

# **Gun Violence, Crime and Politics in the Southern Highlands**

Community Interviews and a  
Guide to Military-style Small Arms  
in Papua New Guinea

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## **The Small Arms Survey**

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999 with the generous financial support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, it currently receives additional funding from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Small Arms Survey is the principal international source of public information on all aspects of small arms.

## **Preface**

In 2003-2004, the Small Arms Survey completed a series of research projects across 20 nations of the southwest Pacific.<sup>1</sup> One of these, a survey of the proliferation of small arms and firearm-related violence in the strife-torn Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea (Alpers, 2005), relies on a range of background information, field interviews from 19 communities, weapon descriptions and summaries of supplementary material which are not included in the published work. For the benefit of governments, donors, development agencies, NGOs and others with a stake in curbing the proliferation of small arms in Papua New Guinea, this additional information is provided here.<sup>2</sup>

## **About the Author**

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AUD	Australian dollar
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CIS	Charter Industries Singapore, now ST Kinetics
ECP	Australia-Papua New Guinea Enhanced Cooperation Programme
FN	<i>Fabrique Nationale</i>
HE	high explosive, also His or Her Excellency
H&K	Heckler & Koch
HQ	headquarters
MP	member of parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCD	National Capital District (Port Moresby)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSW	New South Wales, Australia
OIC	officer in charge
PGK	PNG kina (currency)
<i>Post-Courier</i>	<i>Papua New Guinea Post-Courier</i> (Port Moresby)
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
RPG	rocket-propelled grenade
RPNGC	Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
S&W	Smith & Wesson
SHP	Southern Highlands Province, PNG
SLR	self-loading rifle
SMLE	short-magazine Lee-Enfield
UN	United Nations
USD	US dollar
VIC	Victoria, Australia
WHP	Western Highlands Province, PNG

## Maps; Acknowledgements; Individuals and Organizations Consulted; Methodology and Limitations

For these, please refer to the main document, *Gunrunning in Papua New Guinea* (Alpers, 2005), at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/publications/special.htm>

## Barriers to Policing Gun Crime

In the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG), very few illicit small arms have been smuggled from overseas. Instead, police and soldiers within PNG supplied the most destructive guns currently used in crime and conflict. Criminals and tribal fighters routinely buy ammunition from police. Police officers from the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) also rent firearms for crime, and recirculate most confiscated crime guns back into illicit possession. By wide consensus, corruption among law enforcement officers is widespread, and a range of studies have documented the failure of police and prosecutors to gain convictions for gun-related, and other violent crime (Alpers, 2005). One explanation offered is that the RPNGC is simply outgunned.

In explaining the difficulty of apprehending and disarming offenders, police often claim to be less well armed than the criminals (Dinnen, 2002). Chief Superintendent Mark Kanawi, at the time Southern Highlands provincial police commander, said of the weapons available to his men: "What we have here is useless compared to what they have. We have to be very careful" (*National*, 2002c). Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) Chief of Staff Tom Ur has also claimed that state forces in the Southern Highlands were often outgunned (Forbes, 2002b).

Yet armed offenders in the Southern Highlands, almost all of whose most potent small arms were obtained from police and defence forces, are perforce equipped with nothing more powerful than the law enforcers and military who supply these weapons. No firearm either found, or reliably reported to be in the possession of tribal fighters or criminals in the Southern Highlands, possesses any more firepower, or lethality, than the much larger number of identical small arms which remain in RPNGC or PNGDF stocks. Even if outlaws have obtained—and adequately maintained—machine guns or grenade launchers, they are most unlikely to have appropriate ammunition for more than a few short bursts of fire.

Nevertheless, police might still find themselves temporarily ill-equipped. If insufficient firearms remain in a police station whose staff suddenly have to deal with armed violence, the swiftest assistance might come in the form of a police Mobile Squad from elsewhere in the district. Once that squad has arrived, however, the assault rifles, grenade launchers, sub-machine guns and machine guns which 'the mobiles' stock at all times, would handily outgun any known criminal group. The claimed imbalance, and the perceived risk of armed intervention, may have more to do with a lack of police legitimacy, training and morale—and conflicting allegiances.

PNG's police are hampered by their image as a violent, paramilitary force. As one government review of the law and justice sector reported: "None of the efforts made before independence or since have been able to shake this dominant characteristic. The persistent military nature of the police is, in part, responsible for the present deficiencies... The performance of the current police force is very poor" (PNG, 2002). Among tribal fighters, Police are often seen as just another clan, either to be fought as the enemy, or co-opted as an ally in battle. Depending on the allegiances of the police unit involved, this can go either way. Even if police do intervene, as Sgt Ben Napote, an officer with 12 years' experience in the Southern Highlands, puts it ruefully: "When you arrest one man, you arrest the whole tribe."

In short, many Southern Highlanders feel that police lack the *right* to enforce laws seen as foreign to tribal custom. Sinclair Dinnen, an Australian National University criminologist working with reform projects in PNG, writes: "The deficiencies of the present system relate as much to lack of legitimacy, as to lack of institutional capacity... The dominance of [the] retributive approach in contemporary policing practice, with its continuous undermining of police/community relations, remains the most significant source of the constabulary's current weakness" (Dinnen, 2002).

Even the cabinet minister responsible for police, Bire Kimisopa, said in a July, 2004 press statement that the "gulf of mistrust" between public and police continues to widen. "Our police force is infested with corruption, collusion, and incompetence within middle management, and continues to see moonlighting and the indiscriminate sale of ammunition to the public at considerable cost to society," said the minister. "Its inability to maintain an honourable record on prosecutions has rendered the operations of the PNG police totally inoperable and dysfunctional" (*National*, 2004e; 2004d; *Post-Courier*, 2004e). While police legitimacy is challenged all the way from the rural villages of the Highlands, to the cabinet minister to whom the Commissioner of Police reports, it is difficult to imagine how such a mistrusted and disabled force intends to curb the proliferation of small arms.

In addition, many police officers have been caught committing armed crime, or hiring out police guns to others for the same purpose (See Box). The core motivation seems economic. Given the demand for weapons and the high prices offered, a confiscated crime gun may be the single most valuable, portable, and tempting object lying around a police station. On his weekly pay of PGK 82 (USD 27), a police officer in charge of a confiscated SLR rifle could be looking at nearly three years' wages.

### ***Going For Their Guns***

March, 2002: Six policemen in Morobe Province were arrested for using police issue firearms to conduct criminal activities. One AR-15, another semi-automatic rifle, two shotguns and ammunition were recovered (*Post-Courier*, 2002k).

August 2002: four drunken soldiers and a Mendi policeman threatened to shoot villagers, firing shots in the air near Pangia, SHP. Locals overpowered the officers and took their guns (*Post-Courier*, 2002h).

November, 2002: Two police-issue .38 revolvers and a semi-automatic rifle were recovered from a Port Moresby man who said he'd bought them for PGK 1,000, or USD 330 each (*Post-Courier*, 2002j).

September, 2003: Three armed robbers held Bougainville's Provincial Police Commander and two of his officers at gunpoint, tying them up for ten hours as they drove around, trying to locate the keys to the police weapons safe. The men were finally chased away by another officer (*Post-Courier*, 2003a).

December, 2003: Near the Southern Highlands town of Tari, two policemen were taken hostage as they raided a village looking for three police rifles, stolen earlier from their barracks. The inspector and his constable were released, but the firearms were still in the hands of the villagers (Peter, 2003)

February, 2004: In Port Moresby, a police officer was arrested for trying to sell a pump-action shotgun for PGK 1,000 (USD 330). The buyer was a man from the Highlands (Yiprukaman, 2004).

March, 2004: Guns and drugs were stolen when thieves broke into the Alotau court house. Kept as exhibits, the home-made weapons and a factory made pistol "should have been disposed of a long time ago" (*Post-Courier*, 2004f).

March 2004: Mendi police confirmed that a notorious criminal and his gang holed up near Tari had three assault rifles, two pistols and a grenade launcher, all taken from police (Peter, 2004).

3 June 2004: Internal Security Minister Bire Kimisopa acknowledged "a number of cases" in which police firearms had been lent out for criminal activities and later returned (*Post-Courier*, 2004d).

## Elected Representatives

When armed violence flares in the Southern Highlands, government officials are mainly conspicuous by their absence. Immediately following election, many members of parliament (MPs) in PNG disappear to Port Moresby, and rarely—sometimes even never—return to their electorates until the time comes to campaign anew. One notable exception is the Minister for Inter-Government Relations, Sir Peter Barter. During one of his recent visits to the Southern Highlands, Sir Peter said that as long as there were firearms in the province, there would not be peace—and when there was no peace, there would not be any development. The Minister for Social Services, Lady Carol Kidu, who accompanied Sir Peter on their two-MP tour, agreed (*Post-Courier*, 2003f).

Other MPs are better known for embracing guns as implements of advantage, intimidation, and re-election. In the Highlands, many 'big men' are routinely armed, as are their security details and close followers.

### **'Big Men' and Their Guns**

March 2002: Security staff at Port Moresby airport found ammunition and a magazine for an assault rifle in a government minister's bag. Associates of two other ministers were also questioned when security officers found two M-16s in their possession. They were allowed to board their aircraft—with the firearms (Rheeney, 2002).

May 2002: Goroka police arrested the bodyguards of Visiso Seravo MP, for carrying a loaded, pump-action shotgun and a pistol (*Post-Courier*, 2002i). In Vanimo, police also confiscated a handgun from Micah Wes, MP. Wes had fired a shot during a protest in the township, after marchers shouted abuse (*Post-Courier*, 2002p).

December 2002: Alois Kingsley King MP, Minister for Culture and Tourism, admitted punching, then pulling a pistol on the University of PNG's Dean of Social Sciences, at the Port Moresby Rugby League Club. According to Professor Kenneth Sumbuk, King pointed the gun at his head, said "I'm going to kill you," then pulled the trigger. The pistol jammed. King was charged, bailed, and suspended from office. The following April, all charges were dropped when "the police prosecutor mysteriously developed 'high blood pressure' and failed to appear at the trial." King was returned to cabinet as Minister of Fisheries (*Australian*, 2002; *Post-Courier*, 2003d; 2003c).

February 2004: Minutes before his Air Niugini flight from Port Moresby landed in Singapore, Wai Kitts, managing director of PNG's Rural Development Bank, realized he was carrying a 9mm pistol. Accompanying Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare on a PNG delegation to China, but aware that possession of a firearm can attract the death penalty in Singapore, Kitts notified the pilot, who confiscated the weapon. Air Niugini did not inform the Singaporean authorities. Instead, they allowed Kitts to stay aboard the aircraft, and to avoid passenger screening until the aircraft departed again for PNG—where Kitts was arrested (Baynes, 2004). All charges against him were later dismissed (*Post-Courier*, 2004c).

May 2004: The wife of the Governor of West Sepik, Carlos Yuni MP, was shot in the thigh during a domestic argument in the couple's Vanimo home. Charged with attempted murder, Governor Yuni was released on bail of PGK 2,000, or USD 670 (*National*, 2004b; *Post-Courier*, 2004g).

(Continued)

### **'Big Men' and their Guns** (Continued)

May 2004: Police announced the loss of the 9mm pistol taken by former Rural Development Bank managing director Wai Kitts on an Air Niugini flight to Singapore. The gun was in the custody of Kitts' replacement at the bank, Andrew Nagari, when it was stolen from his car. Police called this: "total negligence on the part of Mr Nagari, as the weapon should have been left in a safe place, as it was a court exhibit" (*National*, 2004c).

September 2004: Police laid six charges against former Madang Governor Jim Kas, alleging that while under the influence of alcohol, he'd threatened to shoot supermarket security guards with a loaded Smith & Wesson .38 pistol. Mr Kas was a licensed gun owner (Pamba, 2004).

1998-2002: "In recent years at least four other senior politicians have drawn or discharged guns in the capital alone. Former minister Philemon Embel pulled a gun out at the Holiday Inn, while another governor drew his pistol at the five-star Crowne Plaza. Former governor of Oro province Sylvanius Siembo went to court after he allegedly shot a youth who he claimed had tried to rob him. And former Southern Highlands governor Anderson Agiru was ousted by a leadership tribunal after he drew a pistol at the Port Moresby Golf Club... Adding to the problems is that MPs frequently 'lose' their assigned firearm and are allowed to buy another" (*Australian*, 2002)

## **Failure of Local Government**

By far the largest building in the Southern Highlands provincial capital of Mendi is the seven-storey Anderson Agiru Centre. Named after the since-disgraced governor responsible for millions of kina mislaid during its construction, this is the nominal headquarters of provincial government. At least 300 people should be working here, providing services to the province. In the SHP Provincial Government section of the 2003 PNG phone book, 49 phone numbers are listed at the Agiru Centre. One week in May 2004, two years after the Mendi Peace Agreement was signed, 45 of those 49 numbers rang unanswered.

Says Mendi's Bishop Stephen Reichert: "There's no government here. The public service just doesn't work. Ghost workers take pay for doing nothing. At least 200 teachers are being paid on the ghost roll.") Chairman of the local landowner council, Robert Posu, fears the town faces destruction. "People become frustrated because there are no books in the classroom, no medicine in the hospitals, people are dying of curable diseases... We are the richest province in PNG. How can there be holes in the road? Where is the government, where is the medicine, where are the books? It's coming to boiling point" (Forbes, 2004).

While the Australian government agency AusAID notes that "Poor governance is systemic in the PNG system" (AusAID, 2002), outside observers can be more candid as to the culprits: "Democracy has been hijacked by those responsible for and benefiting from the 'systemic and systematic' corruption of public institutions" (Windybank and Manning, 2003).

