

The Challenges of Lawlessness in Mining Sites in Papua New Guinea: A Case of Porgera Gold Mine in Enga

Starza Paul¹; Ero Wambu²

¹Lecturer, School of Communication and Development Studies, Papua New Guinea University of Technology, Papua New Guinea.

²Deputy Principal and Senior Teacher at Holy Trinity Teachers College, Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea.

Publication Date: 2026/05/22

Abstract: The Porgera Gold Mine in Enga is one of the largest open pit and underground mining operations in Papua New Guinea. Lawlessness in mining sites can be multidimensional. Lawlessness experiences in mining sites are frequently associated with illegal, unregulated, or artisanal mining operations, characterized by a lack of state oversight, high danger, environmental devastation, and corruption (Schwartz, Lee & Darrah, 2021). Such activities are often said to work outside of established legal frameworks that may lead to increased law-and-order issues. Factors such as conflict of interest was looked at carefully in the Porgera Gold Mine case to establish reasons for the lawlessness experience at the mine site. This research was mainly qualitative in nature, but the quantitative approach was employed as well for the convenience of good data collection and analysis. While analyzing the work, the researchers used MS Excel to generate our data. It was recognized that lawlessness is prevalent in the mining areas around the world and are also happening in Papua New Guinea. Porgera is one of those worst mining zones in the South Pacific, where the mine-related problems are very high which threatens the lives of people and suppresses the flow of socioeconomic services in the host communities and the nation.

Keywords: Lawlessness, Open Pit, Underground Mine, Conflicts, Illegal Mine, Mine Sites, Law and Order.

How to Cite: Starza Paul; Ero Wambu (2026). The Challenges of Lawlessness in Mining Sites in Papua New Guinea: A Case of Porgera Gold Mine in Enga. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 11(5), 1014-1023. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26may217>

I. INTRODUCTION

Porgera Gold Mine is a world class mine that contributes a lot to the economy of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Resource extraction in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a cornerstone of government policy that is expected to bring development to remote areas of the country (Ballard and Banks 2003). Through the mining activities local communities that a most often remote are expected to benefit from the spinoffs. So, when expectations are not given, law and order issues arise. Lawlessness is very prevalent at the Porgera mining site which is jointly operated by Barrick Gold Limited and Zijing Mining Group. The problems may raise from land disputes to societal and political issues that after the operation of the mine. While tensions around the mine are often associated with disputes over mining access and benefits, they also reflect broader patterns of conflict in the province (Tabara, 2025). Though lawlessness is a common occurrence around the mine sites, the cause can be analysed and factored into certain settings like conflicts arising from resettlement, illegal mining, existing tribal conflicts and political related violences. Violence and lawlessness happen

most often at this mine site over the year since its operations in late 1980s.

“Lawlessness” refers to a state or condition where laws are not obeyed, enforced, or respected, leading to disorder and a breakdown of social norms (Adekunte, Sadiku & O Sadiku (2025). The New Porgera Mine continues to face problems dealing with lawlessness at the mine site. Sometimes illegal miners disrupt the mining activities when they enter the site evading perimeter security or climb down steep mountains. These are high risks actions that illegal miners employ to get to the open pit to collect gold. Also, benefit sharing and allocation of resources creates frictions among those who benefit and those who do not. Another contributing factor is the migrants, people from other part of the province and country who go there in search of opportunities turn to create social disorder. Sometimes they team-up with locals in the illegal mining activities. According to Jacka (2019), in the Porgera Valley of highlands Papua New Guinea, young men who are called ‘Rambos’ engage in sustained tribal conflicts due to increasing social inequalities in an area that is supposedly benefiting from socioeconomic development.

Such societal problems are caused when hopes are not met and spinoffs are not felt by the surrounding communities.

Below shows the map of Papua New Guinea. Inset shows the Porgera Valley in Enga.

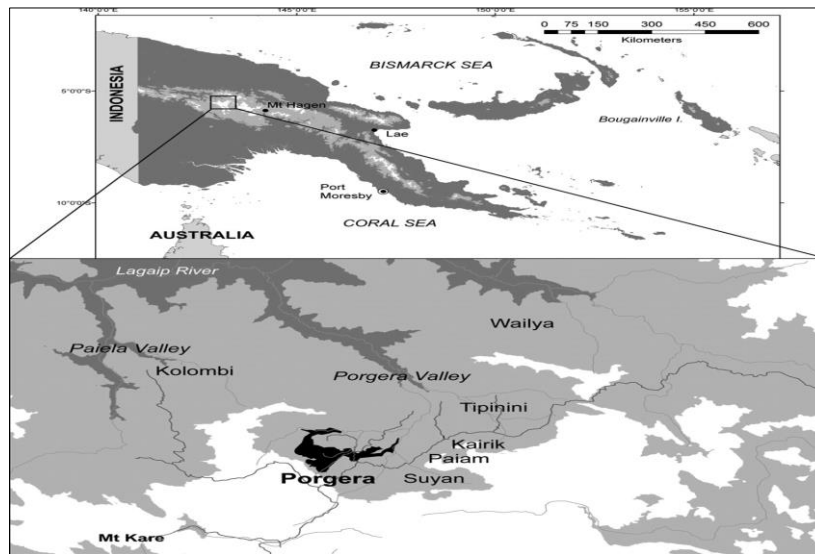


Fig 1 Porgera Valley in Enga.
(Source: Jacka, 2019).

Adekunte, Sadiku & O Sadiku (2025), explain that “lawlessness” is very much prevalent in most developing nations, but less in the developed countries, since there is no crime-free state. Lawlessness affects mining activities can result in the company facing financial, operational and security emergency. After closer of a mine, it takes time and much needed finance to restart.

