

Sexual abuse and exploitation of children in Recife and Pernambuco


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2020

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SUPPORT





Sexual violence against children and adolescents, in the form of sexual abuse or exploitation, is a serious violation of their human rights and has serious consequences for their development. Although studies and data on the problem are few and scattered among the various institutions of the child rights guarantee system, the picture that is evident from the available data indicates an extremely worrying situation.



**THE SCALE OF
THE PROBLEM
IN BRAZIL**

Over 20k reports of sexual violence against children per year in the country.

Dial 100 Hotline

Across the country, the Dial 100 hotline has received in average almost **24 thousand reports** per year of sexual violence against children in the country. The reports in the health system have been close to **20 thousand** per year. But the actual numbers are estimated to be much higher.

46.6% of victims of sexual offenses in the country did not warn any person or institution. Only 7.5% of victims reported to the police.

National Victimization Survey 2012

AN INVISIBLE VIOLENCE

Only 7.5% of sexual offenses in Brazil are reported to the police, therefore it is estimated that the numbers of sexual violence might be 13 times higher than reported.¹ Men reported even less (1.9% versus 10.1% for women).

¹ National Victimization Survey. Datafolha/Crisp/SENASP. May 2013.

It is estimated that approximately 500 thousand rapes occur per year in Brazil. Around 70% of victims are children and adolescents.

Atlas of Violence 2018

CHILDREN ARE THE MAIN VICTIMS.

Some 50.000 cases of rape are reported every year to law enforcement institutions in Brazil, but it is estimated that this represents less than 10% of the total cases of rapes² of women and girls.

There are different categorizations of Sexual Violence Against Children in the several institutions. However, **in over 70% of reports, violence is classified as sexual abuse or “rape”**. Sexual exploitation comprises nearly 20% of the reports of sexual violence to Dial 100, but only 3.3% of sexual violence notifications in the health system. Reports of sexting, grooming and child pornography, are few (less than 1%), but have been growing on average 50% a year.³

2 SOURCE: Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), cited in: Plan International Brasil. [Quanto Custa a Violência Sexual Contra Meninas](#). São Paulo: 2015.

3 SOURCE: Dial 100

More than 80% of child sex abuse occurs below the age of 14, especially between 5 e 14. Girls are at far greater risk of sexual violence and abuse than boys: they account for 85% of victims. 51% of victims are black⁴.

Most of the time, **abuse takes place indoors**. For Children up to the age of 13, **67% of crimes are committed by close relatives or acquaintances of the family** like fathers, mothers, stepfathers, and brothers. As for adolescents, cases of strangers (32.5%) and friends/acquaintances (26.09%) perpetrators prevail.⁵

⁴ **SOURCE:** Epidemiological Bulletin, Volume 49, No. 27, Jun. 2018. Secretariat of Health Surveillance Ministry of Health. Based on data from SINAN Net. Years: 2011 to 2017.

⁵ IPEA and Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública. Atlas of Violence 2018.



**THE SCALE
OF THE PROBLEM IN
RECIFE AND PERNAMBUCO**

Over a thousand reports of sexual violence against children, most of them in the Recife metropolitan area.

Dial 100 Hotline and SINAN

An average of over **a thousand reports per year** of sexual violence against children and adolescents are recorded in Pernambuco.

Over half (52.3%) of cases reported in the health system occurs in the Metropolitan Region of Recife (RMR), and nearly a fourth (23.9%) in the capital Recife. Over the past years, numbers have grown in both police reports and in notifications in the health system.

