

# Case study: Freeing women from violence in PNG

Papua New Guinea

SHARE

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In collaboration with local partner organisations, the Australian Government, through Pacific Women, is supporting the PNG Highlands Women's Human Rights Defenders' Network (HRDN) to empower women to speak up to be free from violence. HRDN's membership includes Voice for Change, Kup Women for Peace and Kafe Urban Settlers Women's Association.

This assistance includes crisis services such as counselling, safehouse accommodation, paralegal advice, referrals to specialist service providers, relocation assistance, and also works with boys and men in addressing violence against women.

HRDN's Rapid Response Team includes men and women representatives from the Law and Justice Family and Sexual Violence Unit, the district Family Support Centre, the Community Development and Child Protection Office, the district and village court, the public prosecutor and church representatives. They work closely with police to increase their understanding about violence against women and its impact, and train them to support women and children. In turn, police gain job satisfaction from being able to assist in extracting women from situations of violence.

'The response is good; in the past 12 months we have been saving many lives, rescuing them from situations of violence and we will continue to do that,' said Mr Peter Larry Kerowagi, Task Force Commander. 'As a police officer, it is my job to save people's lives. And being a part of the Rapid Response Unit has helped me to do my job better, so I am satisfied. Once the victims are safe and receiving assistance from other members of the [Rapid Response] Team, my job continues—trying to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators.'

Demand for assistance from HRDN's Rapid Response Team has tripled as word spreads that help is available in a region where extreme violence against women— including rape, kidnapping, domestic violence and sorcery-related attacks—frequently occurs.

With support from Pacific Women, HRDN continues to advocate for women's rights to seek justice, for them to be able to live peacefully in their home province.

The program will be implemented over seven years (2013-2019) with a total value of \$3,733,924.