



Child Abuse Incidents

Reported in the Media for September 2023

This information is the result of the aggregation and verification of reported cases of violence against children in the media for the month of September 2023. Since January 2023, PEACE/ECPAT Sri Lanka has been sharing similar information in the form of a monthly newsletter with a range of stakeholders. We believe that sharing the information with a wider audience is to everyone's benefit.

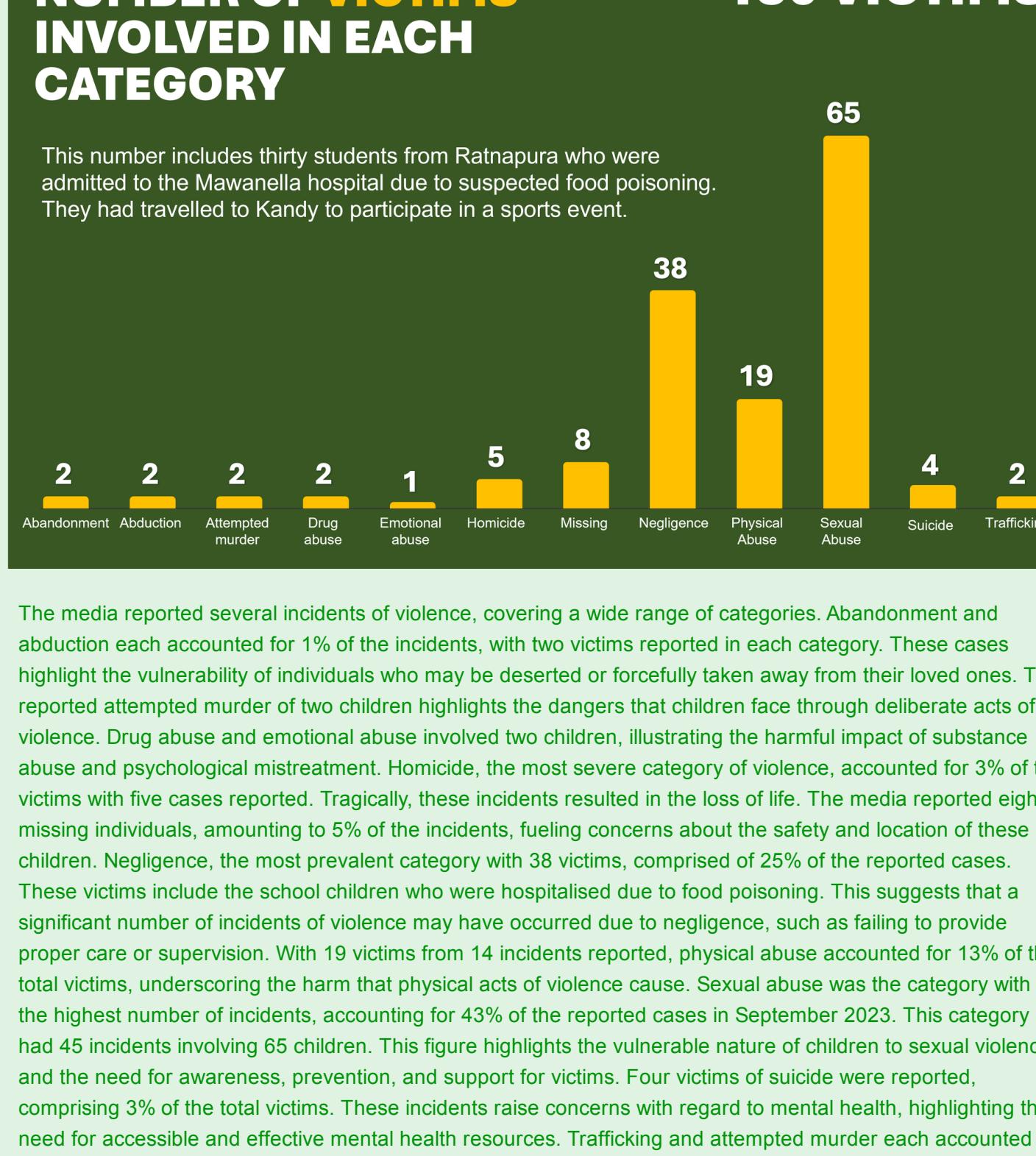
The data provided highlights some concerning trends regarding reported incidents of violence against children in September 2023. Here are some key observations:

- The fact that there were 92 reported incidents of violence against children in a single month is alarming. This indicates that child violence remains a significant issue that needs urgent attention and intervention.
- The data reveals that 150 children were victims of these violent incidents. This means that, on average, each incident involved around 2 victims, indicating that some incidents involved multiple children.
- The data shows that female children seem to be more vulnerable to violence, with 70 incidents reported compared to 27 incidents affecting male children. This suggests that girls more vulnerable to violence than boys. However, there also seems to be a tendency to report more incidents of the girl child.
- The analysis of age groups reveal that children between 11 and 14 years old were the most affected, accounting for 37 incidents or 26% of the total. This finding raises concerns about the safety and well-being of pre-adolescent and early adolescent children, signaling a need for targeted interventions in this age group.
- The report indicates that Kurunegala District had the highest number of incidents in September 2023, with 15 reported cases.
- An alarming finding is that 78% of the accused individuals are either blood relatives of the victims or known to them. This suggests that the majority of incidents are happening within the child's immediate circle of trust. It highlights the need for support and protection systems for children in their own homes.

