

New report shows shockwaves of PNG's family violence epidemic

By Ashlee Betteridge

A [report](#) released yesterday by ChildFund Australia illustrates the impact of the shockingly high rates of violence against women and children in Papua New Guinea.

The report, *Stop Violence Against Women and Children in Papua New Guinea*, draws together existing research and ChildFund's own field research in Rigo District, Central Province.

It features candid stories of women and children who have suffered severe physical assault and sexual abuse, showing how children are particularly vulnerable.

"[Our research] confirms that even in a province which is typically been regarded as relatively calm and peaceful by PNG standards, even in Central Province, there're extremely high levels of quite shocking and brutal violence against women," ChildFund CEO Nigel Spence [told ABC](#).

"We know from previous research, around two-thirds of women are estimated to have experienced physical or sexual assault. Our research confirms that it's at least that high, possibly even higher."

The report makes a number of recommendations, including the need for national programs that work with men to change social norms and improved access to medical care, justice, and transport.

The field research in the report on the lack of legal redress in Rigo tells a similar

story to [research earlier this year](#) by Stephen Howes and Kamalini Lokuge on the staggeringly low conviction rates for sexual violence in Lae. More information is [available here](#) on their efforts to establish a Case Management Centre in Lae to help survivors obtain the services they need.

About the author/s

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Ashlee Betteridge was the Manager of the Development Policy Centre until April 2021. She was previously a Research Officer at the centre from 2013-2017. A former journalist, she holds a Master of Public Policy (Development Policy) from ANU and has development experience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She now works as a development consultant.