Mark Forbes, who seems to be the only Australian newspaper journalist to have visited the Southern Highlands in recent years, highlights just one of many indicators of massive fraud: "A Price Waterhouse audit of the Southern Highlands provincial government revealed senior officials,

including national MPs, were complicit in an 'astounding and sinister' diversion of public funds. Almost all of the province's AUD 15 million (USD 11 million) revenue disappeared. Nearly AUD 2 million (USD 1.4 million) went to a Queensland-based company, linked to the provincial governor, for never-performed work on hospitals" (Forbes, 2004).

In the Southern Highlands, this same elite of politicians, civil servants and conflict entrepreneurs is also responsible for the proliferation and misuse of small arms—especially at election time.

### ***Gun Barrel Voting, 2002***

19 June 2002: Four men were killed and dozens injured when supporters of rival candidates clashed in gunfights at polling booths in the Central Highlands town of Mount Hagen (Radio Australia, 2002).

21 June 2002: Two people were shot dead during polling violence in the Western Highlands province (PACNEWS, 2002).

2 July 2002: Four more people were killed in election related violence in the Highlands. Kundiawa police arrested a political candidate for indiscriminate discharge of a firearm (Palme, 2002a).

4 July 2002: In Enga, a political candidate gunned down two men at a polling booth (*Post-Courier*, 2002b).

11 July 2002: Thirty heavily armed men, masked with underwear and wearing dresses, raided the Wabag police station in Enga. Trussing up four policemen, they blew open three shipping containers full of ballot boxes, and destroyed 30,000 marked ballot papers with aviation fuel ignited by a mortar round (Forbes, 2002b; 2002a).

13 July 2002: In Simbu, Australian election observer Bill Standish saw a candidate use a pistol to force an election official to allow multiple voting. Mount Hagen Hospital chief James Kintwa spoke of mobs blocking a highway, shooting and injuring 20 people with M-16s (Forbes, 2002a).

15 July 2002: A polling official's wife was shot dead as she opened her front door in Enga, and an election worker was found dead in Mount Hagen (Palme, 2002b)

20 July 2002: The Electoral Commission's Highlands operations manager, Boki Raga, said several four-wheel-drive utilities had been fitted with machineguns by candidates' supporters (Forbes, 2002b).

By late August 2002, Bill Standish, an observer of the Chimbu polls, estimated that 30 people had died from election-related violence (Standish, 2002). Many more died as fights spread among angry political factions, and in April 2003, a national newspaper put the election toll at 100 dead in the Highlands alone (*Post-Courier*, 2003e).

In the course of this widespread violence, in the six-month supplementary election period from July to December 2002, Southern Highlands police made no arrests. Provincial Police Commander, Supt Simon Nigi explained: "It was too risky. The decision was made not to make the situation worse, politically."

## **Military Weapons Leaked to Politicians, Criminals**

Despite recent security improvements to state armouries, a large proportion of military small arms had already been leaked to criminals. Recent, unreleased PNGDF estimates put military losses 3 to 5 times higher than previously published reports (Alpers, 2005). Of the 7,664 SLR and M-16 assault rifles delivered to the PNGDF from Australia and the United States since 1971, only 2,013 (26 per cent) remain in stock. Many of the missing rifles undoubtedly succumbed to damage and deterioration. But equally without doubt, large numbers were also lost to theft and diversion—some even in gun thefts disguised as mutiny.

### ***Goldie River Barracks***

"In July 1998, the country's Defence Minister told parliament that he was certain the theft of high-powered<sup>3</sup> military weapons from the Defence Force's Goldie River Barracks, near Port Moresby, was an 'inside job.' He ordered fifteen soldiers suspended. The Minister admitted that three thefts had occurred at Goldie River in the first half of 1998 alone, and that 'not a single weapon' had been recovered." (Capie, 2003)

### ***Murray Barracks***

On 14 March 2001, angered by a scathing, leaked review of the PNGDF which recommended halving its size (Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, 2001), a group of about 100 soldiers entered the armoury at Murray Barracks, defence force headquarters near Port Moresby. Seizing a large number of M-16A2 assault rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition, they barricaded themselves into their quarters and demanded cancellation of the proposed reforms, plus a general amnesty for themselves. After a tense twelve-day standoff the government agreed to their demands. PNGDF commander Carl Malpo, asked why guards at the armoury had not stopped the break-in: "What guards? There are no guards here. You just lock the place and go home. What break-in? There was no break-in. The soldiers just walked in." (Capie, 2003)

In February 2002, four assault rifles and a grenade launcher were reported stolen from Murray Barracks (*National*, 2002b). Four more M-16s, two of them with M-203 under-barrel grenade launchers attached, were stolen in January, 2003 (*Post-Courier*, 2003b). Another went missing in November, 2003 (John, 2004).

### ***The Moem 'Mutiny'***

In March 2002, with national elections looming, and demand for firearms soaring in the Highlands, 11 men, including several civilians in military uniform, entered Moem Barracks at Wewak, East Sepik. Under the guise of a rebellion over PNGDF retrenchment plans, the former soldiers merged with 70 active defence force personnel, broke into the armoury, held seven officers hostage, burned down two buildings and took over the barracks. In the two-week siege which ensued, renegade soldiers, fully armed and clad in battle gear and camouflage paint, caused panic when they mounted a machine gun on a vehicle and drove through Wewak town (*Post-Courier*, 2002d; Sela, 2002b).

But behind the theatre, the real business was gunrunning. As one officer who was there described it to the author, this was: "A gun theft which went wrong. The Wewak mutiny started out as a weapons theft. They were stealing to order for the Southern Highlands elections." Denying reports of 700 missing weapons, Defence Force chief of staff Captain Tom Ur said only 128 had been taken. Away from the barracks, police caught several men selling the stolen guns to buyers from the Highlands (Baynes, 2002; *Post-Courier*, 2002i; 2002e). In a surprise raid on the second weekend of the rebellion, defence forces recaptured Moem Barracks. Defence intelligence reports suggested that the burning of the buildings had been a diversion aimed at shifting attention from the armoury

(Niesi, 2002b). Missing were 96 SLR and M-16 assault rifles, plus an unknown number of semi-automatic pistols and hand grenades (Solomon, 2002). Just before Christmas 2002, 24 of the 27 soldiers charged with mutiny were found guilty (Niesi, 2002a).

### **Igam Barracks**

In July 2002, three soldiers from the Igam Barracks in Lae were sentenced to 12 months' jail with hard labour for stealing an M-16 rifle. The buyer, from the Highlands town of Kainantu, paid more than PGK 4,500, or USD 1,500 (*Post-Courier*, 2002m).

### **Military Firearms Used in Crime**

November 1996: Criminals armed with PNGDF issue M-16s and a grenade launcher staged a two-hour shootout with police. This followed a botched attempt to rob a bank in Waigani, less than a kilometre from parliament buildings (O'Callaghan, 1996).

August 1998: Three serving soldiers of the former Special Forces Unit of the PNGDF were killed in a shootout with police while robbing a bank in Tabubil, WHP (Sikani, 2000).

December 1999: Five men armed with stolen PNGDF assault rifles and hand grenades hijacked a helicopter and landed it on the roof of a downtown Port Moresby bank. In the aborted robbery and attempted getaway which followed, the helicopter was brought down by gunfire, and all five robbers were shot, or beaten to death by police (Lagan, 1999).

May 2000: A group of men armed with pistols and hand grenades robbed a Port Moresby bank. In October of the same year, four people were killed in a drunken fight involving a hand grenade, and in November, hijackers armed with rifles and a hand grenade seized an aircraft carrying gold from the Wau-Bulolo goldfields (Capie, 2003).

April 2002: Government offices in Mendi were closed following the gunpoint theft of an administration vehicle and a private car. The offenders, allegedly from the Wogia faction, were armed with two PNGDF M-16s, and two SLR rifles (Poiya, 2002).

August 2002: Port Moresby police seized a PNGDF issue M-16A2 rifle after a shoot-out with criminals. The weapon was coated in Defence Force camouflage (*Post-Courier*, 2002a).

February 2003: Port Moresby Police confiscated two PNGDF issue SLRs and three magazines (Ranmuthugala, 2003).

March 2004: Four people were killed, more than 500 houses torched, and plantations laid waste in tribal fights near Mt Hagen (Poiya, 2004). A prison escaper armed with a stolen PNGDF M-16 was said to have led the attack. Later, a soldier was charged with providing the assault rifle (*Post-Courier*, 2004b).

### **Machine Guns on the Loose**

In addition to police and military-issue assault rifles, the Southern Highlands are home to a range of illicit light and medium machine guns, all of which appear to have been obtained from state-owned stocks.

Between two and four ex-PNGDF MAG-58 machine guns are said to be kept in Mendi, Lai Valley, and Poroma. One of these was mounted on a truck, then paraded through Mendi and fired in the air in the lead-up to the 2002 elections.<sup>4,5</sup> Both MAG-58s and M-60 machine guns were reported by a range of witnesses during three years of inter-group fighting around Mendi<sup>6</sup> (Alphonse, 2001; Sela, 2002a). Mendi police say their town is still home to at least three M-60s,<sup>7</sup> though these can easily be mistaken for MAG-58s. In Koroba in early 2003, a local teacher gave up a weapon variously

described as an M-60 or a MAG-58 to a surrender ceremony, and the Tari area is now said to free of machine guns.<sup>8</sup> Karints and Semberigi may have an M-60 each.<sup>9</sup>

Two Kagua informants identified an ex-PNGDF Minimi light machine gun from a photo recognition sheet, saying it fired 'chain bullets' and was hired from Mendi into Kagua for the 2002 election.<sup>10, 11</sup>

RPNGC stocks have not escaped theft, with two police-issue Ultimex-100 light machine guns said to be kept near Utupia (Udjabia<sup>12</sup>) and Mendi.<sup>13</sup> A local helicopter pilot also remembers seeing a light machine gun with a rotary magazine, which in PNG may be unique to the Ultimex, during the Mendi fighting.<sup>14</sup>

Two Bren light machine guns have been reported in the Mendi area (Morris, 2002). The Australian-supplied Bren was a PNGDF staple for many years, and is sometimes used in inter-group conflict. In a 2004 PNGDF small arms audit, 43 Bren guns were unaccounted for.<sup>15</sup> Charlie Pooley, a charter pilot who ferried police to and from conflict areas around Tari and Mendi recalls: "I saw two Brens in good condition, being brandished at Margarima airfield."<sup>16</sup> A story doing the rounds of defence force NCOs and others has it that a Southern Highlands MP, notorious for gunrunning and holding very high office at the time, paid PNGDF staff to 'release' the two Bren guns for the Mendi fighting.

### ***The Tari High School Robbery***

In February 2004, on an Air Niugini flight from Port Moresby to Tari, construction company boss Keith Collett showed the author PGK 14,000 (USD 4,700) in a polystyrene food bin. This was his company payroll, replacing cash stolen from St Joseph's Secondary School in Tari the day before. After only a few months on the job, Australian construction site manager David Murnane and his wife Liz had been bashed and robbed by eight masked bandits brandishing and firing pistols, assault rifles, a military-issue machine gun and machetes.<sup>17</sup>

"They knew exactly when the money would be in the safe, and where it was," said David. "They bashed me with the blunt edge of the machete and did the same to Liz's legs while they had a gun stuck in her back. It was a terrifying experience for us" (*Post-Courier*, 2004a; *Telegraph*, 2004).

As the effort to build Tari's new high school slowed once more to halt, project coordinator Bishop Stephen Reichert voiced his regret—but no surprise—that local children hoping for an education were once again the victims.

## Smuggling Guns for Drugs

In the early 1990s, media speculation conjured up a large-scale 'guns for drugs' trade across the island-studded Torres Strait, between PNG and Australia. Despite concentrated, long-term scrutiny by a range of agencies, no evidence of significant small arms trafficking in this area has emerged (Alpers, 2005). In addition, a central assumption of the 'guns for drugs' story—that market forces might encourage such trafficking—remained untested. This study finds notable disincentives to such a trade, and questions whether in recent years it existed on any scale.

### ***Why Cross a Border for 'Niugini Gold'?***

In the early years of marijuana consumption in western nations, 'Acapulco Gold,' 'Niugini Gold' or 'PNG Gold,' along with other imported varieties of cannabis and resin, were often more potent than local crops. Because they attracted much higher prices, foreign varieties were sometimes worth the extra risk of cross-border smuggling (Liebert, 1986). As late as 1998, PNG criminologist Richard Sikani wrote: "'New Guinea Gold'—Papua New Guinean marijuana—is known on the streets of New York, Sydney, and London, and has become more important than gold and agricultural produce" (Sikani, 2000). A third of a century on from the 1960s and '70s heydays of cannabis smuggling, this may no longer hold true.

The State Crime Command Drug Squad of the New South Wales Police is responsible for Australia's largest state, and its capital, Sydney. Says Nerys Evans, the squad's intelligence coordinator: "There isn't any PNG cannabis on the streets of NSW, and if there was, we'd know about it. We've got quite enough local cannabis to satisfy the market. It's more than a year since we saw any importation from anywhere, and Queensland is similar. Our local growing conditions are ideal, and hydroponics have made a difference, too. You could grow Niugini Gold here just as easily, and it would be better quality. It's much less risky than to run the gauntlet of border controls." <sup>18</sup>

In Australia's second largest state of Victoria, police forensic scientist Susan Fiddian confirms: "We've got so much hydroponically grown that we don't have a need to import cannabis from anywhere." <sup>19</sup> From Canberra, Australian Federal Police forensic consultant and cannabis DNA specialist Simon Gilmore reports that, rather than being smuggled into the country, cannabis is now grown locally from carefully bred, high-yield seed strains developed in the Netherlands.<sup>20</sup>

Given that Australia's largest East Coast markets may no longer attach a price premium to cannabis from PNG, it seems that braving the Torres Strait, then negotiating 920kms of rugged dirt track to reach the nearest Australian city of Cairns—all the while risking both firearm and drug smuggling charges—might prove less attractive to some cannabis dealers than purchasing an equally potent, and more plentiful crop, much closer to market.