It was reported recently in a local newspaper that the PNG Police Commissioner David Manning declared emergency orders to safeguard infrastructure and residents in Porgera due to escalating law and order brought about by illegal miners (“Emergency Declared,” 2025). Its not only the operations but people working as staff and the surrounding communities are affected as a result. Due to such dangers posed by lawlessness, the authorities must find a way to contain and minimize disorder.

With having this in mind, this research was done to assess the causes of lawlessness and propose suggestions as to how the people and authorities can work together to minimize crisis in the mine site.

II. BACKGROUND

Porgera Gold Mine started in the late 1980s and actual operation eventuated in 1990. Banks and Burton (September, 2024) stated that the Porgera mine opened in 1990, producing four million ounces of gold in its first four years of operation and over the 30 years it has had a chequered history, with the ownership of the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV, the operator) changing at least a dozen times (with the state’s interest shifting from its original 10% to 25%, then down to zero, and now to a majority position of 51%), and environmental, human rights and social issues bedevilling the mine. Porgera Mine closed in 2020 after the special mining leased expired.

After a new mining lease was issue, the New Porgera Limited (NPL) was allowed to operate in late 2023. The NPL is joint ventured by Zijin Mining of China and Barrick Gold Limited (“Announces Reopening,” 2023).

When Porgera opened for the first time in 1990, the people from the area thought they would enrich themselves to unimaginable richness form the mining activities. Probably they thought would own and operate businesses or just become rich with a lot of money. Jacka (2019) explained that the opening of the Porgera Gold Mine in 1990 ushered in an era of anticipated benefits that were hoped to transform the lives of the region’s subsistence horticulturalists. No intimate interpersonal relationship with the company and host community due to company not being faithful to paying the royalty distribution, relocation and service delivery to the host community while the landowners on the other hand cause problems like illegal mining and disturbing the extracting company having to release frustration (Wambu & Paul, 2023). No intimate interpersonal relationship with the company and host community due to company not being faithful to paying the royalty distribution, relocation and service delivery to the host community while the landowners on the other hand cause problems like illegal mining and disturbing the extracting company having to release frustration (Wambu & Paul, 2023). Jacka (2019) explained that the abjection experienced by young men eventuated into a series of tribal fights, resulting in deaths, displacements, and the destruction of most infrastructure According to Wambu and Paul (2023), conflict of interest between landowners and the Barrick Mining Company at Porgera is extremely serious and causes eyesores to many ordinary Papua New Guineans and international friends who are here and made aware of it.

Lawlessness in mine centres can also because by migrates. People who go to these mining centres in the hope

of finding employment or in search of a good life. Many of those engaged in informal mining are not the traditional landowners, and, over time, disagreements have emerged (Tabara, 2025). Police Commissioner Manning explained that the worsening situation caused by illegal miners and settlers who are using violence to victimise and terrorise the traditional landowners (“Emergency Declared,” 2025). According to Tabara (2025);

Violence around the Porgera Gold Mine in Papua New Guinea’s Enga province remains a persistent challenge, despite recent peace-building efforts. A stark example came on 2 March, when a shootout at the mine between informal miners from the Sakar tribe and state security forces left two miners dead. The clash broke out after armed miners attempted to enter a restricted area of the mine. In response to the deaths, the miners burned mining equipment, and members of the tribe damaged and blocked the highway connecting Laiagam and Porgera, disrupting travel, supply routes, and mine operations. The violence occurred despite a peace agreement that was signed on 31 January, requiring the tribe to cease informal mining near the mine.

So, violence arises due to multiple factors. The cause can be existing tribal conflicts, political related, illegal mining activities, benefit sharing inconsistencies or others. While tensions around the mine are often associated with disputes over mining access and benefits, they also reflect broader patterns of conflict in the province (Tabara, 2025). According to Whayman (2015), it is faced with issues such as poverty, crime, tribal conflict, gender-based violence, sorcery and illegal mining. All of these problems have been exacerbated within a context of limited law enforcement capability and access to government services.

III. REASONS BEHIND THE STUDY

The Porgera Mining Centre has experienced widespread lawlessness over the years. The authorities have found it hard to bring lasting peace to the communities. When lawlessness or violence arises, it affects all. Violence and lawlessness fundamentally break down social order, creating environments where fear, instability, and injustice thrive (Adekunle, Sadiku & O Sadiku, 2025). Some of the key aspects of lawlessness include the lack of legal enforcement, anarchy, crime and disorder, and breakdown of institutions. So, when lawlessness is widespread, it affects everyone regardless of who you are, what you do and where you come. In the Porgera case, incidents connected to the mine are not limited to the mining site itself; they can also occur along access routes and in nearby communities, highlighting how concerns linked to the mine resonate across a wider geographic and social landscape (Tabara, 2025).

Due to the mine closer in 2020, illegal mining has increased around the mine site. Local landowners claim that due to the mining closer and no more benefits, the illegal mining activities provided them with a source of income to enhance their livelihoods. During this time, formal employment disappeared, and informal mining expanded in the absence of regulation. For these individuals, small-scale

gold panning has become a primary means of earning a living since the establishment of the mine in 1990, particularly in the absence of stable employment opportunities (Tabara, 2025). Individuals, including some of the traditional landowners, felt justified in mining during the closure, citing the absence of benefits and income from formal agreements while the mine was inactive (“Real Issue in Porgera,” 2024). The state also considers illegal mining to be a challenge to law and order around a nationally significant economic site (Kora & Swanston, 2024). In one instance, the PNG Police Commissioner, David Manning gave 48 hours ultimatum for squatters living around the mine site to leave or they could be forcefully removed (“48 hours ultimatum,” 2024).

