

South Africa

Out of the shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation

It takes place mostly in the shadows, but sexual violence against children is happening everywhere, regardless of a country's economic status or its citizens' quality of life. Yet, child sexual abuse and exploitation is preventable, and there are strategies that have been proven successful in reducing it. When government, civil society and the private sector act together, progress is possible.

The Out of the Shadows Index illustrates how countries are responding to the problem, highlighting areas for attention and advancement towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which include a target (16.2) to end all forms of violence against children by 2030.

Background indicators

GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (US\$ at PPP)	13,499
Population (m)	56.7
Population under 19 (%)	37.7
Access to broadband Internet (%)	2.1

Source: EIU



Brief summary

South Africa has demonstrated its commitment to tackling sexual violence against children by enacting comprehensive legislation on sexual offences against children. Victim support and resources for legal and law enforcement professionals could be strengthened.

Where has progress been made?

Frontline support workers: South Africa has a comprehensive system of training and guidance for frontline support workers who respond to cases of sexual violence against children. The Department of Education issues guidelines for teaching professionals, and there are similar programmes for medical, social and psychiatric workers.

Laws to prevent child sexual exploitation: The country provides protections against the procurement of minors for sexual services and the visual depiction of minors engaging in sexual activities, having signed into law the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill in 2013.

Online grooming laws: Legislation specific to online grooming has been enacted in South Africa, according to 2017 data from the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children.

Technology industry engagement: In the private sector, the country's largest telecommunications operator, Vodacom, provides a toll-free crisis telephone counselling service for children.

What more needs to be done?

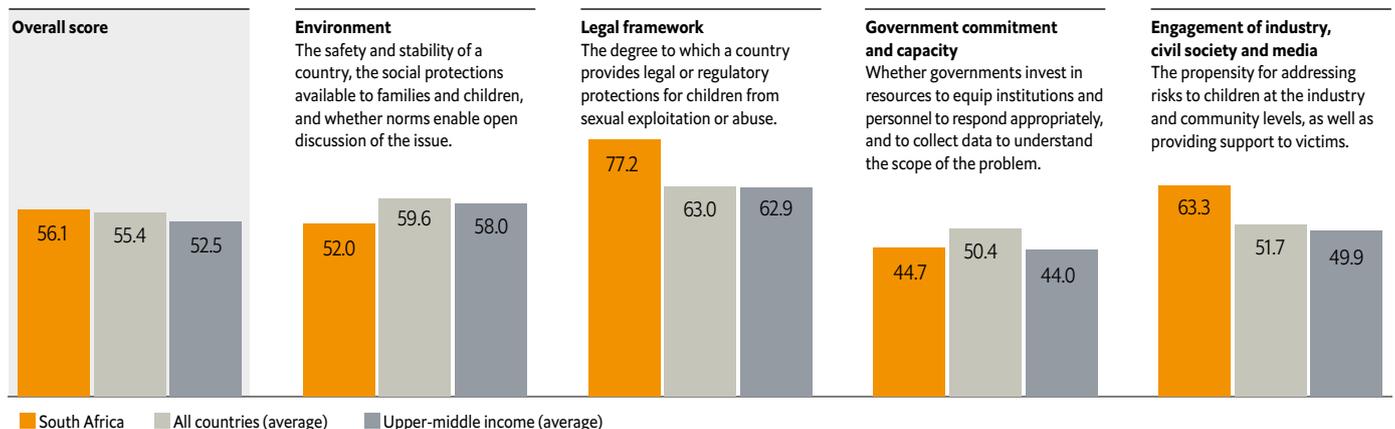
Access to victim support programmes: There are support programmes for victims of child sexual abuse, but data on individuals who seek such support is unavailable from official sources. Victims do not have the option of seeking compensation from offenders.

Media engagement: Civil society organisations provide guidelines for reporting on cases of sexual violence against children, but industry-led groups do not.

Resources for legal and law enforcement professionals: There are guidelines for prosecuting cases of sexual abuse, but these do not pay special attention to cases involving children.

Child-specific rape laws: While the Criminal Law has a dedicated chapter on Sexual Offences Against Children, South Africa does not offer any special protections for children in its national rape laws.

Index scores



All countries average includes 40 countries across East Asia & the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East & North Africa, North America, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Upper-middle income average (as classified by the World Bank) includes 12 countries. Full methodology at <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com>.

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Indicator	Score / 100
1.1) Instability	77.5
1.2) Livelihoods	18.3
1.3) Social protections	62.1
1.4) Consumption of stimulants	71.5
1.5) Societal attitudes	65.5
1.6) Perceptions of violence	0.0
1.7) Attitudes to law enforcement	54.9
2.1) Contextual legal framework	85.7
2.2) Age of consent	100.0
2.3) Child sexual offenses	60.0
2.4) Child marriage	50.0
2.5) Child-specific rape laws	0.0
2.6) General sex laws	100.0
2.7) Exemptions and qualifiers	75.0
2.8) Purchasing sexual services	100.0
2.9) Procurement of minors	100.0
2.10) Visual depiction of minors engaging in sexual activities	100.0

Indicator	Score / 100
2.11) Online grooming	100.0
2.12) Protecting child interests	50.0
2.13) Internet protections	100.0
3.1) International standards or conventions	60.0
3.2) National plans and policies	40.0
3.3) Resources for legal and enforcement professionals	0.0
3.4) Data collection: prevalence	46.2
3.5) Reporting	100.0
3.6) Government and law enforcement capacity	42.9
3.7) Complaint mechanisms	50.0
3.8) Access to victim support programmes	12.0
3.9) Access to offender support programmes	50.0
4.1) Technology industry engagement	100.0
4.2) Travel and tourism industry engagement	66.7
4.3) Frontline support workers	100.0
4.4) Civil society engagement	50.0
4.5) Media industry engagement	0.0



For a full explanation of indicators, underlying weightings and further details on the country profile, please see the interactive Excel model available at <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com>.

In addition to the full methodology, an interactive Excel model and a white paper outlining overall findings are available at <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com>

What is the Out of the Shadows Index?

The Out of the Shadows Index examines how stakeholders are responding to the threat of child sexual abuse and exploitation in 40 countries. It does not attempt to measure the scale of the problem in each country, nor does the index incorporate information on the prevalence of sexual violence against children. It includes data and information from 34 indicators and 132 sub-indicators, grouped into four categories that measure the extent to which countries are acknowledging the problem of sexual violence against children, and whether they are implementing measures to address and prevent it.

While the index can help to highlight areas for attention, existing resources such as the “INSPIRE” package of seven strategies for ending violence against children (http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire-package/en/) and the WePROTECT Model National Response for preventing and tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse (<https://www.weprotect.org/the-model-national-response/>) offer detailed guidance and support on implementation of solutions.

Please use the following when citing this country summary:

The Economist Intelligence Unit. 2018. Out of the shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation- a 40 country benchmarking index. South Africa country summary. EIU, New York, NY.

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Research supported by World Childhood Foundation and Oak Foundation
With additional support from Carlson Family Foundation