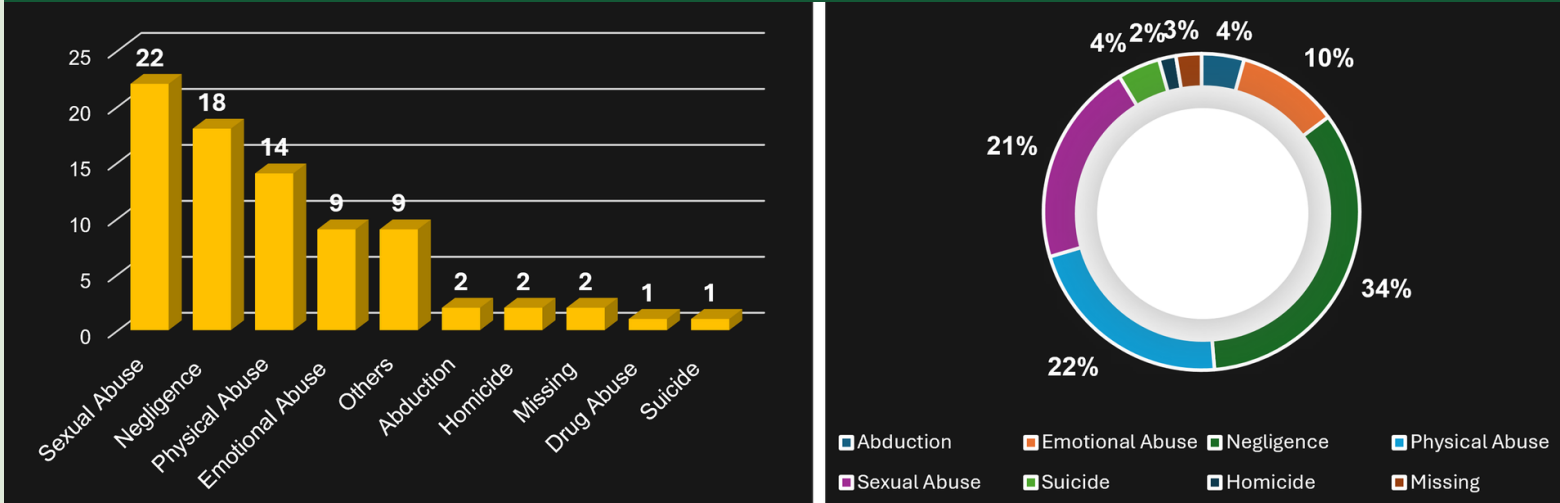




Child Abuse Incidents Reported in the Media in May 2024

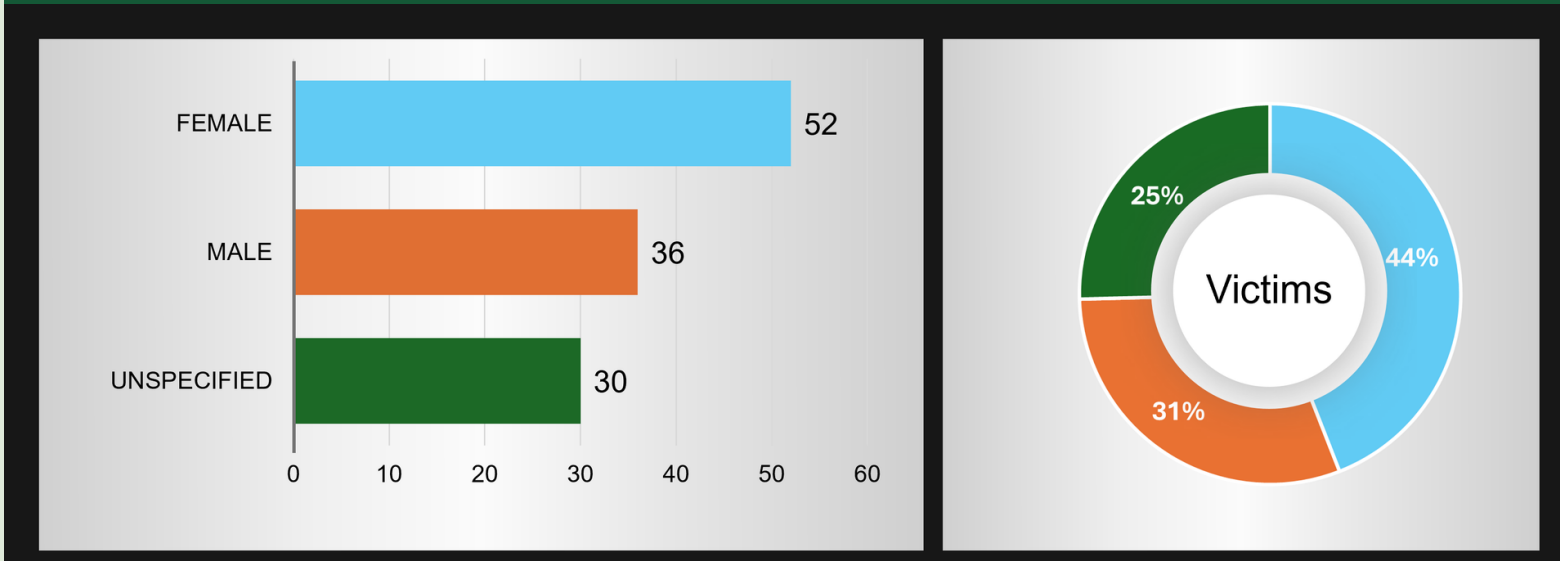
PEACE/ECPAT Sri Lanka continues its monthly newsletters, having our dedicated Media Monitoring team document incidents of child abuse and neglect reported across various media platforms. As per usual, we have compiled extensive data for our readers' awareness for the month of May and are utilising our newly expanded classifications, aligning with UNICEF's International Classification of Violence against Children (ICVAC) standards.