The mining area continues to experience law and order problems despite government interventions. Enga Provincial Governor Sir Peter Ipatas was quoted saying in a local newspaper, “if security challenges are not addressed promptly, is an ongoing risk of the mine being shutdown to safeguard its operations and personnel, which could have significant economic impact for the country,” (“Emergency Declared,” 2025). “Maintaining law and order has emerged as a critical factor for its ongoing success,” according to Barrick President and CEO Mark Bristow (Bristow, 2024, as cited in Arlo, 2024). Bristow explains explicitly that law and order issue is very threatening and it does not reflect well this world class mine. He has called for a holistic approach to curb the lawlessness that is having a drastic effect on the employees and its activities. Bristow (as cited in Arlo, 2024) stated that “the greatest threat to the continued operation and profitability of the mine is the lack of law and order. It requires the active support of all stakeholders to ensure that Porgera can continue to deliver benefits in line with its potential as a Tier One asset.”

Despite the complexity of the causes of the lawlessness in the area, the stakeholders, especially the state (government) and miner need an action and effective comprehensive approach to handling of situation so the good of the mine, employees and the concern landowner population. The mining is a lifeline to the economy of the country and it provided employment for thousands of locals and expatriates. Likewise, spill off economic activities benefit a lot of people from the region and the country.

➤ *Research Questions*

The following research questions have been developed to investigate this study.

- What are the causes of lawlessness in Porgera Gold Mine in Enga?
- Who is to be blamed for the law-and-order situation in Porgera?

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was both qualitative and quantitative. The research is mainly qualitative in nature, but the quantitative approach was employed as well for the convenience of good data collection and analysis. It has been estimated that the

population has increased significantly to 70,000 in Porgera electorate in recent times due to the mining activity (Mako, 2023). The study was proposed and designed to take place at Porgera Mine site and villages surrounding the Special Mine Lease Area (SMLA). In that time the population was estimated to be around 10,500 around the SMLA.

A combination of cluster randomized and purposeful sampling was used to collect the data. To select the sample population, it is important to apply relevant and appropriate sampling techniques useful for this research (Paul and Sali,

2020). Therefore, the sampling techniques of cluster randomized and purposive were used and applied in this research. There were total of 150 structured and unstructured questionnaires being taken to the study site for the interview. Out of them 40 questionnaires were distributed to the mining employees inside the mining area. Another 20 questionnaires were distributed to the mining employees outside of their residential area. Twenty (20) questionnaires were distributed to the government employees like teachers, nurses and so forth. The remaining 70 questionnaires were completed through one-on-one interviews in households.

Table 1 Showing Interview Schedule and Study Sites

Targeted Villages	Questionnaires Distributed and Interviewed	Comment
Yanjakona	5 Days	The questionnaires were distributed and interviews were carried out as scheduled here. The completed questionnaires were collected or given upon completion by the responsible respondents.
Panandak	5 Days	
Kulapi	5 Days	
Paiam Station	5 Days	
Suyane	5 Days	
Tipinim	5 Days	
Karrick Two	5 Days	
Apalak	5 Days	

Cluster sampling is a practical and efficient method for sampling large and dispersed populations, balancing cost considerations with the need for representative data collection (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013 as cited in Alex, 2024). Alex goes into explaining;

It can also be combined with other sampling techniques in multistage sampling designs. This cost-effective approach is efficient, especially for large, geographically dispersed populations. For instance, a national health survey assessing diabetes prevalence might divide the country into districts (clusters), randomly select several districts, and then survey all or a random sample of individuals within those districts. This method simplifies logistics and reduces costs while maintaining a representative sample, making it ideal for applications in national surveys, educational research, public health assessments, market research, and environmental studies.

Cluster Sampling is situationally convenience for this research because of its function as definition stated below.

Using this sampling technique the researcher tries to directly deal with the principal landowners, the working community and the affected civil society in their 8 targeted villages. Within the villages the researcher deploys the random sampling technique to randomly select 10 percent of houses from each group. Furthermore, to it, 2 people from each household male and female were selected and interviewed. Maxwell (1996) says that the —logic and strength of purposeful sampling lies in the intentional selection of information-rich-cases for an in-depth study. Information rich cases are areas and people who possess more in-depth information about any one or more of those 8 different sub areas of study that suit the purpose of the study.

The appropriate and the selected sample size for this study is given below after explaining the processes (techniques) involved in selecting the samples—that is, cluster randomized purposeful sampling. Using this connected sampling technique the researcher grouped the landowners, mining and government workers and settlers into three major groups. Within that the landowners are grouped into their already grouped 8 village groups. Those groups ‘populations are further selected randomly using the process below.

Landowners are grouped into 8 community groups. Thus, their approximate houses are 30 for each village. 10% of 30 \implies 3 houses each x 8 \implies 24 houses total interviewed. The approximate number of houses for the other two groups: Company Employee Approx. 40 so 10% \implies 4 houses interviewed.

The approximate number of houses for settlers is 50 so 10% of that is \implies 5 Houses interviewed. Therefore, the total houses interviewed were 33 in all the study sites.

The smallest sampling unit of analysis in the experiment is the individual person from which data was collected. For example, depending on the objectives, experimental units for this survey were divided into 8 villages or targeted sites namely, Tipinim, Karik, Paiam, Suyane Gate, Yanjkona, Kulapi, Panandak and Apalak at Porgera. These are villages (study sites) surrounding the SML area.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the results referring to the main research questions asked in the study. While presenting these results, it discusses and provides some reasoning as to why the results turnout to be presented as it is in this order; the result will be presented first than followed with the discussion for each of the research questions asked.

