

Ume Wainetti
PO Box 1501,
Port Moresby, NCD,
Papua New Guinea

Ms. Navanethem Pillay
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais Wilson
52 rue des Paquis
CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Commissioner Pillay:

Abuse by Barrick Gold of non-judicial grievance mechanism for victims of rape by security guards at Porgera Joint Venture mine in Papua New Guinea.

I am Ume Wainetti, the National Convenor of the Papua New Guinea Family And Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC), and I have worked in the field of violence against women in Papua New Guinea for many years. I have participated in the process that developed the Porgera remedial framework and was later invited to be a member of the Review Panel of the OLGETA MERI IGAT RAITS program.

It is unfortunate that Human Rights Activists like Dr Catherine Coumans whom I met in Port Moresby at Holiday Inn Hotel on 11 March 2013, talked about the rights of women at Porgera Valley knowing full-well that such rights cannot be fully realized at present because of cultural issues and the attitudes of men.

The **Survivors** of the Porgera abuses had maintained a silence on the abuses, because in PNG women are blamed for whatever happens to them, they are told that they should be more careful and also in PNG communal rights are more important than individual rights, so these women maintain their silence to avoid tribal fights and other conflicts that would eventuate should their families, especially if they were married to avoid husbands knowing. The fear that was expressed to us at the time in by senior women on the ground was evident enough that we either go along with local womens' advice or we forget the remedial program.

We, the Papua New Guinea women who are involved in the implementation of the remedial framework, decided this and advised Barrick accordingly, that it was in the best interest of the survivors', the CAT Team and the leaders of the Porgera Women's Association not to advertise the program. Maria Kensary, the leader of the Porgera District Womens Association, who speaks both Ipili and Engan, was asked to interpret. She was also the woman leader who privately organized women to have the first consultations meetings with the international human rights advocates. Flyers, reports and documents were not to be given out to women because of literacy problems, and the risk they would be seen by their men. These things were all done to maintain confidentiality and to safe guard the survivors.

There are men's landowners associations such as Akali Tange Association and Porgera Landowners Associations who want to get involved. These associations are male dominated and would not reflect the interest of the women. I am glad that these men reported the abuses inflicted by Porgera mine employees to but who holds the land owners responsible for the abuses that they commit in their communities to women and girls and especially in their families? This is seen all over PNG in major project areas. Women in Papua New Guinea generally do not trust landowners as they are worse perpetrators of abuse against women in this country. I have yet to come across a landowner association that has consciously provided for women and children. This is Papua New Guinea and

especially when the women are from Porgera - If cash or pigs were given to women, this will be taken and shared by their families, especially by male relatives. We would also witness a lot more abuse of the women so that men get access to the cash. It is not wise in this particular situation to just hand cash to survivors. That is why other options were considered. Women will always be at risks from the security men at the mine if they go there, so when we considered the remedies it was with the hope that the women would be encouraged to go into income generating activities and to empower them to improve not just their own lives but that of their families and stay away from doing illegal mining and keep away from that place. We hope that women can be encouraged to come forward to participate instead of going to court because in this country court fees are quite high and it takes forever even if you do have the resources.

I believe that for all concerned we should give this process a chance to run over a period of 18-24 months before assessing its success and failures.

I would be happy to talk to you about any of this as well.

Kind regards,

Ume Wainetti

National Convenor
Family Sexual Violence Action Committee
Papua New Guinea