In Mossi society, life is ruled by customary law and practices, where the Naabsas (traditional leaders) make key decisions affecting the political, social and economic life of the community.

**TRADITIONAL BELIEF IN WITCHCRAFT**

Witchcraft accusations against women are not uncommon. In Yako, Passoré Province, 20 accused women were banished from their community after being accused of witchcraft in traditional contexts. In the center in Yako, “Siongo” and “Zangogo” accusations created great anxiety among women, threatening their lives. The process proved to be cruel and unjust treatment of women who were already marginalized from their communities.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGES TRADITIONAL PRACTICES**

In 2006, with the support of the Mogho Naaba (the King of the Mossi people), Amnesty International and its regional partners worked closely with communities in Kourweogo and Passoré provinces to change this practice. Dialogue, theater forum plays and radio programs facilitated a process of education and awareness.

In 2011, with the support of the Mogho Naaba, the King of the Mossi people, Amnesty International in Burkina Faso and its local partners worked closely with communities in Kourweogo and Passoré provinces to change this practice. Dialogue, theater forum plays and radio programs facilitated a process of education and awareness.

**Women’s Rights in Burkina Faso**

In 1994, at the age of 74, Habibou Sawadogo was banished from her village after being found ‘guilty’ of using witchcraft to cause the death of a child. In 2011, Amnesty International and local partners began working with community leaders to abolish the tradition of banishment. Through engagement and dialogue, villagers understood such practices violated the dignity and human rights of women. As a result, many women were reunited with their communities.

**POSITIVE RESULTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

The practice of banishing older women as allegations of witchcraft are legally abolished in 45 villages. In 2011, the government of Burkina Faso adopted a national plan to end the banning of women accused of witchcraft. The plan of action to end the banishment of women accused of witchcraft included: public awareness campaigns to raise awareness about the human rights of women, including sexual abuse, discrimination based on age and the right to be treated with dignity.

In 2012, eighteen years after being forced to leave her house, Habibou Sawadogo returned to her community and was reunited with her family. In 2011, the Mogho Naaba proclaimed:

“I cannot approve, on the basis of traditional or cultural beliefs, the human rights and dignity violations for women and girls. I accordingly invite all the citizens of Burkina Faso and mainly people living in the villages, districts and regions under my control … to put an end to all forms of violence and social exclusion of women. I invite all the women excluded from their communities and to assist them in their return to their communities.”

Through engagement and dialogue, villagers understood such practices violated the dignity and human rights of women. As a result, many women were reunited with their communities.

End ing this form of exclusion and violence against women is a process that involves cooperation at all levels—from international, regional and national laws, to the work of community-based organizations, traditional leaders and community members.”

Moussa Ouedraogo, Amnesty International Burkina Faso

**THE KING ADDRESSES THE MOSSI PEOPLE**

On June 10, 2011, the Mogho Naaba proclaimed:

“I cannot approve, on the basis of traditional or cultural beliefs, the human rights and dignity violations for women and girls. I accordingly invite all the citizens of Burkina Faso and mainly people living in the villages, districts and regions under my control … to put an end to all forms of violence and social exclusion of women. I invite all the women excluded from their communities and to assist them in their return to their communities.”

Through engagement and dialogue, villagers understood such practices violated the dignity and human rights of women. As a result, many women were reunited with their communities.

End ing this form of exclusion and violence against women is a process that involves cooperation at all levels—from international, regional and national laws, to the work of community-based organizations, traditional leaders and community members.”

Moussa Ouedraogo, Amnesty International Burkina Faso