➤ *Results on Research Question One (1) - What are the Causes of Lawlessness in Porgera Gold Mine in Enga?*

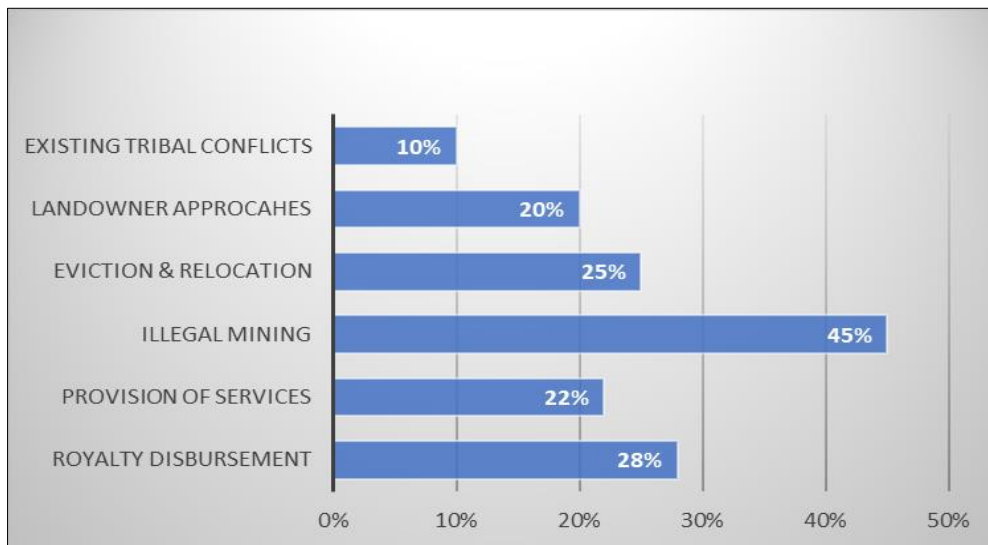


Fig 2 Causes of Lawlessness in Porgera Mine Site

The research question one was framed to identify if the causes of lawlessness in the mining area. As shown Figure 2, 45% of the sample examined pointed out that illegal mining was causing widespread law-and-order program while 28% blamed the company for irregularities in the distribution of royalty disbursement. Another 25% indicated forced eviction and relocation by the mining company while a further 22% indicated provision of services to the affected communities and the people. Further 20% blamed the company for not approaching well the landowners and their concerns while the remaining 10% of the sample population stated existing tribal conflicts were the causes of lawlessness in the mining township.

Lawlessness and violence experience in the mine site is multifactorial. All actors in the above figure are blamed for what happens in the mining valley that affects the day-to-day operation of the mine and the livelihood of the people. For example, illegal miners who were very prevalent in the sample are blamed for the violence experience in the mining area. Since Porgera is one of the huge mines in the global perspective influx of people through-out the country in-migrate into the valley (Wambu & Paul, 2023). Their prime aim is to become direct or indirect beneficiaries from the mine, as a result the valley is over populated. For the migrants, small-scale gold panning has become a primary means of earning a living since the establishment of the mine in 1990, particularly in the absence of stable employment opportunities (Tabara, 2025). The greatest threat to the continued operation and profitability of the mine is the lack of law and order (Bristow, 2024, as cited in Arlo, 2024). Police Commissioner Manning blamed illegal squatters and miner damaging properties, committing criminal activities and threatening peace and order in the mining valley (“48 hours ultimatum,” 2024). But concerns are emerging of what might happen when security forces attempt to move on the swelling population of illegal miners armed with "high-powered firearms" (Kora & Swanston, 2024).

According to Tabara (2025), incidents connected to the mine are not limited to the mining site itself; they can also occur along access routes and in nearby communities, highlighting how concerns linked to the mine resonate across a wider geographic and social landscape. Enga Governor Sir Peter calls for state of emergency following escalating law and order problem in the mining centre (“Emergency Orders”, 2024). When benefit sharing from the company is questioned, people are likely to resort to violence as they see that land as their gold (“Benefit Sharing,” 2024). In the Porgera Valley of highlands PNG, violence associated with the development of the world-class Porgera Gold Mine in 1990 has likewise been argued by the mining company to be based on prior conflicts rather than responses to inequalities associated with resource extraction (Burton 2014, as cited in Jacka, 2019). According to Paul (2025), tribal conflicts are seen as cultural norm and inevitably part of life in Enga. From political instigated warfare to hired gunmen and the use of modern factory-made weapons contributes to mass destructions to the communities and endangers the lives of the people (Paul, 2022).

The mining company is said to cause problems when it addresses well landowner royalties, employs forced migration while not listening to the concerns of the people. Tensions around the mine are often associated with disputes over mining access and benefits (Tabara, 2025). Disputes over land ownership due to some clans feeling they were unfairly excluded from formal landowner agreements (Post Courier 2021, as cited in Tabara, 2025). Likewise, discontent among landowners over compensation from mine operators and the government for use of the land and the environmental degradation caused by the mining, and reports of human rights abuses have long fuelled local frustration (Mining Watch Canada 2018, cited in Tabara, 2025). The relocation of landowners who still live on the edges of the mine has been hindered, among other things, by population increase and complicated kinship ties (Mako, 2023). According to a local leader, his village, Wingima was burnt due to forced eviction by the company that can result in conflicts (Amnesty

International 2012, cited in Wambu & Paul, 2023). Economic pressures (Tabara, 2025) and unequal provisions of services from the miner (Wambu & Paul, 2023) causes frictions and discontent among the landowners as well that can eventually lead to violence. Thousands are facing financial hardship, and are being thrown into poverty, as the mine closure prolongs (Mako, 2023). This can lead to illegal mining and conflicts in the mining area. In a study by Wambu & Paul (2023), eviction was carried-out it was reported that more than 200 houses were burned down which did not match the total number of people living in the area, this led to conflicts with the miner for not disclosing factual data.

