



Violence Against Children

Reported in the Media for June 2024

PEACE/ECPAT Sri Lanka continues its commitment to raising awareness of child abuse and neglect through our monthly newsletters. Our Media Monitoring team has meticulously documented incidents reported across various media platforms for June 2024. This report reflects our ongoing effort to align with UNICEF's International Classification of Violence against Children (ICVAC) standards, providing a comprehensive analysis of the disturbing trends observed throughout the month.

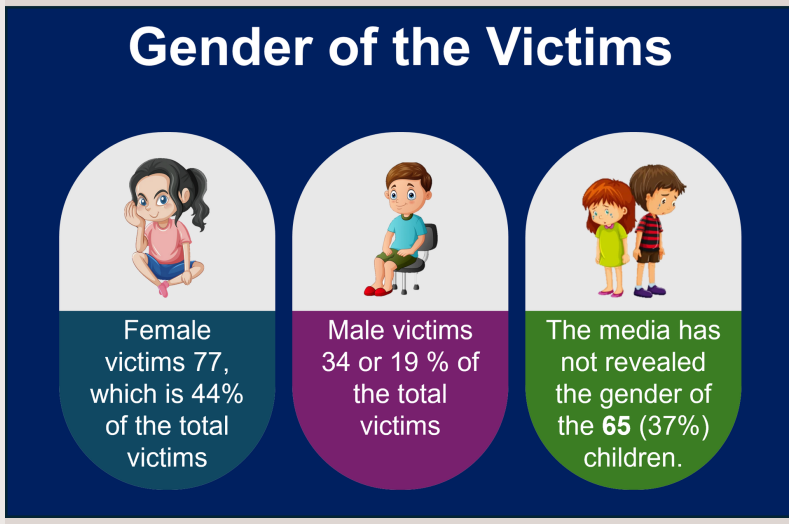
Types of Child Abuse Incidents

In June 2024, a total of 85 incidents of child abuse were reported by mainstream media, affecting 176 victims across the country. The data reveals a distressing pattern where negligence, physical abuse, and sexual abuse were the most prevalent forms of abuse. These three categories alone accounted for the majority of cases, highlighting a pressing need for targeted interventions. Additionally, the report identified other alarming cases linked to drug abuse, emotional abuse, and incidents of suicide among children, underscoring the multifaceted nature of child victimisation. The diversity of abuse types showcases the pervasive and varied threats faced by children in Sri Lanka. While some cases involved direct physical harm, others were more insidious, such as neglect and emotional torment, which can have long-lasting impacts on a child's well-being.