Type of Child Abuse Incidents



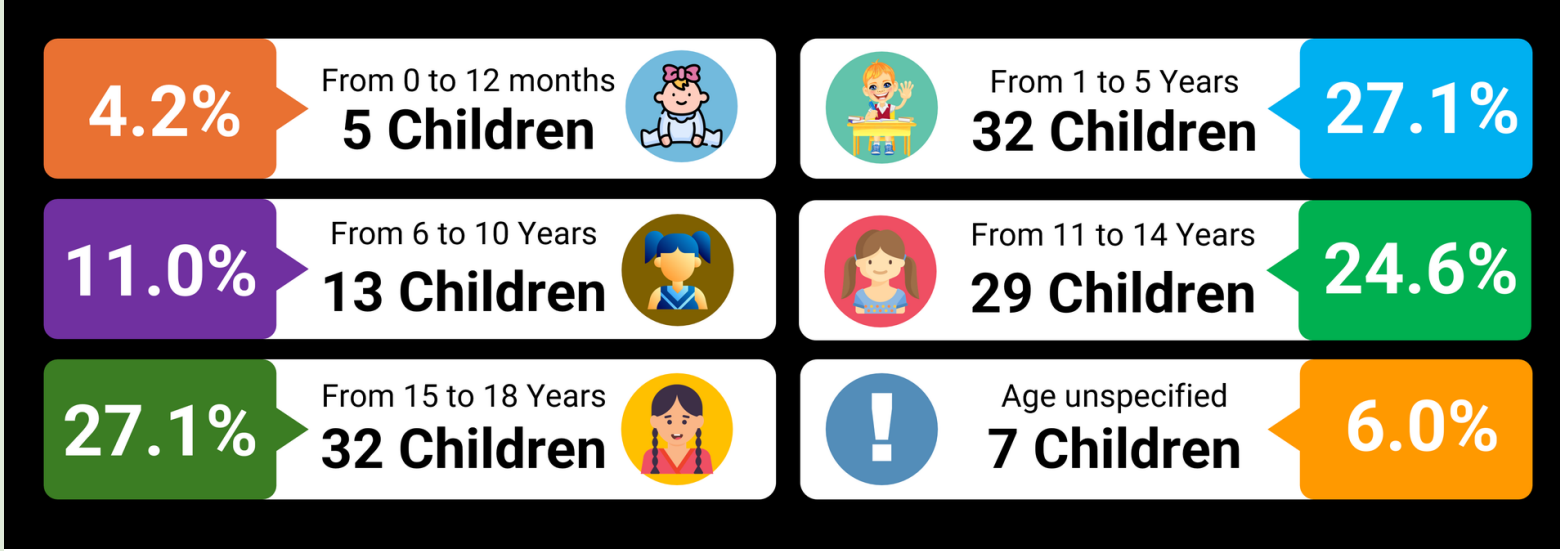
In May 2024, the media reported 80 separate incidents of child abuse, affecting a total of 118 victims. It is important to note that these figures represent only the cases reported by the media, reflecting a small segment of the actual situation in Sri Lanka. Many incidents go unnoticed or are under reported, failing to reach mainstream coverage. A majority of these cases comprised of occurrences such as abductions, drug abuse, emotional abuse, negligence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, suicide, homicides, missing and trafficking cases.