## Smuggling Guns in Coffins... and Frozen Fish

"In 2000 Dr. Sam Foster (not a real name) who works with a Mining Industry was shown guns hidden in coffin boxes at a place called Mabudawan Corner Settlement in Daru, Western Province. He was offered to choose any of the guns to his liking for saving the gun owner's daughter's life. He said he refused the offer. He stated the transaction... [took] place in less than 5 minutes from helicopter to helicopter."

Sarah Garap, Meri Kirap Support Team, Goroka (Garap and Kai, 2004).

The coffin story is heard in several forms, and seems more substantial than many. In 1990, anthropologist John Burton retold the tale of a bogus funeral party smuggling guns and ammunition past police checkpoints on the Highlands Highway (Burton, 1990). When the body of a soldier killed in the Bougainville war arrived in Pangia, SHP, from Port Moresby, residents say an M-16 was in the coffin.<sup>21</sup> According to Greg Bill, manager of the largest air charter operation in the Southern Highlands: "We've suspected a lot of coffin charters. We've carried coffins with a lot of weight in them, but we sure aren't going to open them up." In another case, a gun was found being smuggled inside a large frozen fish.

### ***'Fight Fee' a Health Hurdle for Gunshot Victims***

While the serious effects of gun violence as a barrier to health care and other essential services in the Highlands are documented in a companion volume (Alpers, 2005), this study also highlights the unintended side effects of a most unusual provincial health policy. Hospitals in the Highlands impose a financial penalty for the treatment of wounds suffered in tribal fights (Dyke, 1996). When staff charge victims a hefty 'fight fee' (PGK 100/USD 33 for a bullet wound; PGK 60/USD 20 for an arrow puncture), Mendi Provincial Hospital is not alone in creating a powerful disincentive to treatment and recovery.

Although these amounts may seem modest to outsiders, for a typical family of SHP subsistence farmers, such a sum can represent many months of cash earnings. Even attending Mendi Hospital as a victim of domestic violence is discouraged, with battered victims obliged to pay a lesser 'fight fee' of PGK 10 (USD 3.30). Across the border in Enga Province, health care workers levy a fee of PGK 500 (USD 167), before trauma treatment to an injured combatant can begin (Taime, 2002).

As tribal fighters appear undeterred even by the prospect of death, the fight fee may show little effect as preventive medicine. Instead, victims of violence are penalized on the assumption that they could have avoided injury. In this context, the 'fight fee' sits uneasily with the age-old 'no blame' tenets of public health.

According to former Mendi Hospital surgeon P K Mathew, additional disincentives to treatment are also at work: "Many villagers fail to attend the hospital because of lack of transport, fear of traversing enemy territory or unwillingness to share a hospital with the enemy." As a result, most trauma deaths occur before the patient reaches hospital (Matthew, Kapua *et al.*, 1996).

## Community Interviews

Interviews for this study were conducted with residents of 19 localities in Southern Highlands Province. After consultation with community leaders, police, government agencies, churches, NGOs and journalists, most localities were selected for their perceived high risk of small arm-related violence, based largely on a past history of armed conflict. To ensure accurate identification of small arms, photo recognition sheets were used to confirm all descriptions. The following snapshots summarize the results of each community meeting, group and individual interview conducted. Each informant or group named the community for which they spoke, and provided a consensus estimate of its population. These are shown in plain text. Official census population estimates sometimes differed, and these are shown before each locality snapshot, in italics.<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of methodology and limitations of this research, see (Alpers, 2005).

### ***Bela, Upper Karints***

*Mendi District, Karints Census Division (CD), Karints Rural Local Level Government Area (LLG). LLG population approx 20,000. Bela Census Unit (CU) pop. 691*

In Bela, Upper Karints, two wars were fought in recent years between the Kondup/Konjop and Menpo/Humsem tribes. The first gun deaths were in March, 1993. During the decade of fighting which followed, 18 men were shot dead and nine injured by gunshot on the Kondup/Konjop side (pop. 1,752), while 14 were shot dead and seven injured with firearms on the Menpo/Humsem side (pop. 2,500). Of the Menpo/Humsem casualties, four of the seven people injured suffered long-term disability, and all those killed or injured were adult or adolescent males. On the Kondup/Konjop side, eight of the nine people injured received non-fatal gunshot wounds which resulted in long-term disability. These included one woman and a child, while all remaining injury and fatality victims were adult or adolescent males. Since 1993, when guns were first used in conflict in the Bela region, villagers report no fatal unintentional shootings or firearm-related suicides.<sup>23</sup>

The Kondup/Konjop fighters are clear as to the purpose of their firearms: "We only use guns for tribal fights. Only to protect our community, not for crime." Since small arms arrived in the valley, Bela's only firearm-related deaths resulted from organized, tribal conflict.<sup>24</sup> As for the weapons used: "There are plenty of home-mades here, but nowhere near one per man. In both battles we used three or four rifles on our side. They had about the same on their side."<sup>25</sup> The most experienced fighters in the group said they'd never seen SLRs, AK-47s, handguns or machine guns in the area: "Nothing but M-16s, .303s and .22s."<sup>26</sup>

### ***Det and Poroma***

*Nipa/Kutubu District, Nembi Valley CD, Poroma Rural LLG  
LLG pop. approx 22,000. Det CU pop. 823, Poroma CU pop. 750*

For the Aron people of Det and Poroma (pop. 15,000), guns arrived around 1994. In that year's battle with the Karints to the west, four Aron warriors were killed. As hostilities continued, the people of Det and Poroma decided they needed guns of their own. For three years they bought and collected firearms and ammunition, waiting for an opportunity to strike back. Said one leader: "We don't have guns to shoot pigs and birds. We have them to shoot an enemy man." When the next major battle came in 1997, Aron warriors had amassed 30 factory made guns, including 15 M-16 army-issue assault rifles, one fully automatic AK-47 or AKM assault rifle, various .308 and .22 calibre semi-automatic and single-shot rifles, and pump-action shotguns, several of which had originally been supplied to police. After 4,000 Aron warriors met the Karints in battle parties of 200 men at a time, 26 Aron men and three women had been shot dead. Three more were killed in

gunfights with police. Ten Det people suffered gunshot wounds which led to permanent disability, one man losing a leg, another an eye. Around 150 also received gunshot wounds which were judged to be minor. At no time in living memory, say the people of Det and Poroma, has one of their number committed suicide with a firearm, nor has a gun been used for a 'criminal,' or domestic killing unrelated to tribal warfare.<sup>27</sup>

Counting their battle dead by name, the elders of Det now mourn the cost, not only in lives and trauma, but also in cash and other resources. The community purchased 15 high-powered firearms for PGK 6-7,000 (USD 2,000-2,300) each—huge sums for a small rural village. Another 15 were rented for the duration of hostilities, some provided and fired by mercenary gunmen hired from outside tribes and provinces. "We gave away two girls, pigs, a store, a car and many thousands of kina to get guns," said one Det elder. Given a local bride price of PGK 10,000 (USD 3,300) cash, plus 25 pigs (value PGK 30,000, or USD 10,000) for each young woman, swapping two brides for guns and ammunition was an expensive proposition for Det. A four wheel drive vehicle and a going-concern village shop were also traded in return for weapons. Taking into account transportation and medical expenses, fees for mercenaries and subsequent compensation paid for injury and damage, Det community leaders put the financial cost of the 1997 battles as high as PGK 3 million (USD 1 million) for their side alone. Of the 30 battle weapons bought and hired in the late 1990s, Det community leaders say they retain only "six to ten" factory made firearms "for protection." When asked if Det is prepared for more fighting, answers differ by generation. A village leader responds "No, we would not fight. We've had enough. We've seen too much damage, too much loss." Yet three younger men answer without hesitation: "Yes. We're ready."<sup>28</sup>

To villagers, the impact of firearms is clear: "Before guns came here, four men were killed with bows and arrows in a fight which lasted five years. In the ten years of fighting since those days, if we'd only had bows and arrows, only about four men would have died. Young men spent years fighting instead of learning. Now it's too late for us, but we want our own young men to go away to school. We send them away to be educated, and now there aren't enough left to fight big battles like the old times. We don't want them to fight. We've learnt our lesson, now we'll go a better way."<sup>29</sup>

Although many Highlanders do still prize and use traditional weapons, the leaders of Det lament their passing: "When we fought with bows and arrows, before he died, a man could say his last words to family. Now, when a man is shot he's finished. This is a terrible thing to us. A terrible weapon has been introduced which has changed our community forever. Many more people die. But suddenly we need guns. It's a new thing which replaces the old thing. In order to scare the others, we need guns. But they're not coming from us. We have no factories for guns here. We have no idea where they come from, how they get here. We are just a little village. We thought only police and army should own guns. It's like a toy. Guns have completely replaced bows and arrows and spears. Nobody even makes bows and arrows any more. Our young boys don't even know how to use them. But now we know enough about guns to make them ourselves."<sup>30</sup>

## ***Kewabi, Ialibu***

*Ialibu/Pangia District, Kewabi CD, Kewabi Rural LLG*  
*LLG pop. approx 13,500*

No firearm-related deaths have been reported in the Kewabi area of Ialibu district (pop. 14,000) since a police crowd dispersal shot killed a young man in 1993. Tribal fights are uncommon, and the use of firearms even more so. Although guns are occasionally used to threaten and intimidate, it's said they are rarely fired. Local leaders report no known gun injuries, and no firearm-related suicides. They say that residents of Ialibu's 27 local level government wards are likely to keep two or more guns per ward, and estimate that perhaps 20 of these would be factory made firearms, including World War II .303 rifles.<sup>31</sup> A local church worker reports seeing an M-16 and an AR-15

owned by gunmen in Kewabi, and says that two Kewabi politicians carry Glock semi-automatic pistols.<sup>32</sup>

### **Kuare, Kagua**

*Kagua/Erave District, Kuare CD, Kuare Rural LLG*

*LLG pop. approx 7,500*

The Kuare area of Kagua (pop. 7,500), east of Mendi, is commonly seen as peaceful. Although a police officer was shot and killed in a tribal fight in 1987, no firearm-related deaths have been reported since. One man was injured in an unintentional shooting, and there are no known cases of firearm-related suicide. Local leaders say that although each village has one factory made firearm, there is rarely more than one. The reasons given for gun ownership are self defence, and the occasional need to challenge a roadblock thrown up by raskols.<sup>33</sup>

### **Margarima**

*Komo/Margarima District, Margarima CD, Margarima Rural LLG*

*LLG pop. approx 33,000*

In a critical position on the east-west Southern Highlands road, halfway between the provincial capital of Mendi and the town of Tari, Margarima sits just to the west of the border between two large and traditionally hostile groups. The populous, and distinct language groups of the Tari region have for many years agitated for their own Hela Province. At times of tension, the tribes centred on Nipa, between Mendi and Margarima, often throw up armed roadblocks, cutting off Tari's only road access. Local helicopter pilot Charlie Pooley remembers: "I flew police in and out of tribal fights in the Tari, Margarima, Nipa and Mendi areas. We all saw plenty of guns, and at Margarima airfield I saw two Bren guns being brandished, in good condition."<sup>34</sup> Although much fighting occurs on both sides, and on the nearby Nembi Plateau, the people of Margarima village seem to escape much of the violence.<sup>35</sup>

### **Mendi, and the Unjamap/Wogia Fights<sup>36</sup>**

*Mendi District, Mendi Urban CD, Mendi Urban LLG*

*LLG pop. approx 17,000. Unjamap CU pop. 1,010; Wogia CU pop. 1,303*

Illegal, factory made firearms are said to have first appeared in Mendi, the Southern Highlands provincial capital (pop. 17,000), in 1993.<sup>37 38</sup> Slowly, more and more guns slipped in, but it wasn't until several years later that the effects of the build-up became apparent. In 1999 in Mendi town, political and tribal resentments still smouldered from the 1997 elections and before. Catholic Bishop Stephen Reichert, a 34-year Mendi resident, remembers the spark which started a three-year conflagration. A local businessman owned a store and a drinking club in town. After they'd been evicted from the club for drunkenness, a truckload of young men went in search of more alcohol, accompanied by three policemen. One youth fell off the pickup truck, which ran him over while reversing. The police officers helped dump the boy's body near the drinking club, hoping to hold the owner responsible for lack of security. The police were transferred out of Mendi the next day. Witnesses, including a headmaster who'd been at the scene, disappeared. Lacklustre police inquiries were soon closed without result, and the owner of the drinking club was widely blamed for killing the boy. His building was burnt down, and compensation for the boy's death was sought. This ballooned into a three-year tribal fight, with gang rapes, home invasions, theft and murder.<sup>39</sup>

Although it involved a range of tribes, clans and their allies, the conflict centred on Mendi became known as the Unjamap/Wogia fight. According to Unjamap leaders, three of their warriors and six opposing Wogia men were shot and killed in the initial 1999 skirmishes, mainly with home made guns. Although Unjamap people number about 1,000, they were able to call in 8,000 to 9,000

supporters from traditional allies and related clans.<sup>40</sup> Villages were destroyed, and plantations laid waste. On the other side, Wogia say the fighting claimed more than 36 lives, and that 480-550 firearms were involved (LeBrun and Muggah, 2005). One of the Wogia gunmen remembers: "On my side, 18 died. We had more than 2,000, maybe 3,000 men on our side."<sup>41</sup>

By December 2001, both sides had obtained high-powered weapons. A policeman who returned from one battle said these included M-16s, AR-15s, SLRs, M-60 machine guns, AK-47s, and M-203 grenade launchers (Alphonse, 2001). Mercenaries had been hired from Mt Hagen, and just before Christmas, the death toll rose accordingly. From the scene, Bishop Reichert reported: "This is exclusively a high-powered gun battle. The death rate is faster and more devastating than any ordinary tribal fight with bows and arrows or home made and factory made shotguns." Seasoned gunmen from outside were now working for both sides, and Reichert was sure that over a hundred high-powered rifles and other weapons were being used (Poiya, 2001).

