



# Child Abuse Incidents

## Reported in the Media for November 2023

This information is the result of the aggregation and verification of reported cases of violence against children in the media for November 2023. We at PEACE/ECPAT Sri Lanka believe that sharing this information with a wider audience will help us connect, perform better, and become stronger in the field of Child Protection.

The Media Monitoring Team of ECPAT Sri Lanka has collected and collated information on all forms of incidents during November 2023. They have gathered information on 86 such incidents, skimming through various media outlets, which fall under 11 main categories of violence against children and these cases included 106 child abuse victims.

According to our data, the highest number of reported incidents are related to sexual abuse, accounting for 29 cases of all reported cases. Following closely behind during this month as well as physical abuse, with 13 reported incidents. It is rather distressing to note that incidents of child suicide have taken third place. According to our aggregated data victims of child abuse are at increased risk of acting on suicide ideation. Poor mental health, financial difficulties, poor coping skills or confiding a suicide plan due to child abuse were associated with most of the cases.

In November 53 victims of child abuse were girl children while 30 were boy children. The gender of 23 victims was unspecified in the reports. Out of the 86 incidents reported 32 victims are in the age group category of 15-18 years and 31 victims in the age group of 11-14 years old.

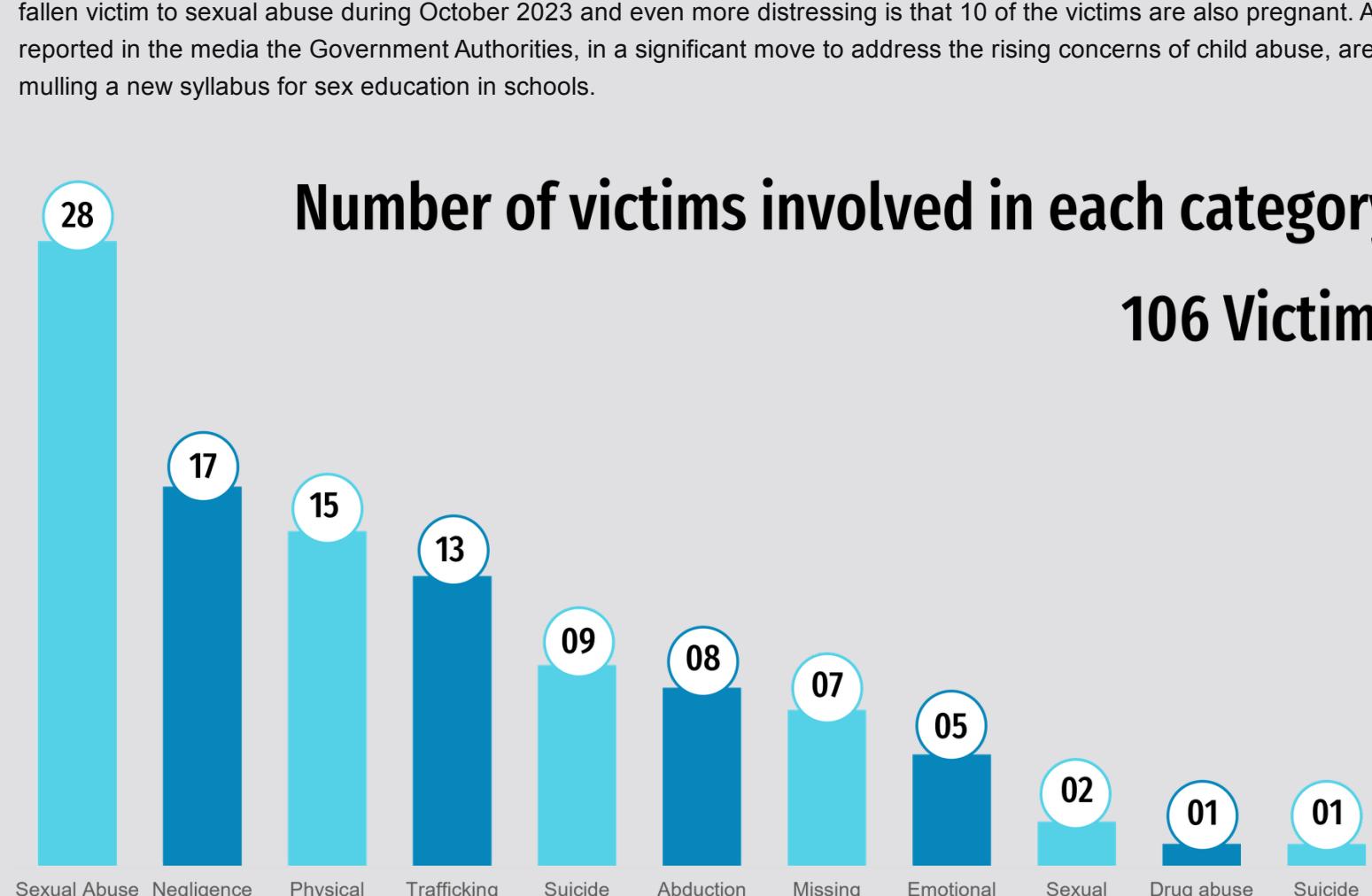
In a report published on 20th November 2023, the Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police in charge of the Western Province stated that at least 5000 crimes related to children are being reported per year in Sri Lanka. He further stated that several of the crimes were a result of the use of drugs and mobile phones.