Gender Distribution



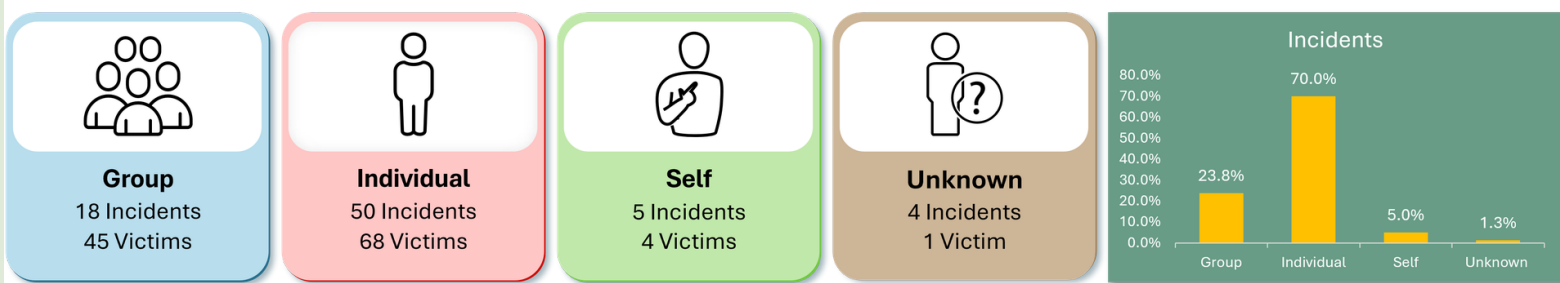
Among the 118 identified victims, 44% of female victims or 52 to be precise were affected as a result of varying types of abuses. Male victims accounted for 31% of the total, with 36 male children affected. These statistics highlight the ongoing issue of child abuse and the need for increased awareness and reporting to address the full scope of the problem. However, the genders of 25% of the victims recorded or, 30 victims, were not revealed in these articles by mainstream media.

Age Diversity Among the Victims



A majority of abuse reported involved child victims who came under the age groups of 1 - 5 and 15 - 18, which came to 27.1% of the victims, for both categories. However, it should be noted that 32 children in the 1 - 5 age group were victimised, thus recording a figure of 27.1% of the total. Simultaneously, children from the 15 - 18 age group recorded 32 victims (also 27.1% of the total number). However, two incidents recorded a group of children affected per group, whose numbers were not disclosed. There were 13 children from the 6 - 10 age group who fell victim to abuse, making up 11% of the total children affected. From the 11 - 14 age group, 24.6% of the total affected, or exactly 29 children were victimised. However, 6% of the total number of victims, or a total of 7 victims fell under the 'Age Unspecified' category.

