

PRESS RELEASE - embargoed until 07/03/2023 at 05:01 (Mexico City)

Mexico ranked 2nd in Latin America and 12th globally on child sexual violence prevention and response

[1 March 2023] Mexico is among the highest ranking countries both globally and in Latin America in terms of preventing and responding to child sexual exploitation and abuse, according to a new report released today by Economist Impact which compares the laws and policies of nine countries in the region.

The [Regional Briefing for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) reviews Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela. The research is part of the Out of the Shadows Index (OOSI), which is the first global assessment of how countries worldwide are addressing sexual violence against children. It covers 60 countries, home to around 85 percent of the world's children. Out of the 60 countries covered by the Out of the Shadows Index, Mexico ranked 12th globally, scoring 64.7 out of a possible 100. Mexico is also the second highest-scoring country covered by the research within Latin America and the Caribbean, with Brazil achieving the top spot.

Other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are ranked as follows: **Brazil** (1st regionally, 11th globally), **Guatemala** (3rd regionally, 17th globally), **Colombia** (4th regionally, 19th globally), **Jamaica** (5th regionally, 20th globally), **El Salvador** (6th regionally, 21st globally), **Peru** (7th regionally, 46th globally), **Venezuela** (8th regionally, 47th globally) and **Argentina** (9th regionally, 50th globally).

Countries were scored out of 100 and ranked according to indicators that broadly measure whether legislation is in place to protect against sexual violence against children, if prevention policies and programmes exist, governments' capacity and commitment, if support and recovery services are available to abuse victims and survivors, and whether justice processes are adapted to the needs of children who have suffered sexual violence.

The [National Briefing for Mexico](#) summarises the data and findings for Mexico. The following presents some of the main features:

- Mexico was also one of only a few countries to develop a **national action plan to address child sexual exploitation and abuse** and was the only country in the region to directly involve children in developing this plan.
- Mexico performed particularly strongly on **providing support and recovery services** to children who suffer sexual exploitation and abuse, being ranked 6th globally on indicators such as emergency support and rehabilitation in healthcare settings.
- Mexico was found to be one of a minority of countries in the region to provide **training on trauma and child-friendly procedures** for judges and prosecutors. There also exist guidelines and training for social workers who deal with child sexual violence cases.
- The country's national law on children's rights also requires **different professionals across agencies and disciplines to work together**, which improves investigations on and responses to child abuse complaints.

However, the Index also notes significant gaps:

- National law lacks **comprehensive legislation** on online grooming of children in the country and there is no legal protection against prosecution for trafficked children who then engage in illegal activities.
- While there are **specialised police units** to cases of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, there is no specialised police agency dedicated to sexual violence against children generally in any setting.
- While the Mexican Senate [approved](#) eliminating **the statute of limitations for all cases of sexual violence against children** in April 2021, the federal Penal Code still states that the limitation period starts running once a child victim turns 18 years old or from the moment there is evidence of the commission of the crime. In January 2022 the country's Supreme Court [said](#) it will review whether victims of child sexual abuse can bring a case at any time without time limitations.¹

The regional report on Latin America concludes that, “countries [in the region] that rank highly on some indicators, may perform poorly on others. Any area of weakness diminishes the child protective system overall. Latin American and Caribbean countries have great strengths, albeit with wide variations between them. The child protective environment can therefore be further improved.”

Leo Ratledge, Co-Director of the Child Rights International Network (CRIN), which coordinated the launch of the regional report, said: “The Out of the Shadows Index shows the need to urgently continue the reform that is already underway across the region to prevent sexual violence against children. This will mean updating legislation on the abuse of children and developing support and response services that genuinely meet the needs and demands of survivors of child sexual abuse.”

Responding to the national report's findings, [ECPAT México's national coordinator, Norma Elena Negrete Aguayo](#), said: “Although the legal developments and the design of an Action Plan are noteworthy, one must not lose sight of the complex reality of a country with widespread social inequality where poverty has the face of a child (1 in every 2 children live in poverty); therefore, a vast majority of victims do not have access to justice, decent services and reparations for the harm caused [by sexual abuse]. The 2023 budget allocated to human rights and to addressing these crimes is less than 1%, which limits the already weak coordination and implementation of specialised and differentiated responses to the issue.”

Meanwhile, **Tania Ramírez Hernández, executive director of Mexico's children's rights network, REDIM**, said: “In 2021, there 8,179 cases of sexual violence against children that ended up in hospitals; which is an increase of 48.9% compared to 2020. In 93% of cases, the victim was a female. This form of sexist and adultist violence, which objectifies these girls because of their age and gender, is often hidden because the perpetrators are part of their families or close circles. The psychosocial effects can be profound and the termination of possible pregnancies is not always legal and the victim adequately supported.”

- ENDS -

¹ Elsewhere in the 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](#) and [Paraguay](#).

Notes to the editor

About how to report on sexual violence against children

There is often confusion surrounding the use of different terminology to describe sexual violence against children. Misuse of terminology can risk stigmatisation, trivialisation and in worst cases be counter-productive in the work to prevent child sexual violence. We encourage you to review the [Luxembourg Guidelines](#) to ensure appropriate language is used when reporting on this issue.

National helplines

[Teléfono ANAR México 01800 911-1119](#): Helpline to report abuse, receive advice and support.

About the Out of the Shadows Index

The Out of the Shadows Index (OOSI) is a global review of the laws, policies and services that governments must have in place to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse against children. It covers 60 countries worldwide, home to approximately 85 percent of the world's children. The Index was commissioned by Ignite Philanthropy and developed by Economist Impact, the policy research and analysis division of The Economist Group. [outoftheshadows.global](#)

Access the [global ranking and data](#), the [regional reports](#) and the [methodology](#). Also access the [briefings](#) for each country in Latin America.

About Economist Impact

Economist Impact is the policy research and analysis division of The Economist Group. It partners with corporations, foundations, NGOs and governments across themes including sustainability, health and the changing shape of globalisation to catalyse change and enable progress. For 75 years, Economist Impact has shed light on policy choices through benchmarks, economic and social impact analysis, white papers, forecasting and scenario modelling. [impact.economist.com](#)

About Ignite Philanthropy

Ignite Philanthropy is a donor collaborative fund that takes advantage of philanthropy's unique role, flexibility, and ability to act quickly to empower partners, allies and grassroots voices to bring an end to violence against children and young people. [www.ignitephilanthropy.org](#)

About the Child Rights International Network (CRIN)

CRIN is a human rights organisation with a focus on children's rights. We challenge the status quo because the norms that dictate children and young people's place in society need radical change. We press for rights - not charity - and campaign for a genuine shift in how governments and societies view and treat under-18s. Through using research, policy, advocacy and art, we encourage people to think critically about the world. [www.crin.org](#)