One day a group of gun-toting warriors, from a village supporting the Unjamap faction, mounted a MAG-58 machine gun on a truck, drove into Mendi and sprayed bullets around the town (Pamba, 2002). Mendi hospital closed for a year, the United Church primary school was demolished and removed piece by piece for its building materials, Mendi High School lost five buildings to arsonists jealous of their enemies' facilities, and much of the northern end of town was trashed.<sup>42</sup> (*Post-Courier*, 2001).

For the various battles, Unjamap leaders say they bought M-16s, SLRs and two .303 rifles, but had no need to rent guns. By targeting the enemy's specialist gunmen in battle, they captured two more M-16s, and two pump-action shotguns. Traditional allies from outside brought with them eight additional high-powered weapons, and in several Unjamap/Wogia battles around Mendi, another 18 men were shot dead. Many more died by other means, including drowning while trying to escape. Two Unjamap fighters are known to have suffered disabling firearm injuries, while two more received minor bullet wounds. Many additional, non-fatal firearm injuries were inflicted with pellets from home made shotguns. Despite all reports to the contrary, including eyewitnesses and many local residents who heard automatic weapons fired both in battle and at other times, Unjamap leaders insist they never had machine guns.<sup>43</sup>

Although the conflicts in Mendi township were often on a larger scale, other fights also spilled into the provincial capital from 1997 to 2003. These included battles between Tongo and Kelta, Kelta and Upper Tulum, Sol and Bela, and Marep and Nene villages. The long-running Marep and Nene battles, known as the 'Dog and Chicken Fight,' began when one man's dog killed another man's chicken (*National*, 2002a).

In 1999, the accidental death of a former governor sparked battles to the west, between many tribes in the Mendi and Tari areas (LeBrun and Muggah, 2005). The vital road link between the two centres was frequently cut by roadblocks, violent robberies and the destruction of bridges.

Infrastructure and essential services had been devastated. A Highlands tribal war is often only won when all is destroyed. Around Mendi, even power and telephone poles had been felled. What was left of provincial government had fled town, and central government was notable by its absence. But by late January, both sides were talking peace. Acknowledging that 6,000 warriors had been involved, Tungujip chief, Tabul Sosi said: "We want peace so that we can have access to basic services." (*Post-Courier*, 2002q). Ten days later, in a battle said to be one of the fiercest of the war, ten people from the Unjamap and Tubiri tribes were killed by the Wogia and Lai Valley tribes (*Post-Courier*, 2002f). In late February, assistance from outside had still not arrived. Said one church worker: "We don't know who is running the province now" (*Post-Courier*, 2002n).

Finally, in late March 2002, a "tenuous calm" had returned to Mendi. Rival tribes had not fired a shot in 30 days, and a peace agreement was in the works (*Post-Courier*, 2002g). The Mendi Peace Commission was chaired by a local businessman, flanked by the bishops of both the Catholic and United churches of Mendi. With distant encouragement from government, these three brokered an agreement which, when it was signed at a public ceremony attended by more than 10,000 people on 3 May 2002, offered closure in a three-year tribal war (Mendi Peace Commission, 2002). However, the surrender and destruction of guns was never a serious prospect (*Post-Courier*, 2002c).

The commonly accepted death toll in the Mendi tribal fights is 120.<sup>44, 45</sup> Bishop Reichert remembers: "I counted names at peace meetings. That's an accurate number. Church workers collected and returned bodies to both sides for burial, and lifted bodies out of the river." Seven of those riverside graves remain unclaimed.<sup>46</sup> When asked about gun injuries unrelated to organized conflict, both sides agreed that unintentional firearm injuries have been rare, and that no cases of gun suicide are known since guns arrived in the valleys around Mendi.<sup>47, 48</sup>

## **Nipa Basin**

*Nipa/Kutubu District, Nipa Basin CD, Nipa Rural LLG*  
*LLG Pop. approx 43,000*

In the Nipa Basin area (pop. 45,000), a large number of homes were torched and plantations destroyed during tribal fighting in 1990. Only traditional weapons were used, and 14 men were killed. Said one group of residents: "We would have killed 50-60 if we had modern guns." In 1993, home made firearms were used in a round of fighting, in which 28 men died. This time, about half the deaths were due to gunshot. The men of Nipa report no major tribal fighting since 1993, and no fatal shootings with a factory made gun.<sup>49</sup>

Although fatalities may now be lower, the people of Nipa have been particularly active in seizing political power by force of arms, often by controlling a crucial stretch of the western road out of Mendi. Mark Yangen, a police inspector in Mendi at the time, remembers the sequel to 1995's sudden influx of firearms: "Gunmen were forcing people to vote for their candidate. Roadblocks were used to intimidate voters and to extract voting commitments."<sup>50</sup> Bishop Stephen Reichert remembers that in 1999, the accidental death of a former provincial governor, Dick Mone, "generated bitter anger and frustration among supporters and clansmen, which resulted in the closure of the Highlands Highway between Mendi and Tari, cutting off 200,000 people, the Hela tribes, from the rest of the province for months to come." (Reichert, 2002). Tribal fights flared up in the surrounding Poroma area, Nembi Valley and the Nembi Plateau. Two separate conflicts claimed well over 60 lives during 1996-1999, most casualties resulting from high-powered assault rifles, M-16s, AR-15s and the like. Grenades were also used (Reichert, 1999).

A terse intelligence message received at Provincial Police Headquarters in Mendi at the height of the 2002 polling illustrates the culmination of years of tension: "138 fully armed men now at Tupiri. They are from Nipa, believed to be with ballot boxes. Extra 3,000 men supporting" (Perea, 2002).

Despite all the intimidation and violence, the area is by some accounts not heavily armed with factory made firearms. Tari District Administrator Philip Moya estimates: "There are less than 30 high-powered guns in the Nipa Basin."<sup>51</sup> This excludes the Nembi Plateau, Utupia,<sup>52</sup> Poroma and Det. A former Mobile Squad commander in the area puts the number a bit higher, counting about 40 illicit, factory made, high-powered guns around Nipa.<sup>53</sup> Although a community meeting agreed on an estimate of 25 factory made firearms in the Nipa Basin,<sup>54</sup> other locals and visitors call this a substantial underestimate. Said one Nipa man: "There are a lot more guns here than they told you about. Nipa has hundreds of high-powered guns."<sup>55</sup> An Australian pilot who spent time in Nipa during tribal fights says "Nipa has more guns than anyone. They brought lots of high-powered guns to town [Mendi] in the 2002 elections."<sup>56</sup> In line with neighbouring areas, and this time by broad

consensus, unintentional fatal shootings are very rare, and firearm-related suicides unheard of in Nipa Basin.

### ***Nipa Central***

*Nipa/Kutubu District, Nipa Basin CD, Nipa Rural LLG*  
*LLG pop. approx 43,000*

In 1990, a major tribal fight in the Nipa Central area (pop. 46,000), was fought entirely with traditional weapons, resulting in relatively few deaths. By 1993, gunmen had obtained police-issue, semi-automatic AR-15s, along with a much-feared, telescopic-sighted rifle known as Black Thunder. In the 1993 battle, nine men were shot dead and about 30 injured with modern guns. By 1996, politicians had delivered at least 12 more factory made firearms to their supporters, including AR-15s, SLRs, pump-action shotguns, and three pistols. One community source estimates there are now 300 factory made firearms in Nipa Central. As a result, local people report that hired guns and mercenary gunmen are rarely, if ever required for tribal fights. A Nipa community worker explains: "We have 46 local wards. All compete against each other with guns. You have to have a gun. It's a competition to have more guns than other wards."<sup>57</sup>

### ***The Lai Valley 'Type 68'***

*Mendi District, Lai Valley CD, Lai Valley Rural LLG*  
*LLG pop. approx 32,000*

Despite reporting no deaths from high-powered weapons in tribal fighting, one locality (pop. 2,000), in the Lai Valley is nevertheless prepared for a shooting war.<sup>58</sup> Like others visited in the Southern Highlands, this community to the east of Mendi, two hours' walk from the nearest road, acquires guns whenever possible "in case of attack." Among standard ex-army SLRs and World War II .303 rifles, local gunmen dragged from hiding a well-maintained, Chinese Type 68 military assault rifle designed for both semi-automatic and automatic 'machine gun' fire. A prohibited weapon in most countries, this single rifle with bayonet, ammunition and 30-round AK-47 magazines to fit it were smuggled into the northern port of Lae in 1996, by a clansman working on a ship. "It came from the North, [South East Asia], and he's wantok, so it only cost us about PGK 200" (USD 67).

Unlike others who trialled similar firearms in the Highlands, the owners of the Type 68 reported little difficulty obtaining a small quantity of the 7.62 x 39mm Eastern Bloc military ammunition required to fire it, although each round did cost twice as much as more common rifle ammunition. The markings on this Chinese weapon did not permit its first or subsequent points of sale to be traced.

A semi-automatic L1A1 rifle (SLR) in good condition, owned by the same gunmen since 2000, was traced by serial number to its manufacturer in 1974, the Australian government small arms factory in Lithgow, NSW. This rifle was one of 5,463 SLRs supplied by the Australian government to PNG's defence force, and must have leaked from a PNGDF armoury into illicit possession. None of the guns in this village were used for hunting. All were kept for a sense of security, and for possible tribal inter-group fighting. One man said: "We wouldn't need them if the police did their job. If our (provincial and national) leaders were good, if we had development, we could throw them away." None of those interviewed could recall hearing of any unintentional fatal shootings or gun suicides within two days' walk in any direction.<sup>59</sup>

## **Semberigi/Kagua**

*Kagua/Erave District, Semberigi CD, Erave Rural LLG  
LLG pop. approx 11,500, Semberigi CU pop. 104*

The people of Semberigi (pop. 12,000) occasionally fight with the Kiam people, who live "over the mountain" to the east. In 2002, Semberigi received windfall revenue of PGK 18 million (USD 6 million), as royalties from the Gobe oil field. A local pilot heard: "That was when they bought the guns to fight the Kagua, up to the north." <sup>60</sup> Residents say there are "plenty of guns in Kagua," but "we don't fight with Kagua." While acknowledging a handful of M-16s in Semberigi, all held only for security, and all apparently swapped for marijuana, locals said there were no machine guns. From photos, they identified only M-16s and shotguns, and said: "There are no tribal fights here with factory-made guns." <sup>61</sup> The pilot of many evacuation flights agrees that firearm injuries in Semberigi can be more consistent with home made shotguns. "We flew two men out of here, both with shotgun injuries. The pellets were well splayed." <sup>62</sup>

A spokesman for two nearby oil fields, Gobe and Kutubu, says Semberigi have their own names for firearms, so that a reference to a stone or tree or animals would indicate a type of gun. A sub-machine gun is referred to in one place as 'Bulla,' which in the Semberigi tongue refers to a dog legend that is said to have spiritual attachments to the people. It was purchased for PGK 30,000 (USD 10,000). An AR-15 rifle is called 'Wisi,' which is the name of a mountain in the area (Kolma, 2004).

Both Semberigi and neighbouring Erave are said to be centres of illicit cannabis trafficking, with the Kikori River Valley linking both towns to the Central and Western Provinces, and to the Gulf of Papua river deltas to the south. Residents of Semberigi report no communal memory of firearm-related suicides, or fatal unintentional shootings. <sup>63</sup>

## **Sugu, Kagua Central**

*Kagua/Erave District, East Sugu/West Sugu CDs, Kagua Rural LLG  
LLG pop. approx 35,500. Sugu CU pop. 154*

Although one man was shot to death in a tribal fight in 1987, the Sugu area of Kagua Central (pop. 25,000) reports no firearm homicide since then. In 1990, two people died in unintentional shootings, and local leaders could not recall any serious non-fatal gunshot injury, nor any firearm-related suicide. A recent community discussion yielded an estimate of 200 factory made firearms in private hands in Kagua Central. Of these, about 30 are said to be army M-16s and police AR-15s, with five to ten army SLRs. Pump-action shotguns, .303 and .22-calibre rifles make up the balance. It was agreed that "all politicians have handguns." <sup>64</sup>

## **Tamanda, Poroma**

*Nipa/Kutubu District, Nembi Valley CD, Poroma Rural LLG  
LLG pop. approx 22,000*

The residents of Tamanda, near Poroma, belong to the Ipre (Lower) Karints, a grouping of 23 clans and about 12,000 people. Traditional enemies of the Karints are the Aron people to the east, centred around Det. Tamanda villagers recall that although the first guns arrived in 1993/94, most battles between the Karints and the Aron still involved only traditional weapons. Said one village leader: "In our tribal fights, not many died. But when guns came into our area, we had serious problems. They cause too much damage." Recalling four major battles between 1993 and 1999, elders and warriors in Tamanda counted fifty people killed by gunshot on the Karints side, five of whom were women. About a dozen more suffered disabling gun injuries, while "hundreds" were hit with minor

bullet and pellet wounds, mostly from home-made shotguns. When all methods of injury are included, The people of Tamanda count 730 fellow Karints killed or wounded in inter-group fighting from 1993 to 1999. In a recent community meeting, they agreed that: "If we had no guns in these fights, maybe less than ten would have died." <sup>65</sup>

