

FACT SHEET

STATISTICS ON CHILD
SEXUAL ABUSE IN GHANA

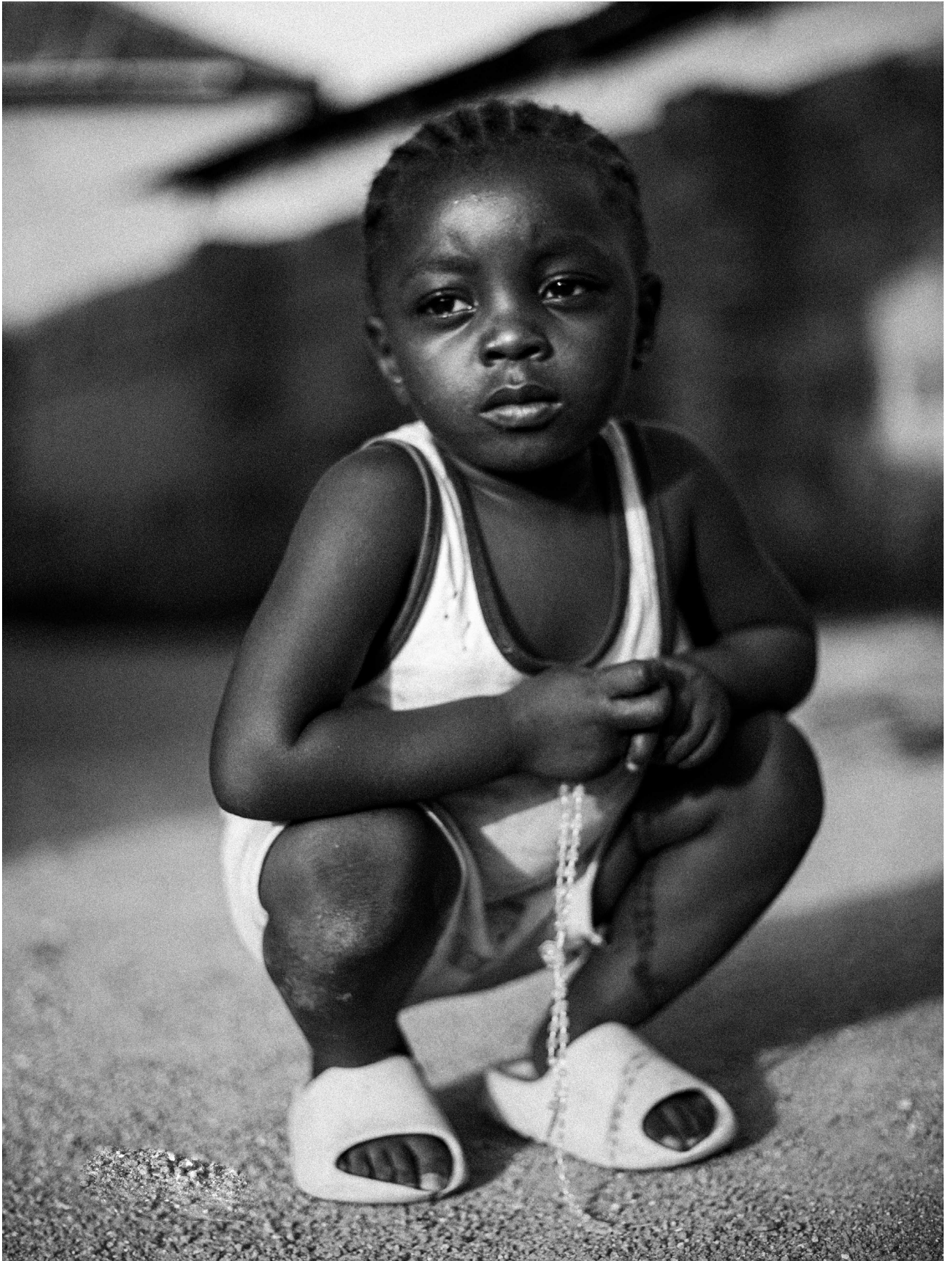
Statistics on Child Sexual Abuse in Ghana

The United Nations Global Study on Violence against Children (UNVAC) defines CSA as “any kind of sexual activity to which children are subjected, especially by someone who is responsible for them or has power or control over them, and who they should be able to trust.”