In another rather appalling report from 21st November 2023, the Police Children and Women's Bureau stated that 917 children have been sexually abused in the last nine months.

## Types of Child Abuse Incidents

### Types of child abuse incidents reported By media in November 2023

86 Incidents



Out of the 86 incidents gathered we reaffirm that sexual abuse has been the highest crime against children in November 2023 with 29 incidents. Second, in place is physical abuse of children recording 13 incidents and third in place is the number of suicide cases among children which is also on the rise with nine such cases being reported, most of them due to some form of child abuse. Followed by that, are eight incidents that had occurred due to negligence of children. Seven incidents of abductions of children have also been reported during the period. Six cases of drug abuse have been reported while five cases each of emotional abuse and children gone missing have been reported two cases of sexual exploitation a case each of attempted suicide and one case of child trafficking have been reported.

Since sexual abuse has been the highest crime against children in November 2023 with 29 incidents we would like to highlight here a few grave cases for the attention of our readership.

According to some disturbing reports, a 40-year-old three-wheeler driver has sexually abused a 07-year-old school girl and in another disturbing report, a 14-year-old girl has gone over to meet an unknown man she had come across on Facebook. Fortunately, when he was about to commit the crime of sexual abuse, her uncle who had seen the couple meet, had followed them which had resulted in the suspect being arrested. In another shocking incident, six people including a 14-year-old girl's grandfather who is eighty years old have been arrested since they had been sexually abusing this girl for a period spanning over four years.

In another incident a 14-year-old girl has been sexually abused by three family members including her own father.

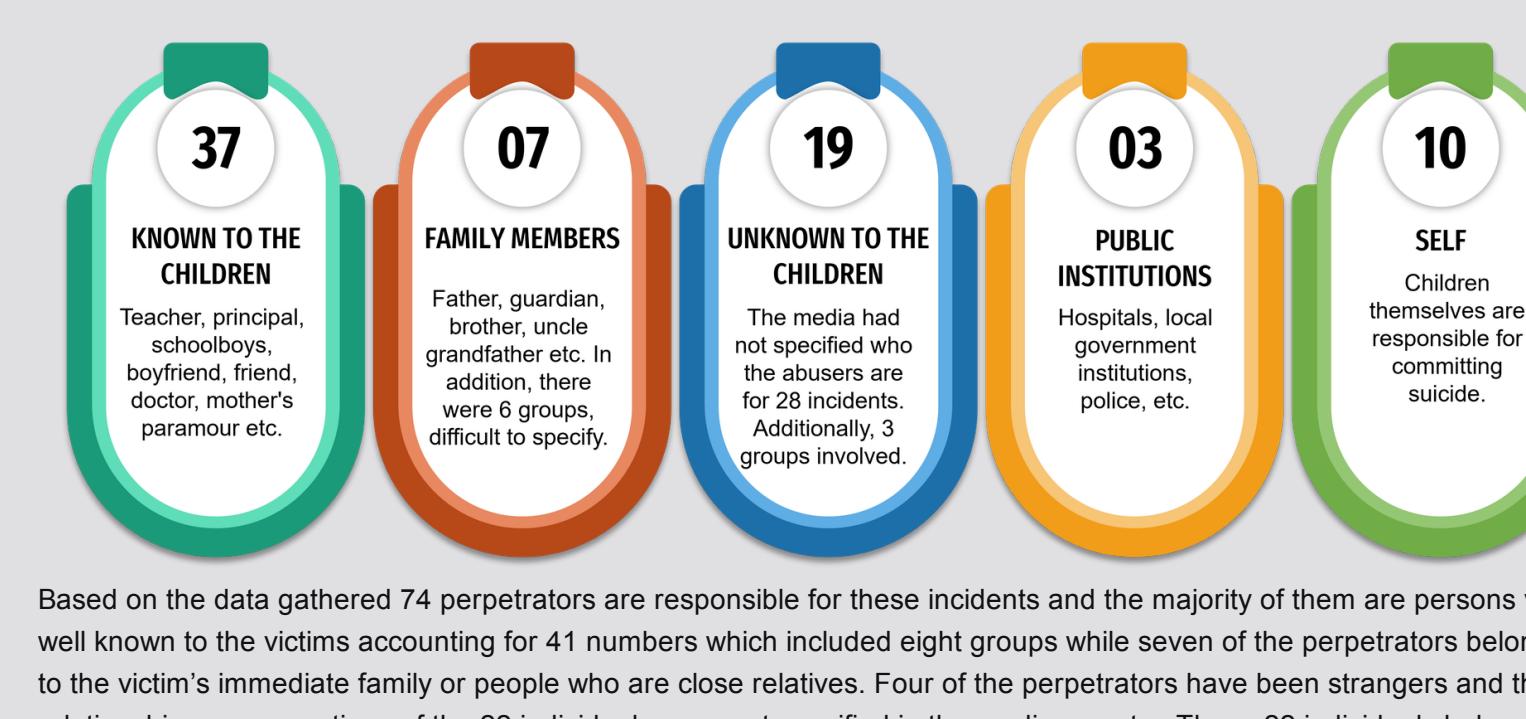
According to a report by the Police a girl in grade one has been raped by a three-wheel driver while taking her to school and police have also arrested a 48-year-old married man who sexually abused a 13-year-old boy by showing him porn videos.