In the biggest battle, Karints warriors say they had more than 20 high-powered firearms, plus 50 other factory made guns and countless home-made, single-shot shotguns. Only a few guns were rented, and most are still locally owned. Although the years 2000-2004 have been relatively peaceful, Tamanda villagers claim their side retains about 24 high-powered firearms. These include ten M-16s and five SLRs from the army, five AR-15s and a SIG 540 assault rifle from police sources, plus two old .303 rifles. A variety of single-shot centrefire and .22 calibre rifles, pump-action and other shotguns complete the collection of commercially made firearms to which Karints fighters are said to have immediate access. Over the years, most ammunition has been acquired "from police and defence." For a time, a MAG-58 light machine gun was loaned to the Karints by a local politician, and two semi-automatic versions of the AK-47 were also trialled. All three weapons fell out of use and were returned when it became clear that ammunition for these models—and for .303 rifles—can be hard to obtain. Though Tamanda villagers have seen pistols and revolvers "in town," they report "no use for them" in either day-to-day village life, or in tribal fights. <sup>66</sup>

To the Karints, deeper ambitions are at work. "All the MPs bring in guns. During elections, that's when we fear the guns. It's the politicians who bring these guns into the Southern Highlands." By consensus, Tamanda villagers see little use for guns if not for tribal conflict and self defence, claiming that: "If we had law and order, we'd have less guns. Our enemies would have less guns." Firearm-related deaths unrelated to tribal warfare are said to be rare. None of those interviewed could recall a 'criminal' gun homicide, nor any firearm-related suicide. One man asked: "Why would we want to kill ourselves? Only redskins (white people) do that." <sup>67</sup>

## **Tari**

*Tari/Pori District, Tari Urban CD, Tari Urban LLG*

*Tari District pop. approx 52,000, Tari LLG pop. approx 9,000*

West of Mendi, Tari town and district have the second-highest population density in PNG, and are central to the 150-200,000 Hela peoples of the Southern Highlands. In Halango-Pujaro battles in 2001, 18 were killed in the Tagali area. Tari District Administrator Philip Moya recalls: "This wasn't a gun battle—no high-powered firearms were used." Although the number killed in conflict with high-powered weapons has increased, Moya says, "There aren't that many high-powered firearms in Tari. Lots of home made guns, some .22s, some pump-action and single-shot shotguns. But I'd say there are less than 20 high-powered firearms in the Tari Basin—that is, in all of SHP west of Margarima." <sup>68</sup> This low estimate is contradicted by others. <sup>69</sup> Ben, a gun buyer and civil servant from Tari, claims: "There are more and more—always more, hidden for the elections. And we know where to hire guns. It's big politics." <sup>70</sup>

The 'Tari end' of Southern Highlands province is also home to the most active secessionist movement on the PNG mainland. In August 2002, the self-styled 'Hela Force' was said to have taken control of Tari town. Dressed in military fatigues, faces masked, they roamed the streets fully armed with automatic weapons. Tari Peace and Good Order Committee Chairman Mathew Mapiiria told a reporter: "We don't know who they are, who sent them or who they support." (*Post-Courier*, 2002o)

Yet Tari also stands out as one of the few areas in the Highlands whose people seem willing—even eager—to give up high-powered weapons. Gun amnesties typically yield only home made guns, with perhaps a rusty .22 or a shotgun. But in March 2003, Philip Moya was given two assault rifles

for destruction, a G-3 and an SLR, both in good condition. At another ceremony, a second SLR was received. The biggest success came when a MAG-58<sup>71</sup> machine gun turned up at a peace ceremony in Koroba. As Moya remembers: "The Deputy Police Commissioner took it away." <sup>72</sup> Provincial Police Commander Simon Nigi, who attended the same ceremony, says: "Now there are no machine guns in the Tari area." <sup>73</sup> Some assault rifles do remain, and Philip Moya knows of three illicit M-16s in the Fugwa, Koroba and Tari areas. Two of these were used in the Tari High School robbery in February, 2004.<sup>74</sup>

### **Pureni, Koroba**

*Koroba/Kopiago District, Koroba CD, South Koroba Rural LLG*  
*LLG pop. approx 21,000. Pureni CU pop. 1,462*

In the western corner of the Southern Highlands beyond Tari, the Pureni and Tani people have fought for the past two years. Hundreds from both sides meet in battle, with skirmishes, ambushes and murders. Local men have been stalked and killed as far away as Lae and Port Moresby.<sup>75</sup> Since 1996, 40 to 50 people were killed in Pureni-Haiapuga battles, but only a minority of those were shot. In Fugwa, 15 or 16 have been killed since 2000, less than half with high-powered firearms.<sup>76</sup> Ben, a civil servant and gun buyer for his clan, is excited that MPs in Port Moresby may be getting closer to granting his people their own Hela Province. Culturally separate from—and perennially at war with—the people of Nipa and Mendi to the east, Hela are determined to wring all they can from oil revenues and the 2007 elections. Host to one of PNG's brightest prospects for future revenue, the Hides Gas Project, many Hela believe the districts of Komo/Margarima, Tari/Pori and Koroba/Kopiago should be self governing, no longer dependent on a Mendi-based provincial government they see as being run by the enemy. Against the grain of much public sentiment in Tari, Ben sees those who surrender their guns for peace as "Stupid. That's no good. Only if we have guns... Then politicians will hear us. Some of the boys took out the [Telikom PNG microwave] repeater up at Tari Gap. We'll do that again—and we've got Hides gas. If we have guns, they have to send us development." In the past few years, Ben claims to have bought three SLRs and an M-16 for his clansmen and allies. "Sometimes we need guns just to get to Mendi. Our enemies block the road and try to rob us. That road isn't safe for us [Hela people]." <sup>77</sup>

### **Upper Mendi**

*Mendi District, Mendi CD, Upper Mendi Rural LLG*  
*LLG pop. approx 27,000*

To the north of the provincial capital, residents of the rural district of Upper Mendi (pop. 27,000), seem to possess more high-powered weapons than most. Local leaders put the number of factory made firearms at 300, with M-16s, AR-15s and SLRs most often used in battle. More numerous are shotguns—pump-action or otherwise—and bolt-action rifles in .303 and .22 calibre. Although one report identified an 'AK-47,' the description did not match a Kalashnikov design or its variants, nor was it recognized from a photo. In 2002, the first tribal fight in Upper Mendi to feature firearms brought 14 shooting fatalities in total, all of them men. As both sides were adequately armed before the shooting began, mercenaries and rental guns were not required. Local leaders report no unintentional shootings or firearm-related suicides.<sup>78</sup>

### **Wabi & Sumi, Western Kagua**

*Kagua/Erave District, South Kagua CD, Kagua Rural LLG*  
*LLG pop. approx 35,500. Wabi Station CU Pop. 120; Sumi Station CU pop. 192*

The first fatal shooting recalled by elders of the Wabi-Sumi area of Western Kagua (pop. 18,000), came in 1995, when one man was shot for stealing bananas, and another for stealing a pig. A tribal fight the following year resulted in the shooting death of one man, with 'a few' injured by gunshot.

Factory made firearms became much more common after the 1997 national elections. In 2002, during an election-year fight over ballot boxes, one side lost three warriors shot dead and another badly disabled, while their opponents lost one man dead and several injured with factory made firearms. Community leaders count 'less than 100' commercially manufactured guns in Western Kagua, with the army SLR the first model mentioned. A police-issue SIG 540 assault rifle is also reported, along with a selection of .30-06, .303 and .22 calibre rifles, and pump-action shotguns.<sup>79</sup>

### **Williame, Pangia**

*Ialibu/Pangia District, Wiru CD, Wiru Rural LLG*  
*LLG pop. approx 18,000. Williame CU pop. 242*

Although a local businessman was killed in a political shooting at a roadblock during the 1997 national election, this is said to be the only intentional firearm-related killing in an area widely known to be peaceful. One man was shot dead by his brother in a hunting accident, and a local councillor also shot and injured his son while bird hunting. Community groups know of no gun suicides, and they estimate that between six and 20 factory made firearms are in the area.<sup>80</sup>

### **Wogia, Mendi/Upper Mendi**

*Mendi District, Mendi CD, Upper Mendi Rural LLG*  
*LLG pop. approx 27,000. Wogia CU pop. 1,303*

For the Wogia people of the Mendi and Upper Mendi areas (combined pop. 45,000), the first tribal fights involving mass-produced firearms came as late as 1999. Wogia gunmen say they had nine factory made firearms in the first battle: five fully automatic M-16 assault rifles, two five-round, pump-action shotguns and two single-shot shotguns. All the firearms were rented, at up to PGK 3,000 (USD 1,000) per month for an M-16. As both sides rushed to obtain more weapons, Wogia gun buyers obtained two SLRs, one of which cost PGK 11,000 (USD 3,700), seven M-16s, five of which were rented, and a .303 rifle. Following the 2002 peace settlement, the Wogia community has retained two SLRs, an M-16 and an assortment of bolt-action, pump-action and single-shot long guns.<sup>81</sup>

### **Guns for Girls: Trading Women for Firearms**

In May 2005, further evidence emerged regarding the ongoing trade in young women for guns. Confirming interviews with 'hiremen' who accepted, or had been offered young women in exchange for weapons, or for the services of a hired gunman (Alpers, 2005), along with earlier reports (Yala, 2002), PNG police produced contemporary evidence of such practices in Western Highlands Province.

According to RPNGC Inspector Billy Kombel, young girls are often "sold" for guns and ammunition used in tribal fights. In all cases, this illegal trade occurred against the wishes of the young women, who became virtual captives of their own tribesmen, fathers and brothers. When warring tribes find that there is no money or pigs to pay mercenaries, they sometimes give away their young girls. Out of fear of reprisal, or of being seen as outcast, the girls' mothers and other immediate relatives keep quiet. "In areas where there is tribal fighting involving high powered guns, there is complete lawlessness, and these things happen. The gunmen rules, not the tribal leaders," said Inspector Kombel (Gumuno, 2005).

## Enga Province: A Witness to Tribal Fights <sup>82</sup>

James Pile, an American anthropologist at Princeton University, lived with the Ambulyini clan, closely studying their tribal wars from 1996 to 2004. The 865-strong Ambulyini live 40kms north of Mendi, across the mountains in Lai Valley, Enga Province,<sup>83</sup> between the provincial capital of Wabag, and Wapenamanda to the south east. The local electoral roll claims an inflated 1,500 voters, but the Ambulyini's area of influence, clan and tribal connections includes about 30,000 people.

Ambulyini had not been involved in a tribal war for 25 years, but this changed in 1996, when high-powered firearms became available. In all, eight Ambulyini were killed in battle, with perhaps 50 dead on the opposing side.

With no skilled shooters or suitable high-powered firearms of their own, the Ambulyini enlisted 'hiremen,' or mercenary gunmen, all the while insisting that these outsiders joined the fight only for reasons of kinship, past war alliances, and friendship. In Engan tribal warfare, 'buying' gunmen with pigs or money carries considerable stigma, and is seen as a weakness. Later, when the clan had its own weapons, Ambulyini leaders say they refused to provide their guns to unconnected tribes.

In eight years of war, the Ambulyini clan never did develop its own skilled corps of gunmen. Instead, four or five enlisted outsiders were responsible for almost all shootings. These gunmen melded into the clan, bring with them high-powered firearms for the exclusive use of the Ambulyini and their allies. The guns remain within a single male line, never to be surrendered or sold. Each assault rifle, called a yanda keto ('strong bow'), is individually named, and is said to be so precious that 'it is your clan.' A gun's capture by the enemy brings shame and concern, its loss perhaps threatening the very survival of the clan or tribe. In the course of the war, Ambulyini fighters captured as many as five high-powered weapons, doubling their armoury.

Ambulyini fighters now control five 'M-16s', although one or two of these could be semi-automatic AR-15s instead. Of these five main guns, two are now owned by the clan, while the others remain the property of fighters enlisted from outside. Two SLRs are also used, although ammunition for these is scarce and expensive. In addition, two Chinese SKS rifles are held by the clan, one of which uses the standard Soviet military calibre, while another is chambered for NATO, or hunting ammunition. In Enga as elsewhere, the Soviet/Chinese round is very hard to come by.

The main gun in the valley, an M-16A2 carbine, was first said to have been lost by PNGDF troops in the Bougainville war, then shipped to the Highlands. In a later, more candid conversation, the gun had been snatched in an opportunistic, one-off theft from a canteen at a PNGDF base at Wewak. In a variety of tribal fights, its owner is said to have been responsible for killing as many as 120 enemies, in the process capturing eight of their firearms. In Enga as elsewhere, the ownership and distribution of additional weapons can greatly increase the power and 'name' of the master gunman, who claims them as his own. Among Ambulyini, this recently established precedent appears to have compromised the traditional distribution prerogatives, power and control of tribal elders. These days, the gunmen call the shots.

Battle tactics are controlled by the single named gunman in charge of each sortie. In the field, the gunman and his assault rifle are accompanied at all times by a seasoned protector, following close behind, armed with a factory made shotgun. The protector's primary task is to keep his leader alive, and to ensure that his precious weapon is not lost in battle. In a night ambush, often designed to provoke retribution, the two central fighters are accompanied by perhaps three younger men armed with bush knives, axes or home made shotguns. It's the job of 'the boys' to path-find, attack and

destroy, often noisily, and often drawing fire. Close by, the named gunman and his escort watch and wait for targets. A daylight battle follows the same format, but 'the boys' may number 20-25.

Twice during the Ambulyini's war with neighbouring Wapukini people, sizeable purchases of ammunition allowed more organized battles. Although elders, seers, and fighters collaborated in planning these large-scale assaults, tactics on the day were again decided by a handful of leading gunfighters.

Named gunmen can be excellent shots, hitting targets others can barely see at ranges of 500m or more. At one successful Ambulyini sniper killing, the skirmish team took 15 minutes to run to the place where the enemy had been hit. By then the victim's body had been dragged away, leaving the victors to sing and dance on a blood-spattered, but empty spot.