According to the Criminal Offences Act 1960 (Act 29) Section 101 on sexual and gender-based violence, any sexual encounter with any child under 16 years, with or without the child’s consent, is a case of defilement.

It is a criminal offence and culprits are liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than seven years or at most 25 years.

Statistics from the Ghana Health Service District Health Information Management System (DHIMS) indicate that in 2020 for instance, Ghana recorded a total of 109,888 teenage pregnancies across the 16 administrative regions of Ghana.



Against Females

In the 2017/18 Unicef Situation of Adolescents in Ghana Report, One in Five girls reported issues of sexual violence within the past 12 months, including rape and sexual coercion.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/4081/file/Summary%20Report%20-%20Situation%20of%20Adolescents%20in%20Ghana.pdf>

More than one in five adolescent girls reported that they experienced sexual violence within the past 12 months prior to the research in 2016; primarily sexual touch (15%), followed by sexual comments (12%) and being physically forced to have sex (3%).

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/4081/fileSummary%20Report%20-%20Situation%20of%20Adolescents%20in%20Ghana.pdf>

One in seven women (14%) aged 15-49 have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives according to the 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) Report.

Source: https://www.statsghana.gov.gh/gssmain/fileUpload/pressrelease/3_World%20Day%20of%20the%20Fight%20Against%20Sexual%20Exploitation_new.pdf

3% of women reported their first experience of sexual violence by age 15, and 10% by age 22. The Survey also reveals that a little over half (51%) of women who experienced physical or sexual violence never sought for help or told anyone.

Source: https://www.statsghana.gov.gh/gssmain/fileUpload/pressrelease/3_World%20Day%20of%20the%20Fight%20Against%20Sexual%20Exploitation_new.pdf

1,047 girls were defiled, while 305 women were raped in 2020 (DOVVSU at the Ghana Police Service, reported by graphiconline.com).

Source: <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/dovvsu-describes-1500-annual-rape-cases-as-alarming.html>

One in 7 women aged 15 to 49 years has experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey).

Source: https://statsghana.gov.gh/mediacentre_pressdetails.php?statspress=OTE1MjU0NDU4NjUuNzAy/statsress/62469p5322/ <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/PR149/PR149.pdf>

In 2019, Ghana Police Service registered a total of 1,285 cases of child sexual abuse (defilement) and 376 cases of rape.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/3746/file/Budget%20Brief%20-%20Funding%20Services%20for%20Child%20and%20Women%20Survivors%20of%20Sexual%20Violence.pdf>

The Consequence

A study by the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana, revealed that Ghana lost US\$ 19million (GHS 73.5million) as economic costs of violence against women and girls in 2019.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/3746/file/Budget%20Brief%20-%20Funding%20Service%20for%20Child%20and%20Women%20Survivors%20of%20Sexual%20Violence.pdf>

Sexual and gender-based violence against children and women deepens household poverty as Ghanaian children and women survivors who access medico-legal services have to incur expenses of at least GHS 900 on average per case. In many cases, this is equivalent to 10 per cent of household annual per capital expenditure. This calculation is based on an analysis of an interview and discussion with 100 boy and girl survivors of sexual violence between September and December 2020 in Accra and Kumasi Metropolitan areas.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/3746/file/Budget%20Brief%20-%20Funding%20Services%20for%20Child%20and%20Women%20Survivors%20of%20Sexual%20Violence.pdf>

Currently, the only reliable avenue for respite in situations where the survivor/victim is unable to afford medical treatment is when he/she is in possession of an active National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) card. However, coverage remains limited to certain drugs and potentially, consultation charges.

The NHIS does not cover the cost of the Medical Report which can range from GHS 300 to GHS 1000 depending on the nature of cases.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/3746/file/Budget%20Brief%20-%20Funding%20Services%20for%20Child%20and%20Women%20Survivors%20of%20Sexual%20Violence.pdf>

A study conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service on the impact of COVID-19 found that domestic violence and assault incidences increased by 3.7 per cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/3746/file/Budget%20Brief%20-%20Funding%20Services%20for%20Child%20and%20Women%20Survivors%20of%20Sexual%20Violence.pdf>



Rape and Defilement account for approximately 7.9% of all reported gender-based violence cases in Ghana, establishing it as a significant, recurring type of crime.

