

Out of the Shadows Index: Peru

The Out of the Shadows Index

Every year, more than 400 million children are exposed to child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA). The [Out of the Shadows Index](#), developed by [Economist Impact](#), reviews the performance of 60 countries in addressing CSEA, assessing each country's approach to prevention and response. The countries covered by the research are home to 85% of the world's children. The regional report for Latin America and the Caribbean focuses on Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela and Jamaica.

Trends across Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean ranks above the global average in its response to child sexual exploitation and abuse, which covers elements like the provision of support and recovery services for victims and survivors, and child-friendly justice proceedings. This performance is driven by generally strong judicial systems, social protection and child-friendly medical care systems.

By contrast, the region is weaker with regards to measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of children, which includes national action plans and effective legislation. There are substantial gaps in the legislation across the majority of countries in the region with regards to the criminalisation of all forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation. The majority of countries also lack rehabilitation programmes for those who commit sexual offences against children to reduce reoffending. No country included in the Index was found to have mandatory rehabilitation programmes for children and young people who have committed sexual offences.

Only four countries have developed a national plan to combat sexual violence against children (Mexico, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala), though only Brazil had an identifiable source of funding to implement its national plan. National plans developed previously in Argentina, Colombia, Jamaica, Peru and Venezuela had all expired by 2022.

Child-friendly court processes that avoid retraumatising child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse are beginning to be adopted across the region. Brazil, Guatemala and Mexico have introduced programmes to train judges and prosecutors in child-friendly procedures, trauma and sexual abuse, but the research found limited evidence of this approach in other countries. Confidence in justice and law enforcement remained low compared to other regions covered by the Index.

Context and findings for Peru

While the Out of the Shadow Index does not focus on the scale of sexual violence against children, it is worth noting recent statistics on the scale of the issue in Peru. The Ministry of

Women and Vulnerable Groups (MIMP) [says](#) that between 2017 and 2021, there were more than 54,500 reports of sexual violence against children, and in 92% of the cases, the victim was female. In 2022, the MIMP recorded 22,881 cases of sexual violence, and in 72% of them (16,544 cases) the victim was a child.

Out of the 60 countries covered by the Out of the Shadows Index, Peru ranked 46th globally, scoring 44.8 out of a possible 100. This makes Peru the **third lowest-scoring country** covered by the research within Latin America and the Caribbean.

Peru has allowed its **national plan against** child sexual exploitation and abuse to expire, which is a significant obstacle in ensuring a strong national response to combat the issue. National legislation to protect children from sexual violence has serious weaknesses, for example the law does not **protect from prosecution the child victims of trafficking** who are engaged in illegal activities, such as forced prostitution, by virtue of being trafficked. Another weakness is that Peruvian law does not stipulate the provision of **mental health services**, which is also the case only in one other country in the region, Argentina.

However, a positive aspect is that Peru is among a growing number of countries that have **abolished the statutes of limitations for sexual violence against children**.¹ In practice, this reform removes one of the biggest barriers for victims and survivors for accessing justice, given that many may take years if not decades to report their abusers on account of the trauma suffered as a result of the abuse.

Peru scored lowest in the region on **support services and recovery**, with initial response (hotlines and reporting) being a very significant weakness. Globally, it ranked 58th out of 60, in this regard, alongside Venezuela. While the Ministry for Women and Vulnerable People operates a hotline to report family or sexual violence, it is not specific to sexual violence against children. It appears that a **child-specific hotline** did exist, Teléfono Anar, but it currently appears to be out of service, [according](#) to Child Helpline International. In this regard, Peru was ranked 58th out of 60 countries worldwide, alongside Venezuela.

Notwithstanding this low score, Peru scored well with regard to **aligning national legislation with international law on children's rights**, tying first globally with a group of other countries. It is among a small number of Latin American countries that **criminalise sexual behaviour that does not lead to penetrative sex**, the others including Brazil, El Salvador and Mexico. And there exist **guidelines and training for the clinical evaluation of child sexual abuse victims** by personnel in social work, education, justice and other professions.

Further resources:

- [The Out of the Shadows Index: global ranking and data](#)
- [Regional report on Latin America](#) and [country briefings](#)
- [Methodology used in developing the Index](#)
- [Violence against children in Latin America and the Caribbean 2015-2021](#)

¹ Overall within the region, the countries that have abolished the statute of limitations (SoL) for most child sexual abuse offences are: El Salvador (in 1997), Nicaragua (in 2007), Peru (in 2018), Ecuador (in 2018), Chile (in 2019), Colombia (in 2021), Venezuela (in 2021). Elsewhere, debates have arisen over abolishing the statute of limitations in [Argentina](#), [Mexico](#) and [Paraguay](#).