law and order has deteriorated, their life is important they must defend themselves.” (Mediator, Tari).
An interviewee explained that because he had no brothers and a limited support network to defend him in land disputes, he acquired a high-powered weapon, which made people afraid to attack him or his property. For the owner, it is a deterrent against potential external threats as well as internal disputes or rivalry.

There is a perception that there are many guns in the Hela region now, a variety of both factory-made and home-made guns. “There are big strong guns. This place is full of guns now”. There is a demand for guns so when people no longer need the guns they have, they sell them to others. Although there is a demand for factory-made guns and bullets, obtaining them was difficult and only achieved by a limited number of people. However, the knowledge of how to manufacture home-made guns is now widespread among youths, thus increasing the quantity of guns available. Guns were first seen at Mt Kare and their manufacture was developed based on people’s recollection and memory of these weapons.

“We saw the gun which was man-made. We copied and produced our own home-made guns. We examined his gun very thoroughly. We held it in our hands and examined it carefully. We studied it from start to finish. Therefore, we got some basic idea from him and made our own guns. When we ran short of parts, we went to find them. We checked all the parts carefully. And then we started making our own. We always referred back to his gun whenever we got stuck. We started collecting parts. We looked for the parts and gathered them one at a time. We fitted everything together and a gun was produced. So now, everyone knows how to make a gun. All sorts of new ideas have been incorporated and we are kind of experts now in making guns. We make double barrelled guns. Guns that can hold 2-3 bullets. We also make guns that can hold 5 bullets or 8 bullets to shoot. And then it’s just in one gun.”

“We chop a tree. Then we look for a car battery. There is a car battery which we use. The car battery has a copper element inside. We burn the copper element and melt it. And then we look for an iron rod. We find an axe saw blade and cut it into pieces. We fill the open gap in the iron rod with melted copper from the battery. And then we look for any spring which is available. Iron springs which can be stretched. We place the spring inside. We attach a small trigger and then we look for a small iron pipe and cut it. And then, we fit the bullets in and we pull the trigger and release it to shoot someone. The melted copper provides safety to prevent back fire that can shoot us. The spring holds all the wiring together. When we pull it and release it, the bullet will be released and blown out of the pipe from the point which is located below when you push it. We keep on shooting like that. The copper from the battery is the safety mechanism which stops the gun back firing at you.” Young man, Tari.

Young men showed an intricate knowledge of the production of home-made guns. What was previously knowledge limited to a few has now become a practice shared
and taken up by young men to ensure their own security as well as that of their clan.

Various sources claimed that marijuana was traded for guns across the PNG-Indonesia border in the Western Province. These guns were either used or resold to those who were looking to purchase a weapon. This claim was confirmed in an interview with a former criminal who described the process he went through to purchase a weapon from the Indonesian side of the border. Participants discussed that people who want to buy a gun work through their networks to identify who has a gun for sale, and then purchase it with contributions of pigs and cash from their clan or family. Licensed users also lend their gun to other men in the community. Law enforcement agencies such as the police and army were also identified as suppliers of guns and ammunition. A good relationship must first be established with a particular police officer prior to asking them to sell bullets. Walters (2007: 125) stated that police have become members of the community, compromising their role and duties.

“We buy them from the police too… We come to Kikita to buy them from the police. They ask us for K20. We may have something important to do but if we have K100 and if the police tell us that they are selling some bullets, we tell the police that we have K100 and ask him, ‘Is it possible for you to give me 5 bullets?’ The police pour the bullets out and if they have enough, they give us five bullets. When they give us five bullets, we return quickly home very happy… It’s not simple. The police must know you. You can’t approach a policeman for the first time and say, ‘Police, here is the money, give me the bullets’. When we say that, the police will beat us very badly. So, we don’t do that…. Like for instance, we have beetle nut, smoke and food together first on a particular day. And then, we meet regularly and talk to each other to get to know each other very well. We get to familiarize ourselves first. And then, I tell the policeman that I am looking for something. Is it possible for you to help me or not? When I ask him, the police might say it’s possible so he asks me to find K200 or K100 and bring it and he will give me the bullets. I give him the money and he gives me bullets.”

Young man, Tari.

