

The role of traditional authority in **stopping gun violence.**

The most important role of a clan's leaders is to protect its people, especially the most vulnerable. Sometimes that is done through effective non-violence responses which work very well, including setting and supporting Peace and Good Order Committees, or Land Court or other processes.

Sometimes leaders have chosen tribal fights as a way to defend and deter. In the past fights and payback were not a major threat to clan safety. There were rules. That is no longer the case with high powered rifles – they are the new authority and they decide the rules. We hear stories of **young men with M16s telling their own leaders to sit down and be quiet.**

It is time for the M16s to be quiet and traditional leaders to get their authority back.

A commitment to effective, non-violent justice is the way back. When used as deterrence, it is the best way to protect your clan from rivals. There are ShieldPNG Resources which show how to deter through non-violence and suggested steps on how leaders can help their community practice dispute response so that everyone is ready when disputes and attacks occur.

Committing to justice can also help reclaim your authority within the clan. The above-mentioned M16 is unregistered and the holder is unlicensed.



Under Papua New Guinea's *Firearms Act* unlawful possession of a firearm now carries a maximum is life imprisonment, then 50 years and 20 years as small sentences.

The law stands behind leaders who choose non-violence.

ShieldPNG stands behind them too — with information, resources, and safe ways for communities to make justice work. Fewer guns making the rules. More leaders leading. That is what ShieldPNG is for.