The clan also holds eleven factory made shotguns, two of which are pump-action 'five shot' or 'seven shot,' former police- or military-issue models. Of these, only two are truly owned by the clan, while the others remain the property of resident 'hiremen.' Five SIG-Sauer semi-automatic ex-police pistols are primarily used for self protection while visiting towns and bars.

In times of conflict, a significant amount of time is spent circulating among the clan, asking for money to buy ammunition. James Pile describes Ambulyini tribal warfare as "99% meetings and 1% actual combat... the meetings are spent shaming, begging, and threatening people to get them to cough up a few kina for bullets." Ammunition supply "is really the primary limitation on warfare in the Lai Valley."

Connected to the Ambulyini is a licensed gun owner who travels as far as Port Moresby to return with a bag of assorted shotgun shells, centrefire and .22 rimfire ammunition. Most rifle and pistol rounds are purchased from police and security officers, often in the largest Highland town of Mt Hagen. At times of crisis in Enga, the asking price for a single round in the standard PNG military and police calibres has been as high as PGK 25 (USD 8.30), though the price paid usually settles at around PGK 10 (USD 3.30).

In Enga, too, the story about smuggling guns for drugs across the Torres Strait is commonly offered as an initial explanation for the clan's source of guns. Yet according to Pile, "This is a moral tale. It has a purpose." In later conversation, and when the firearms were more closely described and inspected, it became clear that the source was more likely to be domestic than foreign, most commonly from local police or defence force stocks. The Ambulyini's early factory-made, high-powered guns were smuggled to the Highlands from the city, on Air Niugini flights to Enga's Wapenamanda airport, consigned as freight to the nearby Mukurumanda prison construction site. In March 2004, a clan ally stole an Ultimax-100 machine gun from a sleeping police officer, wounding him in the process. At least one local AR-15, and perhaps two, were also stolen from Enga police.

Source: interviews contributed by anthropologist James S. Pile, Princeton University, USA. July and August, 2004.

## Western Highlands Province: The Gumanch-Nebilyer Guns

One of the largest known collections of illicit small arms in PNG is occasionally displayed just over the border in Western Highlands Province. At the Gumanch Estate coffee plantation, about 5kms north of Mt Hagen, 30-40 warriors met with Paul Omba, a 17-year veteran of mediation in tribal fights. Intent on defending the plantation, the landowners produced for inspection eight M-16s and two AK-47 versions. Omba says the community holds 41 high-powered weapons in total, three of which were seized by police in May, 2004. Says Omba: "They have lots of guns, but only four or five [men] can really use them."<sup>84</sup> In 1988, 89, 90 and 93, AK-47s were used in tribal fights in the Nebilyer Valley. A clansman of one of the deceased tracked the guns back, and found they came from the Baiyer River area.<sup>85</sup> One police officer identified stated that three of these were fully automatic versions.<sup>86</sup>

In September 2000, nearby Ulga Kunulga clansmen were snapped by a newspaper photographer while displaying these and other assault rifles at a sing-sing, or tribal ceremony (Poiya, 2000).

### ***A 'Hireman' Named Rambo***

The precarious existence of a mercenary 'hireman,' perhaps especially one with a conspicuous name, just escaped from prison and returned to his clan, is illustrated in this September, 2004 newspaper item:

"The other [prison] escapee, Kuglame Rambo, 30, from Moromaule village in the Gumine district, was widely known throughout the Highlands region as a sniper and marksman. [Police] Inspector Onopia said Rambo was in high demand during tribal conflicts as a hired gunman. 'He was returning to his house, walking up a small track in his wife's village when a group of 18 men armed with firearms ambushed and shot him to death,' he said" (*National*, 2004a).

## A Guide to Small Arms in the Southern Highlands

This section identifies the most common, military-style firearms found or reported in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea in 2004, along with basic ammunition and feed specifications. For law enforcement and development agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders preparing to tackle the small arms problem, this should suffice as an elementary recognition manual. As the Australia-Papua New Guinea Enhanced Cooperation Programme (ECP) gathers strength on the ground in PNG, more expertise and information is likely to become available, both from Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, and Australian Federal Police personnel.

### Police and Military Rifles

#### M-16

A military-issue assault rifle capable of selective fire (either fully automatic 'machine gun' fire, or semi-automatic, single-shot fire), the M-16A2 model became the standard PNG Defence Force assault rifle when it was first delivered in the mid-1980s. Along with new uniforms for PNGDF troops, 500-600 M-16s were supplied by the US government under its subsidized Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme. Light, accurate and fast-firing weapons designed for manoeuvrability, M-16s were extensively used in the Bougainville conflict.<sup>87</sup> According to American authorities, an additional 1,800 M-16s were exported to PNG in 1991 and 1992 (US Department of State, 2003). Of the 2,300-2,400 M-16s delivered to PNG's defence force in the 1980s and '90s, only 1,034 remained in state armouries by October 2004.<sup>88</sup>

More than half of all PNGDF M-16s are full-length models, the remainder shorter carbines, some fitted with a collapsing stock.<sup>89</sup> Easier to manoeuvre in undergrowth, the carbine is popular among tribal fighters, and commands a higher price. Though the two are often confused, the military-issue M-16 and its cousin, the police-issue AR-15, are the most common high-powered<sup>90</sup> illicit firearms in the Southern Highlands (Alpers, 2005). Major suppliers are Colt's Manufacturing and Bushmaster Firearms (USA).

A separate shipment of optional, under-barrel M-203 40mm grenade launchers was purchased and fitted to a number of PNGDF M-16s as a section weapon (one per ten men).<sup>91, 92</sup> The RPNGC also provided 12 fully automatic M-16A2s with M-203 grenade launchers to its Special Services Division, or mobile air wing, at the SSD base in Port Moresby.<sup>93</sup>

First manufactured in the United States in 1962 and used extensively in the Vietnam war, the M-16, once referred to as the Armalite, is currently in service in more than 60 countries.

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm NATO (0.223inch), most commonly held in a 30-round magazine.

#### AR-15

A police-issue, semi-automatic version of Colt's M-16 assault rifle, the AR-15 is identical to the M-16, except for one important distinction. The AR-15 is not capable of 'machine gun' fire, and functions only as a semi-automatic rifle (each trigger pull fires one bullet).

The first models issued to PNG police were AR-15A2s from Colt's Manufacturing (USA). In 2000 the RPNGC began replacing these with the almost-identical model XM15-E2S, manufactured under licence by Bushmaster Firearms (USA). Although accurate records were not kept, around 500-600

AR-15s are said to have been purchased and issued.<sup>94</sup> Subject to an audit yet to be completed, current RPNGC stocks should total 300-400, of which 60 percent were made by Bushmaster, and 40 percent by Colt's.<sup>95, 96</sup> Some Colt-branded AR-15s were also issued to PNGDF forces.<sup>97</sup>

The AR-15, despite its limitation to semi-automatic fire, is widely referred to in PNG as an 'M-16.' Field reports rarely distinguish between the full-auto military rifle (M-16), and the otherwise identical semi-auto police rifle (AR-15), thus making it difficult to calculate the proportion of assault weapons stolen from police and military forces. The combined numbers of these two lookalikes make the M-16 and the AR-15 by far the most common assault rifles in illicit possession in the Southern Highlands (Alpers, 2005).

First manufactured in the United States in 1986, the AR-15 is used by law enforcement agencies in a wide range of countries. In the United States, the AR-15 or its variants are often lawfully owned by civilians.

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm NATO (0.223inch), most commonly held in a 30-round magazine.

Tari District Administrator Philip Moya knows a civil servant with three M-16s or AR-15s in Mendi, a Lai Valley man with another two, and says he can be sure of five examples in the Fugwa, Koroba, Utupia (Udjabia<sup>98</sup>) and Tari areas.<sup>99</sup> A Bela gunman reports hiring M-16s and AR-15s from their SHP owner for the Bela/Wogia tribal fights in 1994 and 1997,<sup>100</sup> while a gunman involved in the Unjamap/Wogia fights says he also used an M-16 and an AR-15, both of which were rented.<sup>101</sup> A policeman who returned from the scene of the December, 2001 Mendi battles reported M-16s and AR-15s being used (Alphonse, 2001), while another fighter from Bela highlighted the sometimes temporary nature of assault rifle possession: "We brought in M-16s for our tribal fight, then we sent them back. We had no need for them after that."<sup>102</sup>

Along with the SLR, M-16s and AR-15s are the firearms most likely to be given a 'gun name' by the clan which owns them. One Semberigi AR-15 is called 'Wisi,' after a local mountain (Kolma, 2004).

## SLR

Known in several Commonwealth countries as the Self Loading Rifle (SLR), this is a semi-automatic version of the FN-FAL NATO military assault rifle developed by Fabrique Nationale of Belgium. The Australian government Small Arms Factory (SAF) at Lithgow, NSW, manufactured 222,774 SLRs under licence from 1959 to 1986. Most were full-length L1A1s, but 5,463 of a slightly shortened version, the L1A1 F1, were shipped directly from Lithgow to the PNG Defence Force from 1971 to 1974 (Skenneron and Balmer, 1989). By October 2004, only 979 serviceable SLRs remained in PNGDF armouries.<sup>103</sup>

A limited number of the fully automatic, Australian-made L2A1 heavy-barrelled selective fire version of the SLR with fitted bipod also served the PNGDF as a squad automatic weapon (SAW) (Skenneron and Balmer, 1989).<sup>104, 105</sup> This is often referred to as the AR, or Automatic Rifle. In an August, 2004 PNGDF small arms audit, nine ARs were listed as being unaccounted for.<sup>106</sup>

In the Southern Highlands, the semi-automatic SLR is highly prized among gunmen as an accurate, long range sniper's rifle, and commands the highest price of all semi-automatic long guns (Alpers, 2005). The SLR is also the firearm most frequently stolen from PNGDF stocks.<sup>107</sup>

An Australian-made SLR shipped to the PNGDF is likely to be marked on the receiver: "L1A1 F1 7.62mm, serial No. AD7nnnnnn." The same number could also appear on the ejector cover, engraved by hand with an electric pencil. The two major SAF Lithgow production runs destined for

PNG in 1973-74 were stamped with serial numbers in the ranges AD7303168 to AD7305167, and AD7400001 to AD7403400 (Skenner and Balmer, 1989).

The SLR is now seen as obsolete. Although the PNGDF retains a number in usable condition for training and ceremony, its replacement, the M-16, is now standard issue.<sup>108</sup> SLRs were not issued to PNG police.<sup>109, 110</sup>

First manufactured in 1955, the FN-FAL and its variants currently serve in 77 countries.

Ammunition: 7.62 x 51mm NATO (0.308inch), most commonly in a 20-round magazine (L1A1), or 30-round magazine (L2A1).

## **SIG 540**

The Swiss-designed SG-540 is a selective fire assault rifle, of which 150 have been issued to RPNGC personnel. Most were converted to semi-automatic fire for police use, although six examples kept in Mt Hagen remain capable of automatic fire.<sup>111, 112</sup> The PNGDF does not stock the SIG SG-540.<sup>113</sup>

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm NATO (0.223inch), in a 20- or 30-round magazine.

One or more ex-police SIG rifles are reported in Utupia (Udjabia<sup>114</sup>),<sup>115</sup> Poroma,<sup>116</sup> and Wabi-Sumi in Western Kagua.<sup>117</sup>

## **SR-88A**

Manufactured by Chartered Industries of Singapore, 100 SR-88A selective-fire assault rifles were obtained for PNG police use in Bougainville, but proved unpopular with users.<sup>118</sup> About 80-90 are still held in RPNGC armouries.<sup>119</sup> Although the PNGDF also purchased SR-88As, the number remaining is unknown.<sup>120</sup>

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm (0.223inch), in a 20- or 30-round magazine also compatible with the M-16 and AR-15.

## **Kalashnikov**

Since the first delivery to Russian troops of the Avtomat Kalashnikova in 1947 (hence AK-47), more than 160 model variations have been manufactured in 19 countries. Between 70 and 100 million 'AKs' were made, and although more than 80 nations still stock them, none were supplied to PNG. The standard-issue Eastern Bloc assault rifle for several decades, the AK-47 and many of its derivatives are simple, rugged and cheap.

Although news media often speculate that AK-47s may be present in Papua New Guinea, and while a few fully automatic AK variants did go missing from stocks imported by Sandline mercenaries in 1997,<sup>121</sup> the AK's share of the illicit firearm trade seems very limited. When examined, many examples prove to be 'civilian' versions, limited to semi-automatic fire (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 7.62 x 39mm Soviet M1943, from a 30-round magazine. As of mid-2004, this ammunition is scarce in PNG.

In several districts of SHP, although they identified AK-47s from recognition photos and knew them by name, tribal gun buyers, 'hiremen' and other interviewees were also certain of their rarity.

"We don't have AK-47s around here," <sup>122</sup> and "We've never seen AK-47s," <sup>123</sup> were typical of many responses from across the province. Catholic Bishop Stephen Reichert, a 34-year resident of Mendi who travels in SHP more than most, knows a lot about illicit guns in his diocese and writes regularly on the topic, says "I've never seen an AK-47." <sup>124</sup>

Scepticism about the presence of AK-47s in PNG is echoed by a range of police officers, foreign military and law enforcement attaches, heads of government departments, and security firms whose employees guard remote oilfields and city businesses alike. <sup>125</sup> As two resident defence advisers agreed on condition of anonymity: "We've not seen any AK-47s. There's no evidence at all that they've been smuggled across the Indonesian border or on logging ships."

### **Lee-Enfield .303**

This World War II-era bolt-action rifle survives in Papua New Guinea as the SMLE or Jungle Carbine. No longer in service with either the PNGDF or the RPNGC, <sup>126</sup> the .303 is often identified by its distinctive sound.