Bullets are now seen to be costly and difficult to access. Previously they could be obtained from licensed stores but these are no longer in operation. Ammunition for home-made guns is especially difficult to obtain as it differs from those bullets that are used in weapons held by correctional services officers and police. It costs K20 per bullet for a factory-made gun. Some purchase them from Mendi and Mt Hagen and sell them locally. They are also bought and sold by licensed gun-holders.
To overcome the difficulty in accessing bullets for home made guns, young men discussed new ways that have been invented to reuse bullets:

“The place where they dig the limestone, they have something which is used to blow up the limestone. They fill the thing that is used to blow up the limestone into the used bullet shells. ... They use heat to close the opening up. ... They use it again. ...The men who work there secretly get the substance and bring it out to the community. ... They use the bullets for the homemade guns. When the bullets come out, the gun barrel is still intact so they put more bullets in so they are able to reuse it. After firing the bullets, they put more bullets into the gun so they reuse it again.... We are having difficulties to obtain bullets. ... We still haven’t found any possible ways so men have started resorting to doing this as an alternative to getting new bullets.” Young man, Tari.
Appendix 3: Lessons learnt from relatively peaceful communities

The research was also conducted at sites that were relatively peaceful and did not experience tribal fights. Two of the sites visited were CBHC communities, which had benefited from taking part in a livelihoods programme. Community health and development training was used to mobilize and empower communities to take ownership of their own social and economic development. In exchange for taking part in the CBHC programme, communities collectively made a commitment to peace, to improve health and hygiene, establish community laws and a resource centre, and agree not to engage in inter-group conflict.

There were several key factors contributing to the stability of these peaceful communities. Firstly, there was the strength of local leadership. Strong leaders had mandate from their community; had a vision and were able to give clear direction and guidance to their community members. They were able to conduct swift and effective mediation when a problem arose by initiating the quick mobilization of resources to halt violence and prevent conflict and violence from escalating. Collaboration was a key element in their success. Village leaders, the local councillor, public servants in the area, like the school headmaster, school teachers, village court officials, church leaders, and women’s groups all worked together to ensure that further conflict was prevented.

“So, the Government laws failed since 1999 and all these years we were taking care of ourselves and the church played a significant role in our lives. Our pastors and wasman (deacon), teachers from the community school, the health workers, the leaders in the village, village courts, councilors and all the people come together and show concern for all the good things we have in the community.”

Adult man, South Koroba.

Having the whole community participate in maintaining peace and order was essential. Where leaders were respected, their decisions were considered legitimate and mediation outcomes effective. That authority came with a sense of responsibility and trust from community members who sought their advice and support in times of trouble or conflict. It was because of this trust that members of the community respected the outcome of decisions made following any mediation. When disputes involved another clan the leaders quickly approached the conflicting party and humbly negotiated for peace. Leading by example, these leaders were also role models in their communities. Having strong leadership played an important role in strengthening and facilitating community unity and cohesion and helped to initiate positive change and development. Through the
peace circle exercise carried out with communities, participants responded that good leadership was an important feature for any community working to restore peaceful living in the community. Young men particularly mentioned the need for stronger leadership that they are able to respect and listen to but who will also reciprocate this respect and take account of their opinions.

Community cohesion was further strengthened by having regular meetings between leaders and the community, whether discussions were held in a community centre or in an open area. This brings together the different clans and sub-clans to discuss community issues, for dialogue and interaction, and to work and support each other in efforts towards peaceful living. Community members took care of the Government workers and others from outside who had come to live and work with them. The church was also a strong influence in maintaining peace and stability, particularly when different denominations worked together for the greater good of the community and were not competitive.

Stability resulted in certain services being established, much of which came about through the community’s own hard work. Their responsibility and sense of ownership over these developments was another reason why they desisted from creating trouble. They did not want hard-earned infrastructure destroyed in a tribal fight, and therefore tried to contain conflict at all costs to protect the positive developments they had brought to their community. The people were proud of these developments and said other surrounding communities were envious of the ‘good things’ they had and may try to destroy them. To avoid this happening, they work to maintain good relationships with neighbouring clans and to share their services with them. They have seen the suffering and destruction that neighbouring clans have experienced as a result of tribal conflict. Having learnt from this, they have worked hard to maintain the peace in their area for many years.

There were concerns that things would not be the same when the present leaders retired. It was found that there was a realisation of the need to build and mentor young men and women to support their elders and to fill the void in future, so that they can continue the good work.