Dialogue with the principal stakeholders plays a greater role in mitigating the conflict of interest and creates intimate relationship with the host community. The case of Porgera become becomes interesting as claims of excommunication or relationship with then miner. In a study by Wambu & Paul (2023), the responses from different groups of people, the government employees, Barrick employees, the landowners and the settlers said the mining company does not spare time to address the landowners 'issues. Local leaders called on the miner to address well the needs of the because many residents in Porgera have moved out of the district due to the lack of basic services (Kora & Swanston, 2024). Also, in the study by Wambu & Paul (2023), few landowners that were representing the landowners were not really presentative of everyone member of the communities as sometimes they diverted their purposes for self gains. A case can be seen in this report by Mako (2023) where he stated, apart from a

couple of landowner companies which are controlled by a handful of people (and could be better managed), not many SML people own businesses in Porgera, or have invested in other business ventures outside of Porgera. Theory of Social Exchange (SET) by Shari Parsons (2024) further explains this situation by stating that social change and stability in relationship takes place when negotiated exchange of words and materials take place between the parties involved. This theory draws the understanding that people involved in the distribution of royalty payment must treat the benefiteres equally as they want to benefit themselves from the payment as agreed. From illegal miners to, royalty distributions, force evictions, provisions of services, no dialogue to former tribal conflicts continue to affect the people and the mine operations.

➤ *Results on Research Question Two (2) - Who is to be Blamed for the Law-and-Order Situation in Porgera?*

The research question two was drawn up to carefully assess and analyse who were the causes to the escalating violences in the mine centre that was affection the mining operations as well as the livelihood of the people. The question was designed to get the views from that of the local population as well as from the developer and its employees and the government. Both faction which total up to 38% blamed illegal miner while 25% from the indicated it was caused by police/security. An additional 24% from the sample indicated and blamed the mining company while 23% blamed the luck of government interventions and negligence. The remaining 40% (20% a piece/each) indicated mine employees and landowners being equal actors in causing lawlessness.

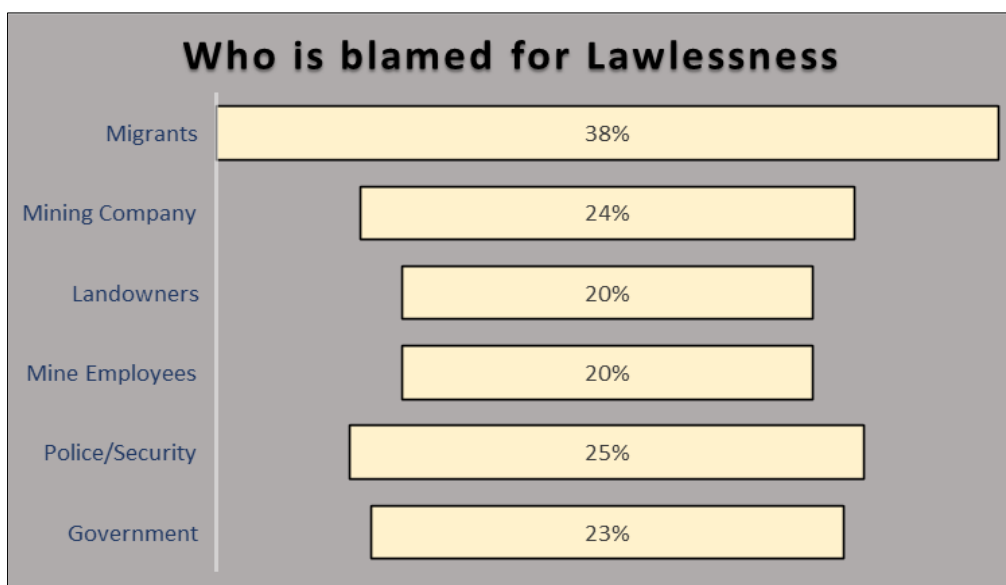


Fig 3 Persons/Group Blamed for Law-and-Order Situation in Porgera.

Migrants in the case of Porgera is those people who are identified not original from the Porgera mine area. The origins of their place could be from areas in the surrounding communities, province and the country. These are the group of people that have been blamed for the lawlessness in the mining centre. Informal/illegal mining is largely carried out by migrants from other parts of Enga (Tabara, 2025). People from all over the country have settled in Porgera, resulting in

a population increase in the district from 4,000 to over 70,000 now (Mako, 2023). A local resident, Jenny Kopi said, "Porgera is now overcrowded and the risk of having so many illegal miners and settlers is now making it quite risky for our mothers and young girls to move around," (Kopi 2024, as cited in Kora & Swanston, 2024). Police Commissioner Manning stated that a state of emergency was called to protect the lives of innocents and the important infrastructure in the

valley due to violence and conflicts caused by illegal miners and settlers (Mining 2024, as cited in The National, 2024). According to Mako (2023), the increase in migrants has created tensions, which have led to fierce fighting and this preceded but has been worsened by the mine closure. PNG Prime Minister Marape was quoted saying he wanted to introduce identification cards for landowners, to help security forces manage the local population (Marape 2024, as cited in Kora & Swanston, 2024). So, migrants who later became illegal miners as term not generalization of all migrants has been blamed wholly for the escalating violence and lawlessness in the once beautiful and peaceful Porgera Valley (Mako, 2023).

Security or police exist to protect the lives of people and the properties and promote law and order in the mining areas. However, in the Porgera case has been quite the opposite according to a study. Wambu & Paul (2023) uncovered that there are speculations around that the policemen are manipulated by the company and the government to follow their orders instead of playing neutral role. Amnesty International confirmed this from their 2010 report that police cause destruction to the indigenous community of Porgera without any established notice to the community. In the same report it was stated that, forced evictions and police brutality around the Porgera gold mine, Papua New Guinea, documents police violence and the forced eviction by police of families living alongside the Porgera gold mine (Amnesty International, 2010). In the same understanding, if the police are employed by the company, then the company is blamed for the violation of human rights and identified as the core contributor to the lawlessness in the mine area. the world's largest gold mining company, has come under fire for attaching strings to a "remediation framework" offered to women raped by employees of its Papua New Guinea mine (Annandale, 2013). Police or security is pointed out as one of the contributors of lawlessness and human rights violators. While some of the alleged rapists were company employees, others were members of the police assigned to provide additional mine security (Annandale, 2013). A spokes person from the Porgera Landowners Association, Mark Tony Ekepa, was quoted saying, the company engaged police force has been rendered powerless due to internal corruption where some officers were implicated in assisting illegal miners that included transporting them to restricted areas ("Law and Order," 2025).