Ammunition: 0.303inch British, in a ten-round magazine. In the Southern Highlands, this is less commonly available than current military and police calibres.

### **SAR-80**

Manufactured by Chartered Industries of Singapore (CIS), <sup>127</sup> the SAR-80 selective-fire assault rifle entered service with the Singapore armed forces in 1984. Perhaps 36 were obtained for trials by the PNGDF. The number remaining is unknown. <sup>128</sup>

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm (0.223inch), in a 20- or 30-round magazine also compatible with the M-16 and AR-15.

### **SA-80**

Made by the British firm Enfield Sterling, a small number of SA-80 selective fire assault rifles, or L85A1 carbines, were provided to PNGDF as trial weapons. The number remaining is unknown. <sup>129</sup>

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm NATO (0.223inch), from a 30-round magazine.

### **FAMAS**

A small number of French FAMAS F-1 and G-2 bullpup assault rifles have been provided to PNGDF as trial weapons. <sup>130</sup>

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm Type France or NATO (0.223inch), from a 30-round magazine.

### **Steyr**

The Austrian Steyr-Mannlicher AUG A1 assault rifle is also manufactured in Australia as the F-88. Although this distinctive weapon has been reported in PNG, both local and resident foreign defence officials say none are held by state forces, nor have they been reliably sighted in civilian possession. <sup>131</sup>

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm M193, SS109, or NATO (0.223inch), from a 30- or 42-round magazine.

## **G3**

The Heckler & Koch G3 was for several decades the standard German military assault rifle. Now obsolete, a few examples of this selective fire weapon remain in PNGDF stocks.<sup>132</sup> PNG police were not issued with G3s.<sup>133</sup> G3s have been reported in illicit possession in the Southern Highlands (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 7.62 x 51mm NATO (0.308inch), most commonly held in a 20-round magazine.

## **Machine Guns**

### **MAG-58**

The Belgian FN MAG general purpose machine gun is in service in 77 countries. A number are held in PNGDF stocks,<sup>134</sup> and several stolen MAG-58s have been reported during elections and tribal fighting in the Southern Highlands (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 7.62 x 51mm NATO (0.308inch), fed from a link belt.

### **Ultimax**

Manufactured by Chartered Industries of Singapore, the Ultimax-100 light machine gun was purchased by the RPNGC and the PNGDF as a squad automatic weapon (SAW).<sup>135</sup> Police Mobile Squads are issued with 2-4 each.<sup>136</sup> Estimates of total police stocks range from 20 to 40.<sup>137</sup> The PNGDF purchased as many as 300 Ultimax-100s.<sup>138, 139</sup> The Ultimax has been reported in Highlands tribal fighting (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm M193 or NATO (0.223inch), from a 30-round box or 100-round drum magazine.

### **M-60**

The standard general purpose machine gun of the US military, the M-60 is held in PNGDF stocks.<sup>140</sup> A number have been reported in illicit possession in the Southern Highlands. The M-60 requires scarce, belted ammunition, and reliable sightings of illicit, fireable examples are old and few.

Ammunition: 7.62 x 51mm NATO (0.308inch) fed from a disintegrating link belt.

### **M-2**

PNGDF patrol boats carry mounted M-2 heavy machine guns (HMGs). Although these American-made pedestal weapons cannot be hand held, 12 are missing from PNGDF stocks (Baynes, 2002).<sup>141, 142</sup> To date, no HMGs have been reliably reported in illicit use in the Highlands (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: .50-calibre BMG (Browning machine gun), belt fed. This ammunition is very scarce in PNG.

### **Bren**

This World War II-era light machine gun survives in PNGDF stocks, in the Australian-supplied L4A4 version chambered for NATO ammunition<sup>143</sup> (Skenneron, 1989). None are held by

RPNGC.<sup>144</sup> More Brens have gone missing from PNGDF stocks than any other machine gun, and several have been sighted in Highlands tribal fighting (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 7.62 x 51mm NATO (0.308inch), in a 20- or 30-round magazine. Magazines are interchangeable with both versions of the SLR, the L1A1 and the L2A1 Automatic Rifle.

## **AR**

Automatic Rifle: See SLR, L2A1 version.

## **Minimi**

The Belgian FN Minimi machine gun, also known as the M-249 (US), is held in small numbers by the PNGDF<sup>145</sup> (Capie, 2003). Yet in the 2004 PNGDF weapon stock take, ADF logistics staff did not encounter any Minimis, and none are listed as being unaccounted for. Infrequently identified as having been used in Highlands tribal warfare, these sightings remain unconfirmed (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 5.56 x 45mm NATO (0.223inch), fed either from a 200-round link belt or from a standard 30-round M-16 magazine. This makes the Minimi independent of link-belt ammunition, which is scarce in PNG.

## **Sub-machine Guns**

### **MP-5**

The German Heckler & Koch (H&K) MP-5A3 sub-machine gun was purchased by PNG police for tactical squads and VIP protection. The first batch numbered 28, a further 30-35 were imported shortly after,<sup>146</sup> and current stocks may number 100.<sup>147, 148</sup> The MP-5 is not issued to PNGDF personnel.<sup>149</sup> There are unconfirmed reports of MP-5s in illicit possession in the Highlands (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 9 x 19mm Parabellum, from a 15- or 30-round magazine.

While being interviewed for this study, a Port Moresby police officer fielded a phone call in which a trace was requested on an MP-5 sighted by police in illicit possession in another location. As the serial number was unknown, the officer could only say that he was unaware of any missing.<sup>150</sup>

### **F-1**

From 1964, the locally designed F-1 sub-machine gun was manufactured for Australian jungle forces at the government small arms factory (SAF) in Lithgow, NSW. More than 200 were supplied to PNG for police use at the time of the Bougainville conflict. The remaining RPNGC stock of 113 F-1s are reported to have been cut up and dumped in 2003.<sup>151, 152</sup> One defence source reports that 60 unused F-1s remain in boxes at a PNGDF armoury.<sup>153</sup> F-1s have been reported in illicit possession in the Highlands (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 9 x 19mm Parabellum, from a 34-round magazine

### **P-90**

The Belgian FN Herstal P-90 sub-machine gun is one component of an advanced weapon system developed in the 1990s for the exclusive use of military and police. Firing very high velocity

ammunition designed to pierce body armour, the P-90 and its stable mate, the FN Five sevenN (sic.) semi-automatic handgun were quickly labelled 'super gun,' and even 'super cop killer' in gun trade magazines and mainstream media (Brady Campaign, 2005; Weinberger, 2005).

According to its manufacturers, a round of specially designed SS-190 ammunition from the fully automatic P-90 can penetrate 48 layers of Kevlar body armour at a range of 200m (FN Herstal, 2004)

Ammunition: 5.7mm x 28mm SS-190 in a 50-round magazine. Rate of fire: 900rpm. Muzzle velocity: 2,395 fps (730 m/s)

## Shotguns

The American Mossberg pump-action shotgun, known to Highlanders as the 'five-shot,' is replacing Remington 870 and Winchester models in both RPNGC and PNGDF stocks. Ubiquitous among criminals, police and tribal fighters alike, 600 to 800 Mossbergs are on issue to police.<sup>154</sup> Boxes of new models lie undistributed in a PNGDF armoury.<sup>155</sup> In May 2004, ten Italian Benelli M-1 Super-90 pump-action shotguns, and a single South Korean Daewoo USAS-12 automatic 12-gauge shotgun were stored in the central RPNGC armoury at Bomana.<sup>156</sup> Of the old Remington 870s, less than 50 are said to remain police hands.<sup>157</sup> Subject to an audit yet to be completed, RPNGC shotgun holdings should total 1,000-1,200.<sup>158</sup>

Mossberg, Rossi, Winchester and Brazil shotguns have also been held in PNGDF armouries.

Ammunition: 12-gauge shotgun shells

## Handguns

The standard police issue sidearm was for many years the US-made Smith & Wesson .38 revolver, including the S&W Model 64 .38 Special. In recent years, most have been lost or destroyed, with perhaps 100 remaining in stock. Since 1995, its RPNGC replacement, the Swiss SIG-Sauer 9mm semi-automatic pistol, has been progressively issued to commissioned officers and special units, with 200-300 of the SIG models P226, P228, P230 and P232 purchased to date. Eight Austrian Glock G-17 9mm semi-automatic pistols are also on issue to RPNGC officers.<sup>159, 160</sup>

The standard-issue PNGDF sidearm was the Belgian FN Browning High Power 9mm semi-automatic pistol Model 1935, supplied by the Australian government. Once commonly issued to commanding officers, batmen, platoon commanders and other PNGDF personnel, the number lost became so alarming that many of the remainder were recalled and stored. Although handguns are now issued to only 15-20 PNGDF military police and very few others, the Browning remains the third most common defence force firearm in illicit possession in PNG, after M-16s and SLRs.<sup>161</sup>

In the search for a replacement PNGDF handgun, a number of Swiss SIG-Sauer semi-automatic pistols were obtained for trials.<sup>162</sup>

In the Southern Highlands, tribal fighters and villagers tend to be slightly contemptuous of factory made handguns, equating them with 'politicians and big men,' and 'criminals in towns.' No Highlands informant felt that a handgun was of much use in battle (Alpers, 2005).

Ammunition: 9mm Parabellum (pistol), superseding .38 S&W Special (revolver)

## Grenades and Launchers

Armed police in Papua New Guinea often carry small, battered grenade launchers capable of lobbing a low-velocity tear gas (CS) grenade into a nearby crowd or building. Purchased by RPNGC to fire only CS gas grenades, current stocks include 300-400 of the CIS 38mm GL model from Singapore,<sup>163</sup> plus a dozen of the more recent CIS-40, which fires 40mm projectiles.<sup>164</sup> Unlike the American M-203 grenade launchers mounted beneath the barrel of an M-16 or AR-15 rifle, the RPNGC's CIS launchers are self-contained. Although all are also capable of firing high explosive (HE) or incendiary grenades, police say they have not purchased, nor do they have ready access to explosive rounds.<sup>165</sup>

Current PNGDF systems include the M-203, 40mm under-barrel grenade launcher fitted to M-16s as a section weapon.<sup>166, 167</sup> A dozen M-203s were also fitted to automatic M-16s for the police Special Services Division, or mobile air wing.<sup>168</sup> A number of PNGDF SR-88A and Heckler & Koch HK-33E assault rifles were also fitted with 40mm under-barrel grenade launchers.

The PNGDF also stocks self-contained M-79, 40mm single-shot HE and practice grenade launchers, along with four automatic grenade launchers (AGLs) capable of rapid-firing 40mm linked HE rounds. An earlier, obsolete weapon reminiscent of the Bazooka, the M-72 shoulder-fired anti-tank launcher and its projectiles, has been destroyed.<sup>169, 170</sup>

All models of grenade launchers have leaked to illicit users, and explosions consistent with their use have been reported in tribal fights. However, explosive grenades for these launchers are said to be very scarce on the black market.<sup>171</sup>

In addition, PNGDF hand grenades have gone missing on several occasions, and some have been reported in tribal fights (Alpers, 2005).

## Rocket Propelled Grenades

Shoulder-held, rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) are often mentioned in media reports and conversations in Papua New Guinea, yet there are no recent, reliable reports of their illicit use. Although an August, 2004 audit of PNGDF stocks showed that ten Soviet-designed RPG-7 rocket launchers are unaccounted for, a defence source doubts that the projectiles necessary to fire them can be sourced on the PNG black market.<sup>172</sup>

A large number of RPG rounds were seized from foreign mercenaries during the Sandline affair, but these are said to have been destroyed by PNGDF and ADF experts. More recently, police and defence sources, military attaches, security firms, professional gunmen and tribal fighters alike all doubt that RPGs with fireable ammunition are in illicit possession.<sup>173</sup>

## Appendix

### Definitions

**Automatic:** A firearm capable of automatic, 'machine gun' fire. Commonly only available to defence forces and specialist law enforcement agencies, these are most often fitted with a selective fire lever that allows the user to choose between single shot, semi-automatic, fully automatic, or burst-fire modes. With automatic fire selected, a single trigger pull can fire and reload repeatedly until released.

**Firearm:** In PNG legislation:

Firearm includes (a) an air rifle or other kind of rifle or gun from which a shot, bullet, or other missile, or irritant liquid, gas, or powder or other substance capable of causing bodily harm, can be discharged; and (b) a rifle or gun from which for the time being any such missile or substance cannot be discharged because of (i) the absence or defect of one or more of its parts; or (ii) some obstruction in the rifle or gun, but which, if the part or parts were replaced, renewed, or repaired, or the obstruction removed, would be capable of discharging (PNG, 1978).

**Handgun:** A firearm that can be easily aimed and fired with one hand, commonly a revolver or pistol.

**High-powered:** The term 'high-powered firearm' is in common usage across Melanesia to describe a long gun or sub-machine gun of the type normally issued to military and police. In Bougainville, peace monitors defined factory manufactured, military-style weapons (M-16, AR-15, SLR, FAMAS, SIG rifle, etc.) as 'high-powered'. In the Solomon Islands, the International Peace Monitoring Team defined a military weapon as 'any high-powered centre-fire semi-automatic, automatic, bolt-action, magazine fed shotgun, riot gun, or signal pistol issued to members of the Solomon Islands police.' In common usage, Eastern bloc SKS rifles, AK-47 assault weapons, and their look-alikes, although never issued to state forces in the Melanesian region, are also referred to as 'high-powered firearms', as are semi-automatic, centrefire hunting rifles. In short, this catch-all term is used to differentiate larger-calibre (centrefire), factory-made repeating long guns from single-shot shotguns, .22 calibre rimfire rifles, and home-made firearms.