In another incident the Police have arrested a 16-year-old boy for abducting and sexually abusing his 16-year-old girlfriend. In the recent past several violent incidents where both the victims and perpetrators are under the age of 18 years have shown an upward trend.

According to a report published by the Police Children and Women's Bureau, a total of 131 girls below the age of 16 have fallen victim to sexual abuse during October 2023 and even more distressing is that 10 of the victims are also pregnant. As reported in the media the Government Authorities, in a significant move to address the rising concerns of child abuse, are mulling a new syllabus for sex education in schools.

## Number of victims involved in each category

106 Victims



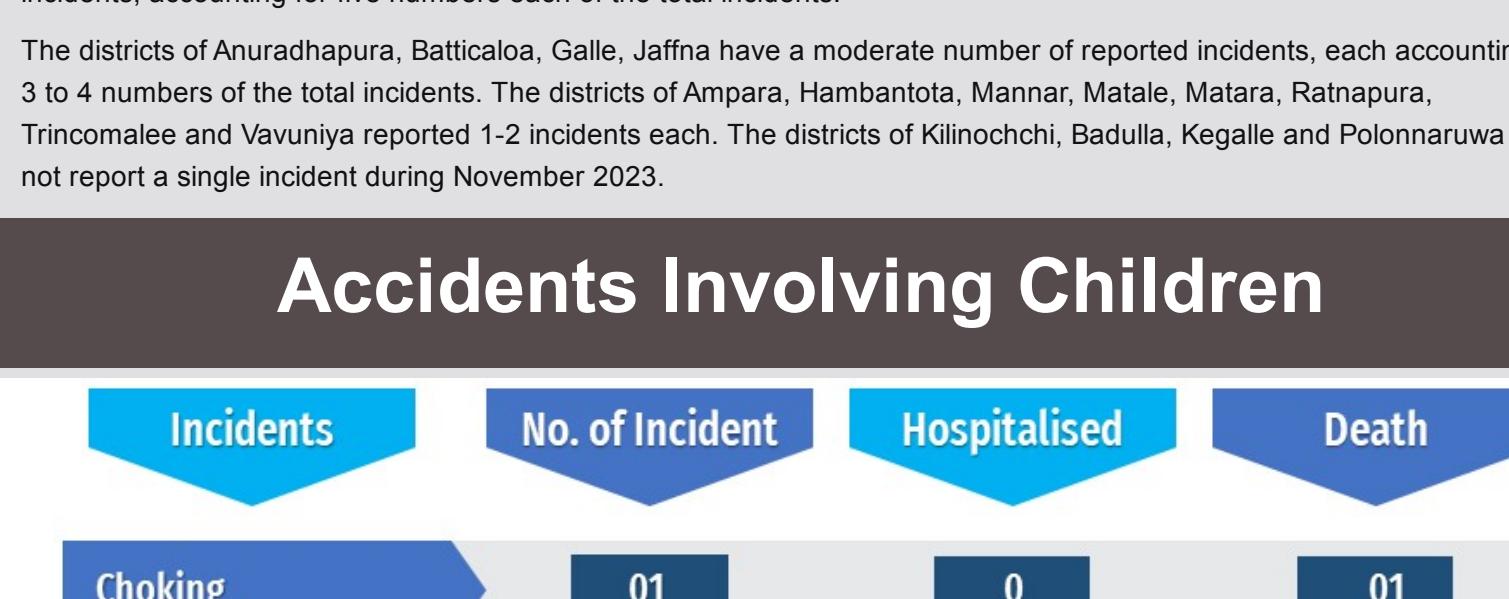
Category-wise an array of incidents was reported in the Media during November 2023. The category of sexual abuse involved 28 victims. 17 victims of child negligence have been reported while 15 victims have experienced physical abuse and 13 victims have been subjected to child trafficking. Unfortunately, nine victims have committed suicide. Sadly, the category of child suicide is on the rise. Eight victims of abductions have been reported and seven children have gone missing. Five child victims have been subjected to emotional abuse and two victims have been sexually exploited. There have been reports of one victim each in the categories of drug abuse and attempted suicide.