As seen from the above discussion, the company becomes its own enemy creating problems that may affect its operations due to lawlessness in the mine area. As in the case of its police not doing their intended job or the company not listening to the peoples' concerns. According to open interviews, informal interviews and observations, greater number of participants stated that through the Akali Tange Association (NGO) more than ten (10) women and underage girls have received their remediation packages, cash payment of K20, 000.00 each from the Barrick Company (Wambu & Paul, 2023). EarthRights International (2014) stated that the raped victims of women and underage girls from Porgera Gold Mine site were going through the mine's remediation program and some have received cash payments for

compensation. While handing the compensation package, Barrick Company said that she was compensating them just for the purpose of creating good and intimate relationship with the community because most of those victims were raped when the project was in the care of the initial company, Placer Dome (PJV), [National Research Institute (2012)]. In the by Wambu & Paul (2023), it was claimed that the scores of killings and rapes occur at the SML area are suspected to be a form of retaliation by the company and the government through their security personnel. Allegations of rapes, beatings and killings of community members by Porgera Joint Venture (PJV) security forces have been prevalent for at least a decade (Coumans, 2009). Wambu and Paul (2023) were explicit when explaining that the scores of killings and rapes occur at the SML area are suspected to be a form of retaliation by the company and the government through their security personnel.

The government whether, this maybe the local, provincial or national government is blamed for the violence in the mine area as well. Whether, its to do with policy matter or duty of governance. People living in countries with weak governance and fragile legal systems have limited access to justice when faced with human rights and environmental abuses by multinational corporations (Kneen, 2012). In April 2020, the government declined to renew the miner's license, hoping to negotiate an increase in the share that the state and the landowners own, leading to a three-year closure (Oeka 2023, as cited in Tabara, 2025). During this time, formal employment disappeared, and informal mining expanded in the absence of regulation. Individuals, including some of the traditional landowners, felt justified in mining during the closure, citing the absence of benefits and income from formal agreements while the mine was inactive (Post Courier 2024, as cited in Tabara, 2025). Despite taxes gained from the resource site, the government sometimes fails to listen to the concerns of the people and this may lead to violence by dissatisfied factions. Resource extraction and resource conflict frequently go hand in hand in PNG (Jacka, 2019). Resource extraction in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a cornerstone of government policy that is expected to bring development to remote areas of the country (Ballard & Banks 2003, as cited in Jacka 2019). Yet, as the case of Bougainville showed in the late 1980s (Filer 1990, as cited in Jacka 2019) when the government does not deliver, the people show their dissatisfaction through violence. A Non-Government Organization said that something urgent needs to be done by the National government and Barrick mining Company because it is not a battle field; it is a company operating area of profit and service (MiningWatch (Canada) (2012).

According to Tabara (2025), that if grievances of landowners, if they are not consistently included in peace efforts, that gap may remain, affecting how government actions are received or followed at the local level. A recent study revealed that the women and the underage girls were raped by the mine securities (including policemen and defence) and company workers or employees (Wambu & Paul, 2023). This query was confirmed by a study taken by MiningWatch (Canada) (2012) that the operator of the multibillion-dollar Porgera goldmine in Papua New Guinea

has sacked five employees over an alleged pattern of violent abuse against villagers, including pack rapes. Numerous women said they were beaten, tortured or raped by members of Barrick Gold Corporation 's 450-strong, private security forces in abuses dating back to 2008 (Wambu & Paul, 2023). Tensions between tribal and state law persist as many locals still follow customary systems that don't always align with state processes, and a lack of trust in government authorities has only deepened these divides (Tabara, 2025). Mako (2023) pointed out that in-fighting among the landowners over many years for the control of mining benefits such as royalty payments has perpetuated the suffering of the poor majority, who bear the brunt of the evils of missed opportunities of mining in PNG. Peace agreement represents progress toward ending violence, lasting peace will depend on consistent enforcement of the peace agreement, community engagement, and addressing the deeper social and economic drivers of informal mining in the province (Tabara, 2025). Resource competition, land tenure, and limited and uneven access to government services and law enforcement that have contributed to a fragile security environment (Whayman 2015, as cited in Tabara, 2025). Such negligence can see violent activities from the concerned affected people. Police, illegal miners and some landowners have been in conflict before (Kora & Swanston, 2024). Several months ago, a conflict broke out between two tribes in the Porgera District (Whayman, 2015). Such can lead to violence engulfing everyone that can affect lives and businesses. So, from landowners to mine employees are also seen as part of the lawlessness in the rich mining centre.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is identified that imbalance and ineffective structure of police, provincial and local level government and other institutions including the national government are encouraging lawlessness and violence in the mining area. Their conflict resolution and management policies lack effective implementation on various issues of violence and conflicts when the structure and the systems of the state institutions are ineffective in enforcing the policies. Declaring state of emergency at Porgera portrays ineffective governance and lack of managerial and strategic conflict resolution.

The conflict of interest between the stakeholders at Porgera does not intensively need National Security Forces and special Mobile Squads. Conflict of interest is not trouble fight where the National and Provincial Government need to deploy such high rated security personnel. Conflict of interest naturally defines as a competition between individuals and or groups for an unequal distribution of resources and mutual respect. This is what is lacking between the stakeholders especially the landowners and the Barrick Mining Company. In order for the government and the mining company to minimize and manage violence, interpersonal and intergroup communication links and networks and participatory community engagement with the support of the mass communication have to be established with the government agents, the Barrick Company/New Porgera Mine and the host community. Where possible the host community members have to be engaged in the planning and development process.

