

Wednesday 7th June, 2023

The Chairman
Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
Parliament House Post Office, Waigani. NCD
National Capital District

Dear Chairman

SUBJECT: SARV SOLUTION – NEPU BAKAI (SORCERY COURT) RESEARCH FINDING

Please find below a submission in response to SARV. A discovery in 2018 known as Nepu Bakai which means Sorcery Court in Kairuku Language. My name is Linda Rau-Tule, I am the Director and Founder of Awaha Sustainable Development Foundation Inc. (ASDF). Through my voluntary work as research assistant with National Research Institute (NRI) from 2018-2020, I discovered as Sorcery Court in Kivori Kui/Kivori Poe in Kairuku District, Central Province which has been practiced for generations over the years.

Only a research will answer more questions should we wish to fund and research Nepu Bakai. To go back in history how long nepu bakai has been around. I found from one elder now who at the time as a teenage when he witness a nepu bakai in 1970. Also a great grandmother now in the 1960's when she witnessed a nepu bakai when she as a young girl. Below is an Abstract on Nepu Bakai I wrote when I was invited to a conference in Brisbane Australia in 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID.'19.

NEPU BAKAI – A Non-Violent traditional court of Kivori Tribes

by Linda Aiva Rau (Tule)

ABSTRACT

I discovered Nepu Bakai a traditional court since becoming a Research Recorder for National Research Institute (NRI) in partnership with Australian National University (ANU) in 2018. Before any other courts or formal judiciary systems were introduced in Kivori Villages Nepu Bakai already existed. The meaning of Nepu Bakai is Sorcery Court, NEPU means Sorcery, BAKAI means Court in Kivori Language. Currently Nepu Bakai is part of the Judiciary system used by Kivori Kui and Kivori Poe Village people to settle sorcery related accusations whenever someone is sick.

Nepu Bakai is a Non Violent Court, even after Nepu Bakai is carried out and sick people die the accused sorcerer's are not affected violently nor cast out of their homes. There is a process before Nepu Bakai is conducted in the village by clan chiefs for the village people that has 100% peaceful way of solving sorcery related accusations. Nepu Bakai is optional and not an obligation for the village people to use. The rights of the village people to choose either Village Court or Nepu Bakai are respected to any settle sorcery related accusations in the village.

The Kivori Villages consist of Kivori Kui Village, Kivori Poe Village, Meauri Village and Hereparu Village, in Kairuku/Hiri District, Central Province. It has a population of about 5000 people, including women and children and covers an area of 1000 square kilometers. It is situated 200 kilometers west of Port Moresby along the coastline it is accessible by road 4 hours of driving depending on road conditions, sea and air (helicopter).

Also below is a newspaper article by Post Courier in July 2022 regarding providing a solution for SARV, which can be only done through research. Through this research finding we can tailor our findings on what is the best practice used by Human Rights Defenders Association to solve Sorcery related accusations. This may not be a 100% solutions but is a start to finding out what is already on the ground. Make a start with what is already working on the ground and work towards protecting the life of people at risk who are facing SARV.

STOP VIOLENCE
SORCERY

A non-violent sorcery court

BY MARJORIE FINKEO

THE *Nepu Bakai* means Sorcery Court. It is a judicial system introduced in Kivori village, Kairuki District, Central Province.

Linda Tule, village court magistrate and a human rights defender, with 20 years experience in solving conflicts among accused women and children from sorcery and gender based violence, will be discussing *Nepu Bakai* from her research with National Research Institute (NRI) in 2018.

Nepu Bakai in the Roro language used by Kivori Kui and Kivori Poe villagers to settle sorcery related accusations whenever someone dies from illness.

It is a non-violent court sitting held when someone is sick and dies and the accused person or sorcerers are not affected, tortured, cast out from their homes or even killed.

"The messenger in the village passes on the message of *Nepu Bakai* to neighbouring villages of when the court will be held and that is his job to make sure everyone is aware of the court date.

"When court date arrives, everyone gathers around the village and is conducted by clan chiefs without any violence.

"A 100 per cent peaceful manner in solving sorcery related accusations." She said people have the right to choose either normal village court or they can choose for *Nepu Bakai* where chiefs conduct the peace talk.

The Kivori village consists of Kivori Kui, Kivori Poe, Meauri and Hereparu villages in Kairuki District. It has 5000 people. Covers area of 1000 square kilometers, situated west of Port Moresby along the coastline and accessible by road by four hours drive depending on the road condition.

Our next week's edition will be talking about difference between good and bad practice of sorcery in Central Province.



Linda Tule, village court magistrate and a human rights defender.
PICTURE: SUPPLIED

Also below is a letter from Dr. Fiona Hukula regarding a research to be But unable to continue because of funding obstacles.



THE NATIONAL
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Research Division
Building Safer Communities Program

10 March 2018

Mrs Linda Tule
Community Recorder
Sorcery Accusation Related Violence Research Project

Dear Mrs Tule,

The PNG NRI Building Safer Communities would appreciate your assistance in facilitating a visit to ~~Kyori Kyi~~ village, ~~Majuku Hiji~~ District to further research and document via film the ~~Nepu Bakaj~~ court which you as a community recorder have documented through the recorder forms. Please do not hesitate myself or Ms Monica Kolkia should you have any concerns or queries.

Sincerely,

Dr Hukula
Senior Research Fellow and Program Leader



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Reference for Linda Tule

To whom it may concern

Linda Tule worked for me doing data gathering on Sorcery Accusation Related Violence in Port Moresby for several years from 2018-2020. During this period, she was reliable and demonstrated initiative in gathering data and carefully recording it and communicating it to the research team. Linda also is an admirable community advocate against violence. I would be happy to answer any specific questions about Linda's work.

Yours sincerely

Miranda Forsyth

School of Regulation and Global Governance (RegNet) | The Australian National University |

Should you require additional information please don't not hesitate to contact me on 78763952 or 71069217 or email: linda.tule@gmail.com. Look forward to a reply.

Yours faithfully,

Linda Rau-Tule

Director and Founder