Child Abuse Categories

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE INCIDENTS REPORTED BY MEDIA IN SEPTEMBER 2023

92 INCIDENTS



The data provided represents incidents of violence reported in the media in September 2023. It is important to note that this analysis is solely based on the information provided and is subject to the accuracy and completeness of the reported incidents. Among the various types of violence reported, sexual abuse has the highest percentage at 49%. Physical abuse is the second most prevalent type of violence, accounting for 15% of the reported incidents. This includes intentionally harming children physically. The data also reveals a concerning number of missing people. The missing category accounts for 8% of reported incidents in September 2023, with a total of 7 cases. This could indicate potential cases of kidnapping or children who have disappeared under suspicious circumstances. Homicide, which refers to cases of intentional killing, represents 5% of the reported incidents. Although this percentage may appear relatively low compared to other categories, it is noteworthy as it involves loss of life and is an extreme form of violence against children. Negligence, with 10% of reported incidents, suggests instances where individuals failed to fulfill their duty of care towards children, resulting in harm or injury. This includes cases of medical negligence, child neglect, and negligence in maintaining a safe environment. The below data provides a detailed account of various incidents of violence that were experienced by the child victims.

NUMBER OF VICTIMS INVOLVED IN EACH CATEGORY

150 VICTIMS

This number includes thirty students from Ratnapura who were admitted to the Mawanella hospital due to suspected food poisoning. They had travelled to Kandy to participate in a sports event.



The media reported several incidents of violence, covering a wide range of categories. Abandonment and abduction each accounted for 1% of the incidents, with two victims reported in each category. These cases highlight the vulnerability of individuals who may be deserted or forcefully taken away from their loved ones. The reported attempted murder of two children highlights the dangers that children face through deliberate acts of violence. Drug abuse and emotional abuse involved two children, illustrating the harmful impact of substance abuse and psychological mistreatment. Homicide, the most severe category of violence, accounted for 3% of the victims with five cases reported. Tragically, these incidents resulted in the loss of life. The media reported eight missing individuals, amounting to 5% of the incidents, fueling concerns about the safety and location of these children. Negligence, the most prevalent category with 38 victims, comprised of 25% of the reported cases. These victims include the school children who were hospitalised due to food poisoning. This suggests that a significant number of incidents of violence may have occurred due to negligence, such as failing to provide proper care or supervision. With 19 victims from 14 incidents reported, physical abuse accounted for 13% of the total victims, underscoring the harm that physical acts of violence cause. Sexual abuse was the category with the highest number of incidents, accounting for 43% of the reported cases in September 2023. This category had 45 incidents involving 65 children. This figure highlights the vulnerable nature of children to sexual violence and the need for awareness, prevention, and support for victims. Four victims of suicide were reported, comprising 3% of the total victims. These incidents raise concerns with regard to mental health, highlighting the need for accessible and effective mental health resources. Trafficking and attempted murder each accounted for 1% of the victims, with 2 individuals reported in each category. These cases shed light on the grave violations of children's rights and the dangers individuals face from organised criminal activities.

105 INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR ABUSE OF CHILDREN FALLS INTO EACH CATEGORY



Among the 105 individuals responsible for 92 incidents of violence, 94 are directly involved, while the remaining 11 are children who have either committed suicide or disappeared from residential care.