The Following are recommendation's basing on the findings:

- To put in place an integrated community management program to monitor and manage the conflict in the valley. This management program will be an organisation which is recommended to be in operation and function in partnership with the provincial government, police and the courts.
- The Barrick Company in collaboration with the provincial and national government must look into these issues more closely to manage and control crime and violent acts. The company and the government must give priority in their policy strategies to provide these basic needs in the Porgera Valley as it is also stated in the initial project agreement. New Porgera Mine and the Governments through the tax credit scheme can allocate more funds and address these issues.
- The royalty payment in cash to the landowners must be made by the company to their individual accounts. The payment must be done to them on the exact stated times. The amount paid to them must be recorded by the company, the National and Provincial governments and the PDA or Landowners 'Association offices and report to them the total figure to confirm the exactness and clarity on provided mass media.
- Three major stakeholders, the national government, provincial government and the Barrick Company have to completely relocate those landowners taking into account the Human Rights Acts of relocation and forced eviction. In the relocation programme, the three stakeholders have to consider the necessities and well being of the relocated families under the Human Rights Acts. After the full relocation the judiciary law regarding the bypassing of the Mine Lease area must be reviewed as mentioned under the law review to a penalty higher than now and if one is found bypassing the SML area must be dealt severely by that reviewed law.
- Company and the government must engage the youths in community projects. Engage many of the leader-minded community members in the community project planning and developments machinery. Government and the company must organise sports to engage youths to get emerged with the sporting activities. Engage more host community members in the employment opportunities provided. Engage women and young girls in life-long trainings like sawing and maternal care trainings. Subsidise school fees and engage all school age youths in all levels of school.
- All provincial governments should establish law reform commission to adopt their own laws basing on their respective cultures and traditions. The laws enacted by provinces would be distributed to all districts and other provinces to guide any individuals or groups residing in any provincial towns or mining centres. By doing so it would allow offenders to be dealt with by both their provincial and state laws of the country. Delegating these powers to provinces may guide all individuals to be law abiding citizens. Train the police with minimum of 3 years so that they know the judiciary system and laws of the country that appropriate actions are taken at different

situations of enforcing law-and-order. Strengthen and give more powers to village court, community policing unit and other social control institutions. Enact tougher penalties for law enforcing personnel who violate the law or those who aid in criminal activities of any kind.

- Provincial Law Reform Committee must make a law to be enforced by police to discourage buy and sale of small-scale gold at Porgera area. Improve company security facilities (Camera) and increase security personnel inside the SML area and; Detain the captivities illegally entering and stealing the mineral-containing ore to a minimum of 3 years hard labour at the general prison camps.
- A Community Partnership Service must be established as this is one of the very useful idea and service sharing forums recommended where all the businessmen and women who directly or indirectly benefit and expand their

businesses because of the Porgera Mining Project have to come together to contribute their ideas and asserts to collaboratively service the host community. This must be organised by; PDA, Porgera Landowners ‘Association, the National and Provincial Governments and Barrick Company. In the forum they must talk about the entire mine related major contributing factors of the conflict of interest leading to the law-and-order problems at Porgera Valley.

VII. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the researchers came up with a model that could capture everyone in the affected area, that includes the mining company and the government for a workable approach towards creating lasting peace.

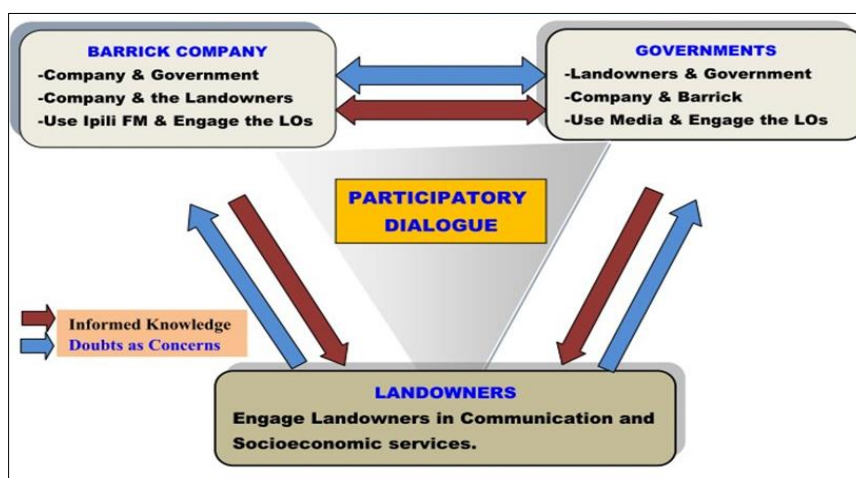


Fig 4 Shows How the Three Stakeholders, National Government, Provincial Government and Barrick Could Engage the Host Community in Order to Control and Contain the Prevalence of Lawlessness in the Porgera Valley.

It is identified that imbalance and ineffective structure of police, provincial and local level government and other institutions including the national government are encouraging lawlessness and violence in the mining area. Their conflict resolution and management policies lack effective implementation on various issues of violence and conflicts when the structure and the systems of the state institutions are ineffective in enforcing the policies. Declaring state of emergency at Porgera portrays ineffective governance and lack of managerial and strategic conflict resolution.