Incidents of Violence against Children

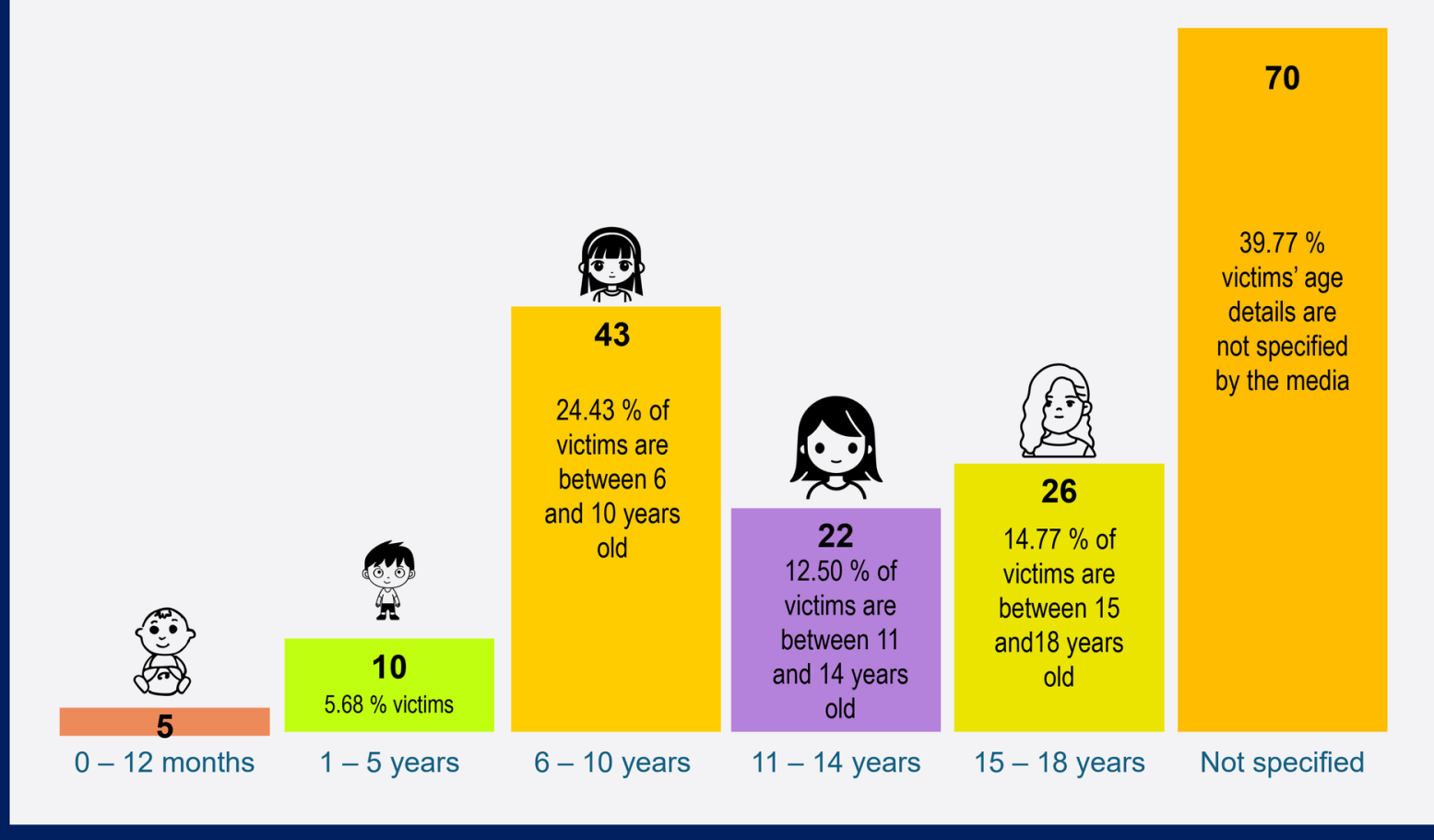
Incidents of Violence against Children				
Categories	Incident	Percentage	Victims	Percentage
Abduction	1	1.18%	1	0.57%
Drug Abuse	3	3.53%	2	1.14%
Emotional Abuse	2	2.35%	3	1.70%
Negligence	16	18.82%	47	26.70%
Physical Abuse	22	25.88%	51	28.98%
Sexual Abuse	35	41.18%	66	37.50%
Suicide	3	3.53%	3	1.70%
Homicide	1	1.18%	1	0.57%
Missing	2	2.35%	2	1.14%
Total	85	100.00%	176	100.00%

Gender Distribution of the Victims



The gender distribution of the victims reported in June presents a troubling snapshot. Female victims constituted 77 or 44% of the total cases, reflecting a significant gendered dimension to the violence and exploitation. Male victims, while fewer in number, comprised 34 cases or 19% of the total, indicating that boys, too, are vulnerable to these heinous acts. However, a substantial proportion of the reports, 65 cases or 37%, did not specify the gender of the victims. This lack of clarity hampers a full understanding of the gendered dynamics of child abuse, pointing to the need for more precise and transparent reporting practices.

Age Distribution of Victims at the time of Violence



The majority of victims, 70 out of 176 or close to 40%, were categorised as "Not specified," indicating a significant gap in reporting. The largest specified group consisted of children aged 6-10 years, with 43 victims, underscoring the particular vulnerability of this age group to various forms of abuse. Victims in the 15-18 age range accounted for nearly 15% of the total, with 26 cases reported, followed by the 11-14 age category, which included 22 victims. Alarmingly, 10 victims were between the ages of 1 and 5 years, while 5 victims were one year old less, emphasising the need for vigilant protection measures for the youngest and most defenceless members of society.

Perpetrator's Trends



An analysis of the perpetrators involved in the 85 reported incidents from June reveals that individuals acting alone were responsible for a significant proportion of the abuse. Specifically, 54 incidents were perpetrated by individuals, leading to the victimisation of 114 children, which accounts for 64.7% of the total victims. Groups were involved in 26 incidents, affecting 57 children, indicating that collective abuse scenarios, though fewer in number, resulted in substantial harm to a large number of victims. Additionally, 2 incidents were reported where the perpetrators were unknown, leaving the identity of the abusers and their motives unaccounted for. Lastly, there were three self-inflicted incidents, which tragically resulted in the loss of three young lives.

