

The media has reported countless stories of brutal acts of torture, murder and violence due to sorcery related accusations in PNG communities. In Mount Hagen in 2013 a woman was tortured and then burnt alive in front of hundreds of onlookers, including members of her community and police officers. Later that year, a female teacher in Bougainville was publicly tortured and beheaded.

These gross acts of injustice cannot continue in our nation.

Quick Facts

- The belief in sorcery and witchcraft is widespread across most parts of the country although the beliefs and practices differ from province to province.
- In Simbu province alone it is estimated that 150 cases of violence and killing occur each year as a result of witchcraft accusations.
- The most vulnerable people who fall victim to sorcery related violence are women and elderly people.

Government's Response

The Government is not trying to get rid of the belief in sorcery or witchcraft, instead the Government is trying to stop the violence and killings that are connected with sorcery and witchcraft accusations.

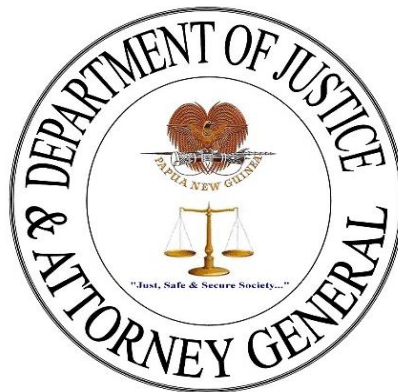
- On 28 May 2013, Members of Parliament repealed the *Sorcery Act 1971*. This means that the Act can no longer be used and all sorcery related matters will be dealt with through the *Criminal Code Act* and other relevant legislations.
- At the same time Members of Parliament agreed that killing an alleged sorcerer or witch would be added to the list of capital offences in PNG.
- On 16 July 2015 the Government endorsed the Sorcery National Action Plan (SNAP) to begin coordinated efforts between Government, Civil Society and Churches to eliminate sorcery related violence.



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CALL THE FREE HOTLINE FOR HELP

Confidential phone counseling service providing information and support for anyone experiencing family and sexual violence in Papua New Guinea



The Government has a National Core Committee led by the Department of Justice and Attorney General working to implement the National Action Plan to Address Sorcery and Witchcraft Related Violence (SNAP).

For more information please contact:

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WITH SUPPORT FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

**HURTING OR KILLING
SOMEONE BECAUSE YOU
THINK THEY ARE A
SORCERER OR
WITCH IS**

AGAINST THE LAW



**EVERYONE HAS THE
RIGHT TO
LIFE**

IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO HURT OR KILL ANOTHER PERSON JUST BECAUSE YOU THINK HE OR SHE IS A SORCERER OR WITCH

What is Sorcery related violence?

Sorcery related violence refers to injuries sustained by people accused of being sorcerers or practicing sorcery. The violence normally associated with such accusations is very violent in nature and in many instances has resulted in death.

Why is the Government against Sorcery related violence?

The Government is against sorcery related violence because it has an obligation by law to protect the rights of all citizens as enshrined in the *Constitution* of Papua New Guinea. These Constitutional Rights include:

- The Right to Life (Section 35)
- The Freedom from Inhuman Treatment (Section 36)
- The Protection of the Law (Section 37)

If a person is murdered or subjected to torture because they are suspected of committing sorcery, it is a crime against the State and will be dealt with through the *Criminal Code*.

The Government is against the VIOLENCE RELATED TO SORCERY

What does the *Criminal Code* say about this sort of violence?

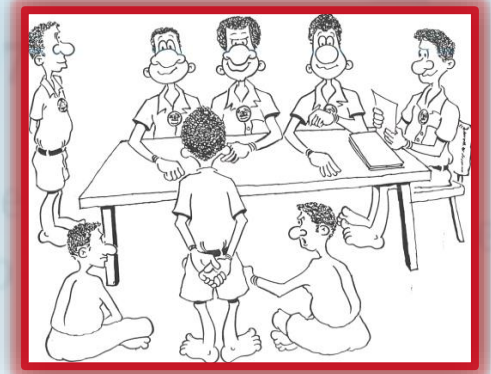
- It is against the law to kill, rape or injure a person because you think they are a sorcerer or a witch.
- If you kill someone who you think is a sorcerer or witch, a court can sentence you to death.
- Even if you only try to hurt someone because you think they are a sorcerer or witch, a Court can still send you to Prison.
- If you plan to hurt or kill another person because you think they are a sorcerer or witch, a Court will send you to prison.
- If you help, encourage or ask someone to hurt another person because you think they are a sorcerer or a witch, a Court can also send you to prison.

Who deals with Sorcery related Offences?

1. Your local Village Court has the authority to hear sorcery related accusations which result in minor injuries sustained to the person being accused of sorcery;
2. If the injuries are more serious it is called Grievous Bodily Harm and should be reported to the police and the matter heard at a higher court of law.
3. If properties have been destroyed up to the value of K1000 then a Village Court can order damages to be paid.
4. If the properties damage is above K1000 that should be reported to the police and the matter should go before a Higher Court depending on the amount of damages.

What do you do if you are worried that someone may be practicing sorcery?

Firstly you must remember that you must never take the law into your own hands. If you are worried that someone has, or is trying, to hurt you or your relative by using sorcery or witchcraft, you should report it to your local Village Court Peace Officer, Village Court Magistrate or the Police. They will help you to solve the dispute.



Village Courts Act 1989 empowers village courts to hear cases in relation to sorcery. The offences include:

- practising or pretending to practise sorcery;
- threatening a person using sorcery that is practised by another person;
- encouraging or attempting to encourage a person to:
 - i. practise sorcery;
 - ii. pretend to practise sorcery; or
 - iii. to assist in practicing sorcery.
- having in your possession items or charms used in practising sorcery; or
- paying or offering to pay a person to perform acts of sorcery.