REFERENCE

[1]. Adekunte, A, P., Sadiku, M, N, O & Sadiku, O, J. Lawlessness. International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD). vol. 9 (4). Pp. 247-257. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd97225.pdf>

[2]. Alex, D. (2024, July 29). What is Cluster Sampling? Definition, Method, and Examples. Researcher. Life. The National. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://researcher.life/blog/article/what-is-cluster-sampling-definition-method-and-examples/>

[3]. Amnesty International. (2010). In Papua New Guinea: Barrick Gold vs. Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved March,

2026 from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2010/02/police-violence-and-illegal-evictions-near-papua-new-guinean-gold-mine-m/>

[4]. Annandale, R. (2013, February, 13). Barrick Gold's offer to rape victims slammed by NGOs. The Tyee. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2013/02/02/Barrick-Gold-Offer/>

[5]. Arlo, J. (2024, July 28). Law & Order Essential for Porgera Gold Mine's Success | Bristow. PNG Haus Bung. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://pnghausbung.com/law-order-essential-for-porgera-gold-mines-success-bristow/>

[6]. Benefit sharing the real issue in Porgera. Post Courier. The National. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.postcourier.com.pg/benefit-sharing-the-real-issue-in-porgera/>

[7]. Coumans, C. (2009, May 17). Backgrounder: Issues Related to Barrick’s Porgera Joint Venture Mine in Papua New Guinea. MiningWatch (Canada). Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://miningwatch.ca/blog/2009/5/17/backgrounder-issues-related-barrick-s-porgera-joint-venture-mine-papua-new-guinea>

[8]. EarthRights International. (2014). Survivors of Rape by Barrick Gold Security Guards Offered: —Business

- Grants and —Training in Exchange for Waiving Legal Rights. Valentina Washington DC.
- [9]. Jacka., J.K. (2019). Resource conflicts and the anthropology of the dark and the good in highlands Papua New Guinea. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* (2019) 30, 35–52. <https://doi:10.1111/taja.12302>
- [10]. Kneen, J. (2012, November 26). Corporations Fight Against Access to Domestic Courts for Harm Caused Overseas. MiningWatch (Canada). Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://miningwatch.ca/blog/2012/11/26/corporations-fight-against-access-domestic-courts-harm-caused-overseas>
- [11]. Kora, B & Swanston, T. (2024, April 10). PNG government to send military and police in crack down on illegal mining and 'squatters' at Porgera gold mine. ABC News. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-10/png-porgera-mine-police-military-illegal-mining/103686590>
- [12]. Maning Declares Emergency Orders for Porgera (2024, September 15). The National Newspaper. The National. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.thenational.com.pg/maning-declares-emergency-orders-for-porgera/>
- [13]. Manning Declares Emergency for Porgera. (2024, September 15). The National Newspaper. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.thenational.com.pg/maning-declares-emergency-orders-for-porgera/>
- [14]. Mako, A, A. (2023, June 21). Mining in PNG: blessings, curse and lessons from the Porgera goldmine. Devpolicy Blog. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://devpolicy.org/blessings-curse-and-lessons-from-the-porgera-goldmine-20230621/>
- [15]. Maxwell, A. J. (1996). *Designing a Qualitative Study*, New York: Guilford Press.
- [16]. MiningWatch (Canada). (2012). Killings, Rapes, Mine-Related Deaths and Arbitrary Detentions: Issues Related to Barrick Gold's Porgera Joint Venture Mine in Papua New Guinea.
- [17]. National Research Institute. (2012, February). NRI Discussion Paper on Sustainability. Port Moresby: The National Research Institute.
- [18]. New Porgera Chairman announces reopening date for gold mine. (2023, December 13). Business Advantage PNG. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.businessadvantagepng.com/new-porgera-chairman-announces-reopening-date-for-gold-mine/>
- [19]. Paul, S & Sali, G. W. (2020). Communicating an Integrated Clan Based Approach to Tribal Warfare in the Enga Province. *Journal of Communication, Politics & Society*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 1-12.
- [20]. Paul, S. (2025, May 16). Causes and Effects of Tribal Warfare; A Case of Kompiam Conflict in Enga, PNG. Social Science Research Network eJournal (SSRN). Retrieved March, 2026 from: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5183071
- [21]. Paul, S. (2022). The Emerging of a New Trend of Warfare in Enga Province of Papua New Guinea. Social Science Research Network eJournal (SSRN). Retrieved March, 2026 from: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5702647
- [22]. Post Courier. (2024, September 24). Benefit Sharing the Real Issue in Porgera. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.postcourier.com.pg/benefit-sharing-the-real-issue-in-porgera/>
- [23]. Porgera Valley Squatters Given 48 Hours Ultimatum, Says Manning (2024, April 5). The National. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.thenational.com.pg/porgera-valley-squatters-given-48-hour-ultimatum-says-manning/>
- [24]. Porgera LO's want end to law and order issues. (2025, January, 16). The National. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.thenational.com.pg/porgera-los-want-end-to-law-and-order-issues/>
- [25]. Schwartz, F. W., Lee, S., & Darrah, T. H. (2021). A review of the scope of artisanal and small-scale mining worldwide, poverty, and the associated health impacts. *GeoHealth*, 5, e2020GH000325. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2020GH000325>
- [26]. Shari Parsons, M. (2024). What is Social Exchange Theory? EBSCO. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/social-sciences-and-humanities/social-exchange-theory>
- [27]. Tabara, H. (2025). What fuels the violence at Papua New Guinea's Porgera Gold Mine, and what lies ahead? *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED)*. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://acleddata.com/qa/qa-what-fuels-violence-papua-new-guineas-porgera-gold-mine-and-what-lies-ahead>
- [28]. Wambu, E. & Paul, S. (2023). Effective Communication Strategies and Community Engagement in Resolving Conflict of Interest between Porgera Landowners and Barrick Ltd Mining Company, Papua New Guinea. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*. vol.8, no.5. pp. 3459-3470. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8068948>
- [29]. Whyman, J. (2015, June 5). A public-private partnership tackling law and order in PNG. Devpolicy Blog. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://devpolicy.org/a-public-private-partnership-tackling-law-and-order-in-png-20150605/>
- [30]. Tabara, H. (2025). What fuels the violence at Papua New Guinea's Porgera Gold Mine, and what lies ahead? *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED)*. Retrieved March, 2026 from: <https://acleddata.com/qa/qa-what-fuels-violence-papua-new-guineas-porgera-gold-mine-and-what-lies-ahead>