**Long gun:** A firearm designed to be aimed and fired with both hands, commonly a rifle or shotgun.

**Semi-automatic:** A self-loading long gun or handgun that ejects each expended cartridge, then loads another from an ammunition magazine either built into or attached to the firearm. For each trigger pull, a single round is fired.

**Small arm:** Many publications, including the draft *Programme of Action* of the 2001 United Nations small arms conference (United Nations, 2001), have relied on the definition of small arms and light weapons developed for the 1997 report of the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. Here, small arms were defined as 'revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns, and light machine guns' (United Nations, 1997). In practice, and particularly in military parlance, the term 'small arms and light weapons' covers not only firearms, but also explosive weapons designed to be carried and fired by a single person. These can include hand grenades, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), light mortars, and man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS).

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> These include: (Alpers, 2005; Alpers and Twyford, 2003; Alpers, Twyford *et al.*, 2004; Garap and Kai, 2004; LeBrun and Muggah, 2005; Muggah, 2004; Muggah and Alpers, 2003; 2004; Nelson and Muggah, 2004)
- <sup>2</sup> Although this background paper was completed and circulated in December 2004, a small number of updates were added to the present version for Web posting in June 2005.
- <sup>3</sup> For an explanation of the term 'high-powered weapon' common in Melanesia, see Appendix: Definitions.
- <sup>4</sup> Interview with Sgt Hosiah Perea, Intelligence Officer, SHP, RPNGC. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>5</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>6</sup> Interview with Greg Bill, Group General Manager, Carson Pratt Services and South West Airlines. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>7</sup> Interview with Insp. Benson Osil, Coordinator, Community Policing, SHP, RPNGC. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>8</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>9</sup> Interview with Mark Yangen, former Mendi police inspector. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>10</sup> Interview with Jakob Rumu, Peace and Justice Committee member, Sugu and Kagua Central. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>11</sup> Interview with Victor Pu Rageloa, Peace and Good Order Committee of Wabi-Sumi, Western Kagua. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>12</sup> While all informants for this study provided the spelling Utupia, the official orthography is Udjabia.
- <sup>13</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>14</sup> Interview with Charlie Pooley, chief helicopter pilot, South West Airlines. Tari, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>15</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Chief of Logistics, Department of Defence, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, Aug 2004.
- <sup>16</sup> Interview with Charlie Pooley, chief helicopter pilot, South West Airlines. Tari, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>17</sup> Interview with Liz and David Murnane, NGI Steel, Tari High School. Tari, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>18</sup> Interview with Nerys Evans, Intelligence Coordinator, State Crime Command Drug Squad, NSW Police HQ. Parramatta, NSW, Sept 2004.
- <sup>19</sup> Interview with Susan Fiddian, Manager, Botany, Victoria Police Laboratories. Melbourne, VIC, September 2004.
- <sup>20</sup> Interview with Simon Gilmore, cannabis DNA researcher and consultant to Forensic & Technical Services, Australian Federal Police. Canberra, ACT, September 2004.
- <sup>21</sup> Interview with Jonathan Roli, Peace and Justice Committee member of Williame, Pangia. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>22</sup> The author is indebted to the Australian National University's State, Society & Governance in Melanesia Project for cross-checking official census figures against those provided by residents in each locality.
- <sup>23</sup> Public meeting with 160 Bela residents, focus groups with six tribal fighters and elders from each of the two warring sides, followed by individual interviews. Bela, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with six Kondup-Konjop tribal fighters. Bela, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>25</sup> Interview with 'Michael,' introduced by fellow Kondup/Konjop tribesmen as a skilled gunman. Bela, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>26</sup> Interview with 'Paul,' 'Peter' and 'James,' three Menpo/Humsem tribal fighters. Bela, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>27</sup> Interviews with 17 male residents of Det and Poroma, Aron fighters and village elders. Det, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> Interview with Dominic Awape, Youth Coordinator and Human Development Educator, Kewabi, Ialibu. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>32</sup> Interview with Rex Ero, Catholic Development Secretary, Mendi Diocese. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>33</sup> Interview with Camillus Wambopa, Peace and Justice Committee member of Kuare, Kagua. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>34</sup> Interview with Charlie Pooley, chief helicopter pilot, South West Airlines. Tari, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>35</sup> Interview with Bishop Stephen Reichert, Catholic Diocese of Mendi. Mendi, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>36</sup> For additional, participatory research describing these battles, see (LeBrun and Muggah, 2005)
- <sup>37</sup> Interviews with three male Unjamap community leaders. Unjamap, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>38</sup> Interview with 'Lukas,' a gunman in the Unjamap/Wogia fighting. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>39</sup> Interview with Bishop Stephen Reichert, Catholic Diocese of Mendi. Mendi, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>40</sup> Interviews with three male Unjamap community leaders. Unjamap, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>41</sup> Interview with 'Lukas,' a gunman in the Unjamap/Wogia fighting. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>42</sup> Interview with Bishop Stephen Reichert, Catholic Diocese of Mendi. Mendi, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>43</sup> Interviews with three male Unjamap community leaders. Unjamap, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>44</sup> Interview with Supt Simon Nigi, Provincial Police Commander, RPNGC. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>45</sup> Interview with Greg Bill, Group General Manager, Carson Pratt Services and South West Airlines. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>46</sup> Interview with Bishop Stephen Reichert, Catholic Diocese of Mendi. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.

- <sup>47</sup> Interviews with three male Unjamap community leaders. Unjamap, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>48</sup> Interview with 'Lukas,' a gunman in the Unjamap/Wogia fighting. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>49</sup> Meeting with 38 male and one female Nipa residents, tribal fighters and village elders, followed by selected interviews. Nipa, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>50</sup> Interview with Mark Yangen, former Mendi police inspector. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>51</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>52</sup> While all informants for this study provided the spelling Utupia, the official orthography is Udjabia.
- <sup>53</sup> Interview with Teddy Agwi, former RPNGC Mobile Squad leader. Hides, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>54</sup> Meeting with 38 male and one female Nipa residents, tribal fighters and village elders, followed by selected interviews. Nipa, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>55</sup> Interview with Nipa resident 'Jerry'. Nipa, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>56</sup> Interview with Mathew Dwyer, chief pilot, South West Airlines. Semberigi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>57</sup> Interview with Daniel Towang, Catholic community worker, Nipa Parish. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>58</sup> Lai Valley, SHP, near Mendi, should not be confused with Lai Valley, Enga Province, 40kms to the north.
- <sup>59</sup> Interview with four Lai Valley fighters and gunmen. Lai Valley, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>60</sup> Interview with Mathew Dwyer, chief pilot, South West Airlines. Semberigi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>61</sup> Interview with eight Semberigi men. Semberigi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>62</sup> Interview with Mathew Dwyer, chief pilot, South West Airlines. Semberigi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>63</sup> Interview with eight Semberigi men. Semberigi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>64</sup> Interview with Jakob Rumu, Peace and Justice Committee member, Sugu and Kagua Central. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>65</sup> Interviews with 23 male Tamanda residents, Karints tribal fighters and village elders. Tamanda, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>66</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>68</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>69</sup> Personal correspondence with David Hegarty and others, Australian National University. Canberra, Nov 2004.
- <sup>70</sup> Interview with 'Ben,' a Tari/Pureni gun buyer, clan leader, and civil servant. Port Moresby, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>71</sup> Other informants identified this machine gun instead as an American-made M-60.
- <sup>72</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>73</sup> Interview with Supt Simon Nigi, Provincial Police Commander, RPNGC. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>74</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>75</sup> Interview with Bishop Stephen Reichert, Catholic Diocese of Mendi. Mendi, SHP, February 2004.
- <sup>76</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>77</sup> Interview with 'Ben,' a Tari/Pureni gun buyer, clan leader, and civil servant. Port Moresby, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>78</sup> Interviews with Raymond Walo, Chairman, Peace and Good Order Committee, and Michael Walop, Peace and Justice Committee member, Upper Mendi. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>79</sup> Interview with Victor Pu Rageloa, Peace and Good Order Committee of Wabi-Sumi, Western Kagua. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>80</sup> Interview with Jonathan Roli, Peace and Justice Committee member of Williame, Pangia. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>81</sup> Interview with 'Mark,' a Wogia gunman. Wogia, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>82</sup> Interviews and correspondence with James Pile, anthropologist, Princeton University. Boston, MA, July and August 2004.
- <sup>83</sup> Lai Valley, Enga Province, should not be confused with Lai Valley, SHP, 40kms to the south near Mendi.
- <sup>84</sup> Interview with Paul Omba, Justice, Peace & Development Secretary, Catholic Church. Mt Hagen, WHP, May 2004.
- <sup>85</sup> Interview with Snr Constable Geoffrey Kereme, Community Policing Officer, RPNGC. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>86</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>87</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Operations Support Commander, PNGDF HQ. Nadi, Fiji, Aug 2004.
- <sup>88</sup> Interviews with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko NCD, February 2005.
- <sup>89</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>90</sup> For an explanation of the term 'high-powered weapon' common in Melanesia, see Appendix: Definitions.
- <sup>91</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Operations Support Commander, PNGDF HQ. Nadi, Fiji, Aug 2004.
- <sup>92</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>93</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004. Note: although Lamb identified these rifles as M-16s, others at RPNGC say they could be M-203-equipped AR-15s instead (Malikienas & Kaian).
- <sup>94</sup> Interview with Mal Malikienas, Logistics Adviser, and Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, October 2004.
- <sup>95</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>96</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>97</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Chief of Logistics, Department of Defence, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, Aug 2004.
- <sup>98</sup> While all informants for this study provided the spelling Utupia, the official orthography is Udjabia.

- <sup>99</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>100</sup> Interview with 'Michael,' introduced by fellow Kondup/Konjop tribesmen as a skilled gunman. Bela, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>101</sup> Interview with 'Lukas,' a gunman in the Unjamap/Wogia fighting. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>102</sup> Interview with Christopher Tos, Menpo-Humsem tribal fighter. Bela, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>103</sup> Interviews with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko NCD, February 2005.
- <sup>104</sup> Interviews and personal communication with Federal Agent Paul McFawn, Team Leader, Firearms & Ballistics, AFP Forensic Services. Weston, ACT, Aug 2004.
- <sup>105</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>106</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Chief of Logistics, Department of Defence, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, Aug 2004.
- <sup>107</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Operations Support Commander, PNGDF HQ. Nadi, Fiji, Aug 2004.
- <sup>108</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>109</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>110</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>111</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>112</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>113</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>114</sup> While all informants for this study provided the spelling Utupia, the official orthography is Udjabia.
- <sup>115</sup> Interview with Philip Moya, Tari District Administrator. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>116</sup> Interview with 23 male Tamanda residents, Karints tribal fighters and village elders. Tamanda, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>117</sup> Interview with Victor Pu Rageloa, Peace and Good Order Committee of Wabi-Sumi, Western Kagua. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>118</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>119</sup> Interviews with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May and October 2004.
- <sup>120</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>121</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>122</sup> Interview with 'Michael,' introduced by fellow Kondup/Konjop tribesmen as a skilled gunman. Bela, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>123</sup> Interview with 'Paul,' 'Peter' and 'James,' three Menpo/Humsem tribal fighters. Bela, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>124</sup> Interview with Bishop Stephen Reichert, Catholic Diocese of Mendi. Mendi, SHP, May 2004.
- <sup>125</sup> Informants on this topic included Deputy Commissioner Gari Baki and Supt Simon Nigi (RPNGC), Federal Agents Leisa James and Richard Terry (AFP), and Commissioner Richard Sikani (PNGCS).
- <sup>126</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>127</sup> CIS has since been renamed Singapore Technologies, Kinetics Division, aka ST Kinetics.
- <sup>128</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>129</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>130</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>131</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>132</sup> Interview with 'Keith,' military adviser to a foreign government with experience in PNG. May, 2004.
- <sup>133</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>134</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>135</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>136</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>137</sup> Interviews with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, and Mal Malikienas, Logistics Adviser, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May and October 2004.
- <sup>138</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Operations Support Commander, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>139</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>140</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>141</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Chief of Logistics, Department of Defence, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, Aug 2004.
- <sup>142</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>143</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>144</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>145</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>146</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>147</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>148</sup> Interview with Mal Malikienas, Logistics Adviser, and Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, October 2004.
- <sup>149</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.

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- <sup>150</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>151</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>152</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>153</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>154</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>155</sup> Interview with 'Keith,' military adviser to a foreign government with experience in PNG. May, 2004.
- <sup>156</sup> Inspected by the author during a visit to the RPNGC central armoury. Bomana, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>157</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>158</sup> Interview with Mal Malikienas, Logistics Adviser, and Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, October 2004.
- <sup>159</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>160</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>161</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Operations Support Commander, PNGDF HQ. Nadi, Fiji, Aug 2004.
- <sup>162</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>163</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Lamb, Acting Force Quartermaster, RPNGC. Gordons Barracks, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>164</sup> Interview with Supt Vincent Kaian, Acting Director, Supply, RPNGC HQ. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>165</sup> Interview with Gari Baki, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations), RPNGC. Konedobu, NCD, May 2004.
- <sup>166</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Operations Support Commander, PNGDF HQ. Nadi, Fiji, Aug 2004.
- <sup>167</sup> Interview with Lt Col. Joe Ben, Director Supply, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, May 2004.
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- <sup>171</sup> Interview with 'Keith,' military adviser to a foreign government with experience in PNG. May, 2004.
- <sup>172</sup> Interview with Col. Joe Fabila, Chief of Logistics, Department of Defence, PNGDF HQ. Murray Barracks, Boroko, NCD, Aug 2004.
- <sup>173</sup> Informants included RPNGC, PNGDF and AFP personnel, resident foreign defence staff, and a variety of Southern Highlands gunmen.