Shield PNG

WHAT ARMED VIOLENCE COSTS WOMEN



When a fight starts, the men are counted. The dead are named, the payback is argued over, the compensation is negotiated – but women are not counted at all.

Here is what the fighting actually does

1 It moves people

Around 30,000 people were displaced by communal violence in a single year in the areas where the Red Cross works in PNG. Displacement is not a night at a relative's house. It runs for months, sometimes years. In the Southern Highlands, fighting between nine clans over four years pushed more than 40,000 people out and destroyed the schools, the markets and the gardens.

2 It is the women who carry that

The gardens that feed the family are gone. The children are out of school. The market where she earned money is closed. She is living on someone else's ground, dependent, with no income of her own.

3 It brings other violence with it

Sexual violence happens during fights. Women displaced from their own land are more exposed to it, not less. And violence at home does not pause because there is violence outside – more than half of women in PNG have experienced physical violence since the age of fifteen, and nearly one in five women who have been pregnant experienced violence while they were carrying a child.

The decisions that start all this are made in rooms women are not in. That is the cost.

One thing to do today

Raise this at your next women's group or church meeting. Ask one question – if fighting started here, what happens to us? The answer is the beginning of a plan.