Perpetrator Trends



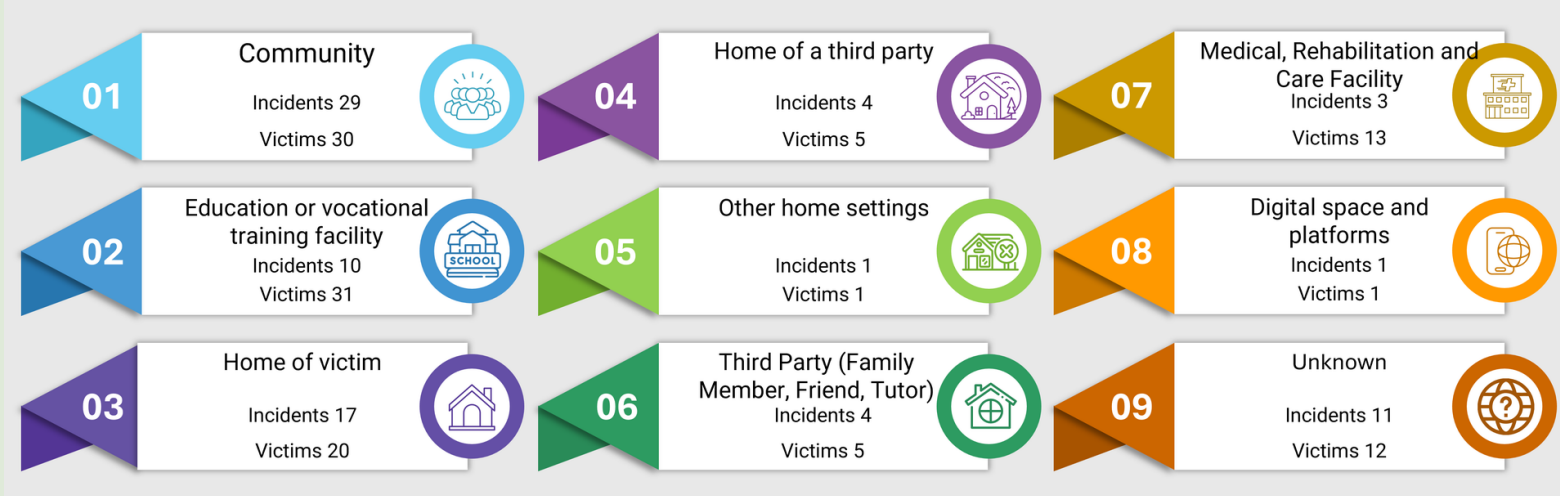
In terms of the types of perpetrators who were involved in these cases, the most common type of abusers were individuals who were responsible for a majority of reported child abuse cases and this pattern tends to be the norm in these situations. Out of the 80 incidents, 70% or 50 of these were perpetrated by individuals, therefore, resulting in the victimization of 68 children. The next perpetrators in line fell under the 'Group' category. In this case, 23.8% of the incidents or 18 of these involved the abuse of 45 victims, which constituted 36.5% of the total number. In terms of self-inflicted abuse or instances where the victims themselves were responsible for the situation, there were five incidents which produced 4 victims. Such occasions would have involved situations such as suicide. Under the 'Unknown' category, one child emerged as a victim though there were 4 incidents that had taken place, making up 1.3% of all the incidents that were recorded during this period.

Perpetrator Specifications

Responsible	No. of Incident	Percentage	No. of Victim	Percentage
Clergy	05	6.25%	08	6.78%
Family Member	19	23.75%	23	19.49%
Non-Family Household Member	01	1.25%	01	0.85%
Intimate Partner	08	10.00%	08	6.78%
Peer or Schoolmate	04	5.00%	05	4.24%
Person with Formal Authority	09	11.25%	42	35.59%
Self	03	3.75%	03	2.54%
Others	07	8.75%	05	4.24%
Stranger	11	13.75%	11	9.32%
Unknown	13	16.25%	12	10.17%
TOTAL	80	100%	118	100%

