

PRESS RELEASE - embargoed until 07/03/2023 at 06:01 (Lima)

Peru ranked 46th globally and third lowest in Latin America on child sexual violence prevention and response

[7 March 2023] Peru is among the lowest ranking countries both globally and in Latin America in terms of its prevention and response 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, Peru, 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, Peru ranked 46th globally, scoring 44.8 out of a possible 100. Peru is also the third lowest scoring country covered by the research within Latin America and the Caribbean.

Other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are ranked as follows: **Brazil** (1st regionally, 11th globally), **Mexico** (2nd regionally, 12th globally), **Guatemala** (3rd regionally, 17th globally), **Colombia** (4th regionally, 19th globally), **Jamaica** (5th regionally, 20th globally), **El Salvador** (6th regionally, 21st 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 Peru](#) summarises the data and findings for Peru. Where Peru scored well includes for:

- **aligning national legislation with international law** on children's rights generally, tying first globally with a group of other countries.
- being 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.
- **abolishing the statute of limitations** for sexual violence against children. Peru is among a group of countries to have made this reform.¹
- developing **guidelines and training for the clinical evaluation of child sexual abuse victims** by personnel in social work, education, justice and other professions.

However, the Index identified weak points that include:

- Peru's legislation not specifically offering **protection from prosecution to child victims of trafficking** who then engage in illegal activities, such as forced prostitution. National legislation

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](#).

also does not stipulate the provision of **mental health services for child victims**, which is also the case in only one other Latin American country in the index: Argentina.

- Peru previously had a **national plan specifically addressing child sexual exploitation and abuse**, but it was allowed to expire, which is a significant obstacle in ensuring a strong national response to the issue.
- Peru scored lowest in the region on **support services and recovery**, including for initial and emergency response services, such as the provision of hotlines. 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.

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, **Sofía García from the Instituto Promoviendo Desarrollo Social (IPRODES)**, a national human rights organisation, said:

“The Out of the Shadows index reveals that there are still challenges to addressing sexual violence against girls, boys and adolescents in Peru - a daily, serious, widespread, persistent crime with devastating effects on the victim. According to the report, the Peruvian State has a regulatory framework in line with international standards for the protection of human rights. However, this has not been fully implemented, and the report rightly says that there are no specialised services for care, protection and restitution of rights for children who are victims of violence and sexual exploitation. What’s more, we do not have a specific budget allocated to preventing and combatting sexual violence against children and adolescents - the State invests less than 1%.”

Responding to the national report’s findings, **Jose Enrique Escardó Steck, founder and coordinator of Red de Sobrevivientes Perú**, the country’s first survivor-led network, said:

“The index is an important tool with tangible data that should open the eyes of those responsible for public policies so that they assume their role of protecting human dignity as the highest constitutional goal. The alarming findings of the Index will not be traced until the seriousness of the problem is understood. In my 22 years of campaigning against abuse, little progress has been made. It is not a priority of the State, since it is the main agent of re-victimisation. The lack of action by the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary powers collude with abusers, cover ups and political interests to the point of aggravating the existing stigma and promoting the persecution of survivors.”

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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.

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