Source: <https://genderapp.statsghana.gov.gh/index.html?utm>

The 2018 Unicef report on Child Online Protection indicated that two in five children in Ghana have received messages containing sexual content on their phones at least once during the past year.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/child-online-protection>

The same study showed that one in five children had actually met someone face to face whom they first got to know on the Internet and 25 per cent of them were upset by this meeting.

About half of all the surveyed children expressed difficulty talking to their caregivers about such exposures to sexual images.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/child-online-protection>

More than 13,000 images and videos of child sexual abuse were reportedly accessed or uploaded from Ghana in 2020.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/3961/file/Fulfilling%20the%20Commitment%20to%20Child%20Protection%20in%20Ghana.pdf>

The Nature of Perpetrators

27.6% of perpetrators use the confidence approach, and 24.3%, the blitz approach (violence and threats with physical attacks)

Source: <https://pure.ug.edu.gh/en/publications/child-sexual-abuse-in-ghana-a-multi-methods-exploratory-study/>

43.9% of survivor-perpetrator relationships were with neighbours, 21.8% with family members and family friends, 11.8% with teachers.

Source: <https://pure.ug.edu.gh/en/publications/child-sexual-abuse-in-ghana-a-multi-methods-exploratory-study/>

Against Males

There are 53.8% male survivors of defilement.

Source: <https://pure.ug.edu.gh/en/publications/child-sexual-abuse-in-ghana-a-multi-methods-exploratory-study/>

Out of the 529 total reported cases of sexual abuse, 97.5% of the survivors were females, with 2.5% reports involving male survivors. Meaning out of every 40 sexual abuse survivors, 1 is male.

The harsh, unfortunate reality is that a lot of sexual-related abuses against male children go unreported.

Source: <https://pure.ug.edu.gh/en/publications/child-sexual-abuse-in-ghana-a-multi-methods-exploratory-study/>

43% survivors of defilement live with single parents.

Source: <https://pure.ug.edu.gh/en/publications/child-sexual-abuse-in-ghana-a-multi-methods-exploratory-study/>



Take out

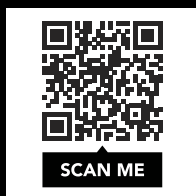
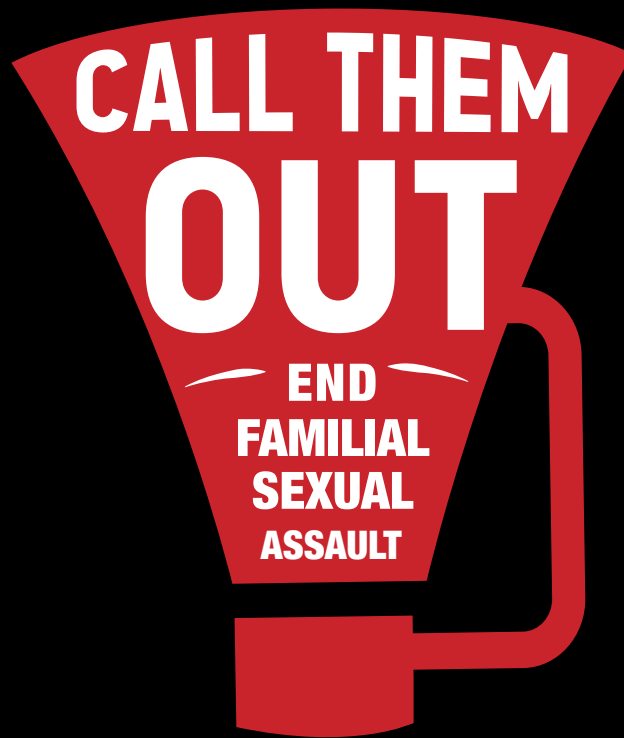
Most reports on sexual abuse tend to focus on female victims, likely because the majority of perpetrators are male. However, it's important to recognize that male children are also affected by this grave violation.

This presents an opportunity to shed light on their experiences as well and to advocate for the reporting and prosecution of all sexual offenders in order to combat this pervasive issue.

Additionally, information on child sexual abuse should be made more accessible to the public to raise awareness and encourage open discussions around this sensitive issue. Fostering such “uncomfortable conversations” is crucial to creating a supportive environment where victims feel empowered to speak out.

A national sex offender registry should be published both digitally and in print, containing information on all convicted offenders as well.

This transparency would help expose the identities of perpetrators and serve as a strong deterrent against future offences.



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