There were 53 female victims, which accounts for approximately 50% of the total.

There were 30 male victims, making up approximately 28% of the total.

There were 23 cases where the gender of the victims was not provided, representing about 22% of the total.

According to the reports gathered from media outlets the girl-child has been the most abused and stands out at 53 victims while abuse cases of boys stand at 30 victims. However, the media has not specified the gender of 23 victims of child abuse and these victims belonged to five groups.



The age category of children between 15 to 18 years has been the most affected with 32 victims, followed closely behind by the age category of 11 to 14-year-old with 31 victims. Sadly, the above-mentioned two age categories have constantly been the most vulnerable. The age category of 6 to 10 years old comprises of 18 victims. While the age category of 1 to 5 years old comprises of 4 victims and the age category of 0-12 months old includes one victim.

## Relationship between the abuser and the victim when abuse was happening

74 Individuals



Based on the data gathered 74 perpetrators are responsible for these incidents and the majority of them are persons very well known to the victims accounting for 41 numbers which included eight groups while seven of the perpetrators belonged to the victim's immediate family or people who are close relatives. Four of the perpetrators have been strangers and the relationships or connections of the 22 individuals were not specified in the media reports. These 22 individuals belonged to four groups.

The above data shows that the highest number of incidents were related to sexual abuse of children with a total of 31 perpetrators, including two groups. The responsible parties for these sexual abuse cases vary from family members such as fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers, boyfriends, soldiers, friends, neighbours and a few unknown individuals.

Physical abuse is the second predominant category, with 29 perpetrators involved. This category comprises of violence perpetrated by various individuals, including fathers, mothers, stepfathers, teachers, fellow students, and the mother's paramour.

During November, nine individuals have been involved in seven cases of child abductions which is a category of concern in the last couple of months. Three individuals have also been caught red-handed selling addictive substances to school children.

Other notable categories of perpetrators include two persons involved in the negligence and sexual exploitation of children.



According to the data, the District of Kalutara has recorded the highest number of crimes against children accounting for 13 numbers while the District of Puttalam has recorded the second highest with 11 incidents.

The districts of Colombo, Kandy and Gampaha have recorded the third highest number of cases while seven each. The districts of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Batticaloa, Ampara, Ratnapura, Hambantota, Matara, and Badulla have significantly high numbers of reported incidents, accounting for five numbers each. The total incidents in the remaining districts have been reported.

The districts of Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, Galle, Jaffna have a moderate number of reported incidents, each accounting for 3 to 4 numbers. The total incidents in the districts of Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, and Badulla, Matara, Ratnapura, Hambantota, and Matara did not report a single incident during November 2023.

## Accidents Involving Children

Incidents No. of Incident Hospitalised Death



In November a two-year-old baby had drowned in the pool of a small tourist resort in Bentota due to the negligence of his parents and guardians. In a similar incident, a six-year-old girl had drowned in a pool in a tourist resort in Badulla, Kalutara, had drowned in a negligence tank in Moneragala, Kumarawatta.

Another tragic incident, a 16-year-old boy who had been addicted to drugs had fallen from the third floor of the Serpentine apartment complex in Borella and had been admitted to the intensive care unit of the National Hospital.

Once again under similar circumstances to an incident that occurred in October a parapet wall in a school in Orugodawatta, Wellawatta had collapsed killing one student aged six and seriously injured six more female students of the school who succumbed to their injuries. It is rather unfortunate that schools and educational authorities do not check in a disturbing school children's safety.

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