Perpetrators Specific Classification

Responsible	No. of victims	Percentage
Family Member	35	19.89%
Non-Family Household Member	01	0.57%
Intimate Partner	06	3.41%
Peer or Schoolmate	06	3.41%
Clergy	06	3.41%
Person with Formal Authority	67	38.07%
Sports Coach	01	0.57%
Self	03	1.70%
Stranger	07	3.98%
Others	33	18.75%
Unknown	11	6.25%
Total	176	100%

A closer examination of the perpetrators reveals disturbing patterns in the abuse cases reported in June. Persons with Formal Authority were responsible for victimising 67 children, comprising 37% of the total victims. This figure is particularly concerning, as it suggests that individuals entrusted with power and responsibility are exploiting their positions to harm those they are supposed to protect. Family members and those categorised as "Others" were also significant perpetrators, each accounting for 35 victims or 19.5% of the total. This indicates that abuse often occurs within the victim's immediate or extended environment, where trust is most easily betrayed. The "Unknown" category, encompassing perpetrators who were not identified, accounted for 11 victims, highlighting the challenges in fully uncovering the identities of all abusers. Other perpetrator categories included clergy, non-family household members, intimate partners, peers or schoolmates, sports coaches, and strangers, each contributing to the overall figure of child abuse cases.

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Settings Where the Violence Occurred

Criteria	No of Incidents		Percentage	
	No of Incidents	Percentage	No of Victims	Percentage
Community	29	34.12%	57	32.39%
Education or Vocational Training Facility	4	4.71%	35	19.89%
Home of Perpetrator	4	4.71%	4	2.27%
Home of Victim	26	30.59%	27	15.34%
Other Home Settings	04	4.71%	05	2.84%
Medical, Rehabilitation and Care Facility	01	1.18%	30	17.05%
Unknown	17	20.00%	18	10.23%

The settings in which the violence occurred offer further context to the abuse cases reported in June. Community-based settings were the most common locations for these incidents, resulting in 57 victims, or 32.3% of the total. This data suggests that children are at significant risk within their own communities, where familiar surroundings may serve as a backdrop for abuse. Educational or Vocational Training Facilities were the next most frequent settings, with 35 victims reported.

The victim's own home, traditionally considered a place of security, was the site of 26 incidents involving 27 victims, revealing that domestic abuse remains a critical issue. Additionally, 30 victims were affected by abuse within Medical, Rehabilitation, and Care Facilities, environments where children should receive care and protection, not exploitation. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive safeguarding measures across all settings where children are present, ensuring their safety in every aspect of their lives.

District	Incident	Percentage	Victims	Percentage
Ampara	2	2.35%	3	1.70%
Anuradhapura	6	7.06%	37	21.02%
Badulla	3	3.53%	3	1.70%
Batticaloa	1	1.18%	1	0.57%
Colombo	12	14.12%	40	22.73%
Gampaha	7	8.24%	7	3.98%
Hambantota	3	3.53%	3	1.70%
Jaffna	7	8.24%	7	3.98%
Kalutara	1	1.18%	1	0.57%
Kegalle	2	2.35%	2	1.14%
Kurunegala	4	4.71%	4	2.27%
Kandy	8	9.41%	36	20.45%
Kilinochchi	2	2.35%	2	1.14%
Mannar	2	2.35%	1	0.57%
Matara	6	7.06%	7	3.98%
Monaragala	4	4.71%	5	2.84%
Mullaitivu	5	5.88%	6	3.41%
Nuwara Eliya	2	2.35%	2	1.14%
Polonnaruwa	1	1.18%	1	0.57%
Puttalam	1	1.18%	1	0.57%
Ratnapura	3	3.53%	4	2.27%
Trincomealee	2	2.35%	2	1.14%
Vavuniya	1	1.18%	1	0.57%
Total	85	100.00%	176	100.00%

Geographical analysis of the incidents reveals that Colombo district recorded the highest number of incidents and victims, with 12 incidents resulting in 40 victims. Anuradhapura district followed with 6 incidents and 37 victims, accounting for 21% of the total, while Kandy recorded 8 incidents and 36 victims, representing 20% of the total victims. Jaffna and Gampaha districts each reported 7 incidents, resulting in 7 victims, highlighting that child abuse is a widespread issue across various regions of the country.

