# IPC Section 331: Voluntarily causing grievous hurt to extort confession, or to compel restoration of property.

## IPC Section 331: Voluntarily Causing Grievous Hurt to Extort Confession, or to Compel Restoration of Property  
  
Section 331 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) addresses the severe crime of intentionally inflicting grievous hurt on an individual to extract a confession or compel the restoration of property. This section highlights the enhanced culpability of those who resort to violence resulting in serious injuries to obtain information or recover possessions, recognizing the substantial harm inflicted upon the victim. It builds upon the principles of Section 330 but focuses on situations involving more serious harm, carrying a correspondingly harsher punishment.  
  
\*\*The Text of Section 331:\*\*  
  
"Whoever voluntarily causes grievous hurt to any person for the purpose of extorting from him or any person related to him any confession or any information which may lead to the detection of an offence or misconduct, or for the purpose of compelling such person or any person related to him to restore or to cause the restoration of any property or valuable security or to satisfy any claim or demand, or to give information which may lead to the restoration or satisfaction thereof, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine."  
  
\*\*Breaking Down the Elements of Section 331:\*\*  
  
1. \*\*Voluntarily Causing Grievous Hurt:\*\* This element constitutes the actus reus (guilty act). The perpetrator must intentionally inflict "grievous hurt" as defined under Section 320 of the IPC. Grievous hurt encompasses injuries of a more serious nature than simple hurt, including:  
  
 \* Emasculation.  
 \* Permanent privation of the sight of either eye.  
 \* Permanent privation of the hearing of either ear.  
 \* Privation of any member or joint.  
 \* Destruction or permanent impairing of the powers of any member or joint.  
 \* Permanent disfiguration of the head or face.  
 \* Fracture or dislocation of a bone or tooth.  
 \* Any hurt which endangers life or which causes the sufferer to be during the space of twenty days in severe bodily pain, or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits.  
  
 The prosecution must establish a direct and voluntary causal link between the accused’s actions and the grievous hurt suffered by the victim.  
  
  
2. \*\*Purpose of Extorting a Confession or Information:\*\* This forms the first of the two mens rea (guilty mind) elements. The perpetrator must inflict grievous hurt with the specific intent of extracting a confession related to an offence or misconduct, or information that might lead to the detection of such an offence or misconduct. "Offence" refers to any act punishable under the IPC or other laws. "Misconduct" covers a wider range of wrongdoing, even if not strictly criminal.  
  
  
3. \*\*Purpose of Compelling Restoration of Property or Satisfying a Claim:\*\* This is the second mens rea element. The accused must intend to compel the victim, or any person related to them, to restore property or valuable security, or to satisfy a claim or demand through the infliction of grievous hurt. This can include compelling the repayment of a debt, the return of stolen goods, or the fulfillment of any other demand, regardless of the legality of the claim or demand. The offence lies in the use of grievous hurt to enforce it. The section also encompasses situations where the grievous hurt is inflicted to obtain information leading to the restoration of property or satisfaction of a claim.  
  
  
4. \*\*Relationship to the Victim:\*\* Like Section 329 and 330, this section covers instances where grievous hurt is inflicted on someone to extort a confession, information, property, or satisfaction of a claim from that person \*or any person related to them\*. This expands the scope of protection, acknowledging the possibility of perpetrators targeting family members or close associates to exert pressure on the intended victim.  
  
  
\*\*Examples of Offences under Section 331:\*\*  
  
\* Breaking someone’s bones to force a confession to a crime.  
\* Blinding someone to compel them to reveal the location of hidden valuables.  
\* Inflicting life-threatening injuries on a person’s family member to pressure them into repaying a large debt.  
\* Causing permanent disfigurement to extract information about a competitor's business practices (misconduct).  
  
  
\*\*Punishment:\*\*  
  
Section 331 prescribes a severe punishment:  
  
\* Imprisonment for life.  
\* Imprisonment of either description (rigorous or simple) for a term which may extend to ten years.  
\* Fine.  
  
The court determines the appropriate sentence based on the specific facts, the severity of the injuries, the nature of the extortion or coercion, and the overall circumstances.  
  
  
\*\*Relationship with Other Sections:\*\*  
  
\* \*\*Section 330 (Voluntarily causing hurt to extort confession, or to compel restoration of property):\*\* The key difference lies in the severity of the hurt inflicted. Section 331 deals with \*grievous hurt\* and carries a heavier punishment, while Section 330 deals with simple hurt.  
\* \*\*Section 329 (Voluntarily causing grievous hurt to extort property, or to constrain to an illegal act):\*\* Both sections address grievous hurt inflicted for coercive purposes. Section 331 focuses specifically on extorting confessions, information related to offences or misconduct, or compelling the restoration of property or satisfaction of claims. Section 329 encompasses a broader range of coercive purposes, including compelling illegal acts.  
\* \*\*Sections 383-389 (Extortion and related offences):\*\* These sections cover a wider range of extortion methods. Section 331 specifically addresses grievous hurt inflicted for the purposes defined within the section.  
  
  
\*\*Burden of Proof:\*\*  
  
The prosecution carries the burden of proving all elements of Section 331 beyond a reasonable doubt. This includes establishing the infliction of grievous hurt, the intent behind the act, and the connection between the grievous hurt and the extortion or coercion of a confession, information, or property. It is crucial to prove that the grievous hurt was inflicted specifically for the purposes mentioned in the section.  
  
  
\*\*Conclusion:\*\*  
  
Section 331 of the IPC plays a critical role in protecting individuals from violence intended to extract confessions, information, or property through the infliction of grievous hurt. The stringent punishment reflects the gravity of such offences, recognizing the potentially devastating consequences for victims. The inclusion of "any person related to him" broadens the protection, acknowledging that perpetrators might target others to exert pressure on their intended victims. The section serves as a strong deterrent against using violence for personal gain or bypassing legal procedures for obtaining information or resolving disputes.