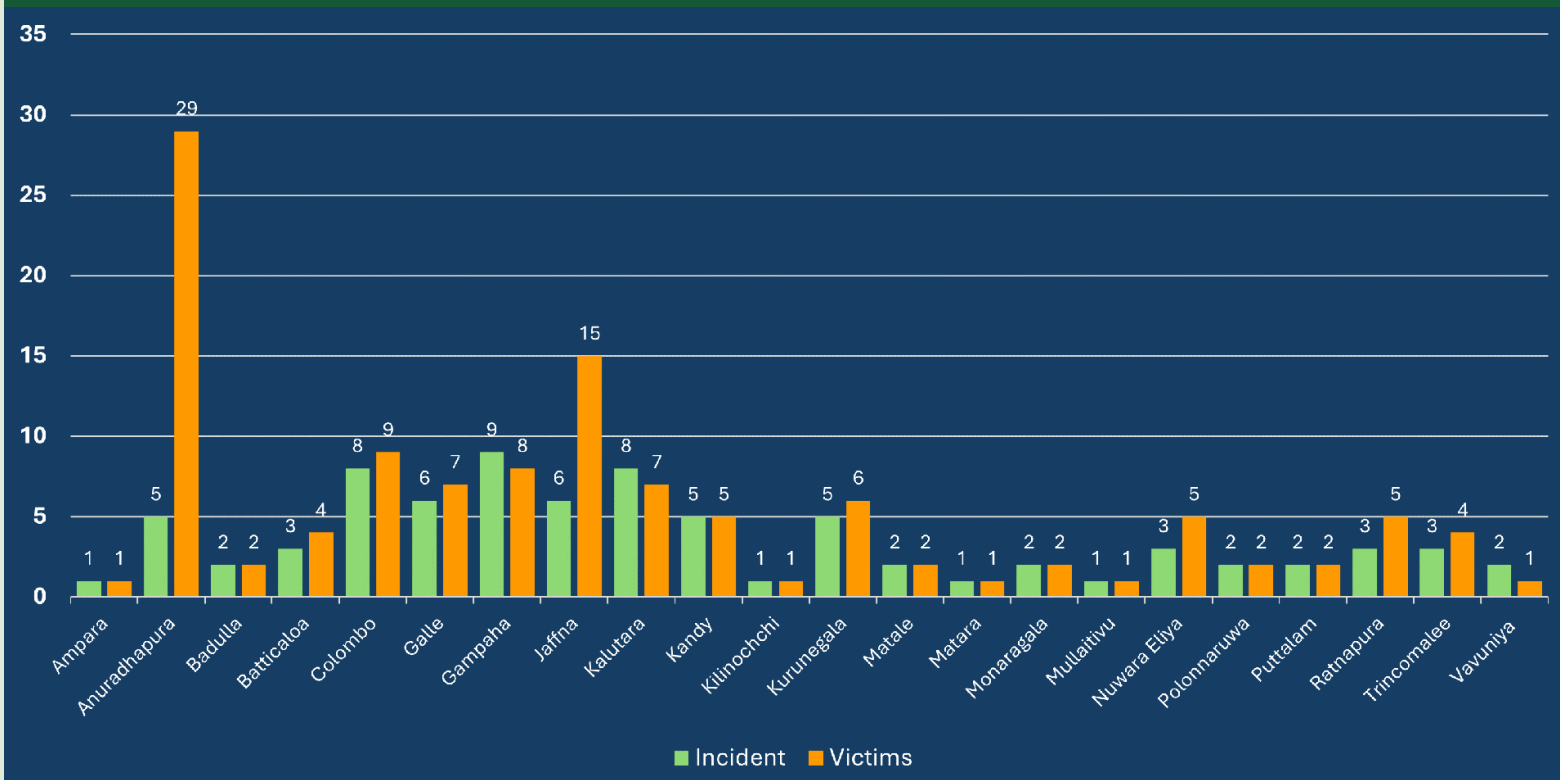
A common trait we have witnessed in terms of the majority of perpetrators of child abuse happens to be a family member. For May, where mainstream news was concerned, this figure seemed to be evident in this instance as well, with 19 such cases having been associated with a child or children abused by a family member. These 19 incidents, in turn, victimized 23 children or close to 19.49% of the total incidents reported. However, the largest number of child victims that were affected; 42 to be precise, were a result of the actions of perpetrators who happened to be persons with formal authority, though that category of perpetrators represented 9 such incidents or 11.2% of the total percentage of reported incidents during the month. Other perpetrator categories involved clergy, non-family household members, intimate partners, peers or schoolmates, self-inflicted incidents and cases that were categorised as unknown due to lack of information. With no definite classification of perpetrator specifics, and which instead were denoted as 'Other' perpetrators from data gathered, there were 7 such incidents that affected 5 victims.

Settings Where the Violence Occurred



Community settings saw 29 incidents victimising 30 children as reported by the media. Incidents occurring in the victims' homes totalled 17, affecting 20 victims. A significant number of victims, reported during May, were from educational or vocational training facilities, with 31 victims resulting from 10 incidents. Other settings where abuse took place included medical, rehabilitation, and care facilities, places of work, and digital spaces and platforms. Additional settings typically monitored, but not prominently featured in news reports during May, included the perpetrator's home, places of work, and places of detention. Despite this, 12 victims were affected by 11 separate incidents where the specific settings were not reported or data was scarce, leading to their categorisation under 'Unknown'.

District-wise Incidents and Victims



According to data accumulated during May, news about these cases as disclosed by the media showed that a majority of victims came from the district of Anuradhapura. The highest number of reported incidents occurred in Gampaha, accounting for 9 incidents that affected 8 victims. Nevertheless, the highest number of victims came out of Anuradhapura, which reported 29 affected children. It is worth noting that those 29 were a result of just 5 incidents. Jaffna district also made it to the top of the May list in terms of the highest number of victims, with 6 incidents were reportedly responsible for the victimisation of 15 children. Colombo district followed closely with 9 victims in total. This number was a result of 8 abuse incidents that had taken place. Kalutara district disclosed news of 7 victims as a result of 8 incidents that had taken place.



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