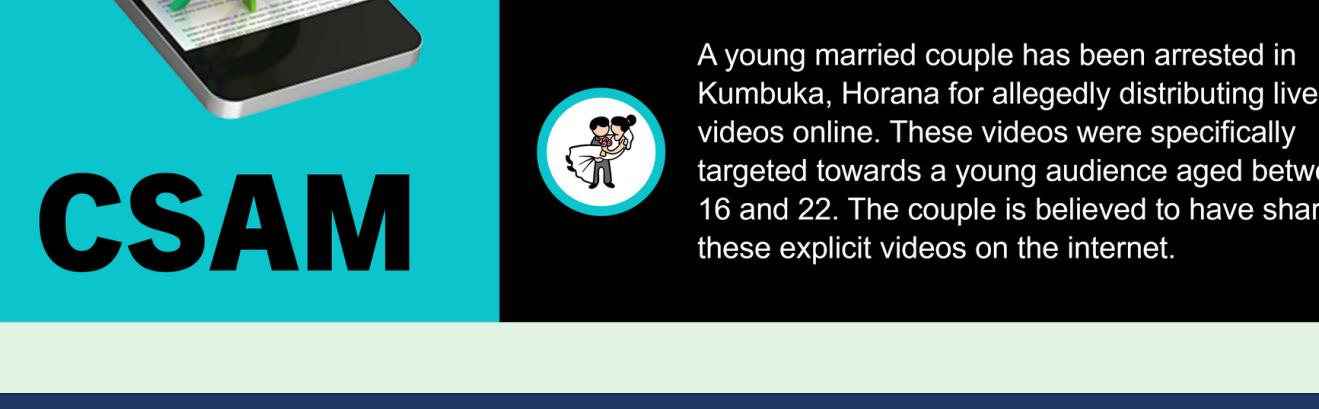
The above data shows that the highest number of incidents involve sexual abuse comprising of a total of 65 incidents. The responsible parties for these sexual abuse cases vary and include family members such as fathers, brothers, and stepfathers, as well as other individuals such as boyfriends, monks, police officers, friends, neighbours, and unknown individuals.

Physical abuse is the second most prevalent category, with 19 incidents. This category involves violence perpetrated by various individuals, including fathers, mothers, stepfathers, teachers, fellow students, and the mother's paramour.

Negligence is another significant issue, accounting for 38 cases. The responsibility for these incidents lies with different parties, including hospitals, schools, local authorities, and parents.

Other notable categories include incidents of abandonment, abduction, attempted murder, drug abuse, emotional abuse, homicide, missing children, suicide, and child trafficking. These incidents have varying numbers and are attributed to different responsible parties, such as parents, family members, school authorities, unknown individuals, and even a hospital employee.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF VICTIMS



The gender of a group of children whose sexual abuse materials were for sale online is unknown

According to the media report, out of the 150 victims, the gender breakdown shows that 47% were female and 18% were male. It is concerning that 35% of the victims were not specified by the media, as this lack of information makes it more difficult to fully understand the nature of the incidents and the demographics of those affected.

Additionally, the report mentions that there were multiple victims in some incidents, but the segregation of gender in these cases is not provided. This further conceals the overall picture and limits our ability to analyse the data in a more comprehensive manner.

Geographic Distribution

The data provided represents the number of reported incidents of violence against children in each district, along with the corresponding percentage of incidents in each district.

Batticaloa, Hambantota, Matale, Trincomalee, and Vavuniya districts have the lowest number of reported incidents, each with only 1% of the total incidents.

Badulla, Matara, Polonnaruwa, Galle, Kandy, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Anuradhapura, and Ratnapura districts account for 2-4% of the total incidents, each accounting for 2-4% of the total incidents.

Jaffna, Galapura, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Colombo and Kegalle districts account for 5% - 9% of the total incidents each, accounting for 5% - 9% of the total incidents.

Kurunegala incidents at 15, accounting for 16% of the total incidents. This indicates a relatively higher prevalence of violence against children in this district.

Critical Cases

MONKS' INVOLVEMENT IN SEXUAL ABUSE

Multiple cases of sexual abuse involving 19-year-old monk have been reported in September. In Panama, a 19-year-old monk was arrested for possessing and selling child sexual abuse materials online. Another incident involved a 25-year-old monk in Poliyandala who was arrested for sexually abusing a 15-year-old novice monk. In Bogawewe, a monk was a 13-year-old novice monk for sexually abusing a 13-year-old boy residing in a temple. The Anuradhapura police are investigating a monk accused of sexually abusing an 11-year-old boy who aspired to become a monk.

CHILDREN ENGAGING IN VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

There has been a concerning rise in children's participation in reported incidents where children were allegedly involved in perpetrating violence against their peers. Shockingly, out of these incidents, in 9 cases involved sexual abuse. The youngest suspect unfortunately abused his 7-year-old step-sister. The police arrested two boys, ages 16 and 13, for drug sales in two separate cases. Furthermore, there were two reported incidents of physical assault among children, resulting in injuries.

In September, two incidents involving Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) were reported.

A 19-year-old monk was arrested by the police, and 7000 CSAM on his phone. Sadly, the majority of the 7000 CSAM on his phone revealed that the victims affected by this horrific crime were children above the age of 16.

A young couple allegedly distributed sexual abuse material online. The couple, a 21-year-old man and a 19-year-old woman, were arrested for sharing explicit sexual abuse material on the internet.

Both individuals were charged with violating the law against the distribution of sexual abuse material online.

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