

URGENT ACTION

WOMEN ACCUSED OF SORCERY FREED

A seriously injured woman and her two daughters, who were held in Papua New Guinea by a group that accused them of practicing "sorcery", have been freed. They are safe and are receiving medical care.

The injured woman has a severe laceration to her neck after being attacked on or around 2 April 2013, according to sources in the country. The three women were being prevented from leaving Lopele, Bana District, Southern Bougainville, to seek essential medical care after locals set up road blocks. They were trapped for several weeks at a basic medical clinic by members of the community who accused them of practising "sorcery".

The response to the incident from local Bougainville police was initially inadequate but following international pressure and attention, including from the Amnesty International movement, the police then involved senior officers to negotiate the women's safe release.

The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea has announced his intention to repeal the notorious Sorcery Act. The Sorcery Act currently allows people who assault or murder someone they accuse of sorcery to claim sorcery as a mitigating factor and to receive reduced sentences.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is required by the UA Network at this time.

This is the first update of UA 90/13. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA34/001/2013/en>

Name: Three unnamed women

Gender m/f: female

Further information on UA 90/13 Index: ASA 34/002/2013 Issue Date: 3 May 2013

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