

# Child Abuse Incidents

Reported in Media for January 2023

Our media monitoring team has come up with a total of 45 child abuse incidents that have been reported in the media for January 2023. These child abuse incidents fall into 12 categories as specified in the chart below. Among the 45 incidents, 21 of them involved female children while 16 involved male children.

Among the 45 child abuse incidents, 14 children have died, including three suicides. There were 15 reports of sexual abuse, the highest number of all abuse reports for the month. Among the 15 sexual abuse incidents, one child was subject to substance abuse and sexual abuse, and another was physically and sexually abused at the same time.

In terms of districts, there were 8 incidents in Gampaha, 5 each in Colombo and Kalutara, and 3 in Kandy.

## Type of Child Abuse

Child sexual abuse is, again, the most frequently occurring crime against children, at 29 percent for January 2023. With 24 percent and 20 percent, respectively, homicide/murder and physical abuse are at close second and third places.

Last year, the data reflected 31 percent for child sexual abuse, 9 percent for homicide/murder, and 12 percent for physical abuse.

With the high rates of incidence for January 2023, the prognosis for the year ahead does not bode well for our children.

We notice, though, that the rate of negligence is low, at 2%, compared to the rate of 10% for the entirety of 2022.

We also note that there were no media reports on cybercrimes even though we know that cybercrime exists and that incidents occurred in January 2023. Last year, only one incident of cybercrime was reported by the media. This indicates that law enforcement is not yet proficient with classifying online incidents of child abuse, such as cyberbullying and online grooming.

## No of Incidents



## Child Deaths

The statistic for child deaths resulting from all types of child abuse for the month of January is 31 percent. 24 percent of these child deaths were due to homicide or murder. Gampaha, Badulla and Jaffna districts each reported two child deaths for January.

From all child deaths, child suicide is at 21 percent; this does not set a good precedent for the months to come.

The precise causes of some children's suicide decisions remain unknown. In December 2022, we learned about an incident where a student who was preparing for his advanced level exam may have killed himself because he was dissatisfied with the way he looked as a result of losing his hair.

## Child Abuse by District

In our most recent news report we mentioned that, according to the data, Colombo, Jaffna, Gampaha, and Anuradhapura had the highest number of media reported child abuse cases.

In January 2023, the districts of Colombo and Gampaha continue 2022's trend for being hotbeds for crimes against children.

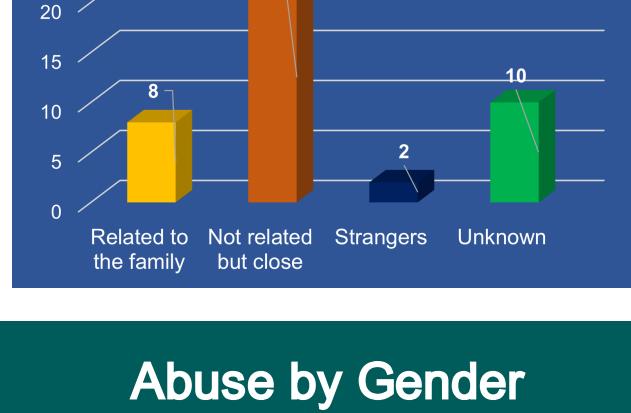
There have also been more reports of child abuse to the media in Kalutara. In 2022, for the whole year, there were 10 reports of child abuse to the media, but in January 2023 there have been five. It is not clear what caused the surge in incidents in Kalutara for January.

## Who are the Perpetrators?

Based on the media reports, we noted that 56 percent of child abuse is perpetrated by those who are close to the victims but not related biologically. These are people in a child's microsystem, like teachers, shop owners, neighbours, lovers, clerics, and others with whom a child will naturally interact daily or frequently.

The second highest child abuse perpetrator, at 18 percent, are those within the child's family; fathers, uncles, brothers, mothers, sisters and aunts. Strangers quantify at just 2 percent.

In 22 percent of incidents, however, the media did not identify if the perpetrator was a relative, unrelated or a stranger.



## Abuse by Gender

According to the media reports, female children were the most abused gender for child abuse in January 2023, with 47% compared to 36% for male children. However, for 8 incidents of child abuse, the media had not specified the gender and we may only classify this as "unknown."