Reports of sexual violence against Children and Adolescents in the State of Pernambuco

Institutions	2016	2017	2018
Police	1744	1704	1981
Social assistance	1073	1409	1361
Health	925	1064	1544
Dial 100	571	804	641

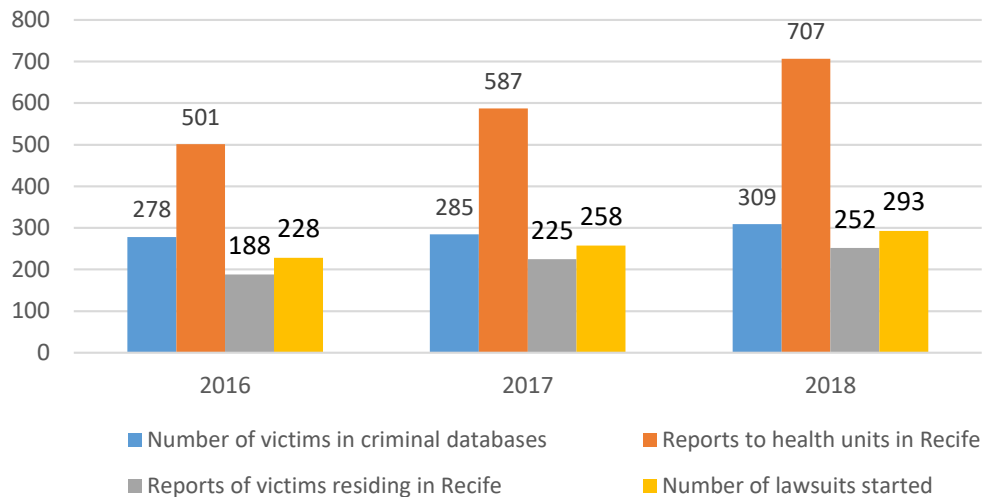
SOURCE: Government of Pernambuco/Secretariat of Social Defense - SDS/GACE/INFOPOL System. Executive Secretariat of Social Assistance - SEASS/GEPMC. Human Rights Hotline. Sinan/SEVS/SES-PE.

It is estimated that over 24 thousand cases of rape occur per year in Pernambuco, and over 5 thousand in Recife. Most the victims are children.

Estimates calculated from INFOPOL and SINAN data.

About **2,000 cases of rape are reported** to the police in Pernambuco every year. But only about 8.2% of sexual offenses in the state are reported to the police. Therefore, it is estimated that the actual number of cases is much higher.

Reports of sexual violence against children - Recife

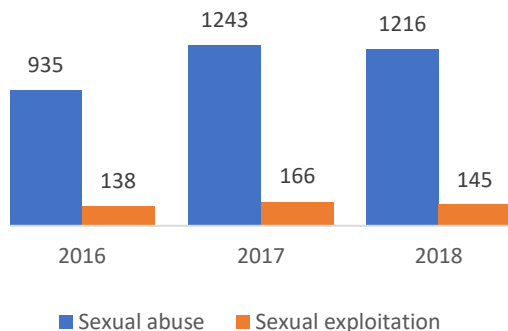


SOURCE: Pernambuco State Secretariat for Social Defense - INFOPOL System; Recife Health Department - SINAN; Pernambuco Court of Justice.



NATURE OF THE VIOLENCE

Child victims of sexual abuse and/or exploitation assisted by the Specialized Family Protection and Care Service in Pernambuco



SOURCE: Executive Secretariat of Social Assistance - SEASS / GEPMC.

PERNAMBUCO

As in the rest of the country, **in more than 70% of cases, violence is recorded as sexual abuse or rape. Sexual exploitation accounts for 21% of reports** of sexual violence to Dial 100, but only 2.6% of the notifications in the health system in Pernambuco refer to sexual exploitation. Child pornography accounts for 2.5% of notifications in SINAN. Reports of sexting and grooming, although a small number (0.6%), have grown by an average of about 40% a year between 2012 and 2017.⁶

RECIFE

77.2% of sexual violence against children reports in the health system correspond to rape and 19.3% to sexual harassment. Sexual exploitation accounts for 2.8% and child pornography for 4.2% of the reports.

⁶ **SOURCE:** Dial 100, including data from SONDHA and SAFERNET systems.

Crimes against the sexual dignity of children and adolescents in Recife and Pernambuco.

Nature of the crime	Pernambuco	Recife
Rape of vulnerable	59,1 %	63,0 %
Rape of vulnerable by domestic / family violence	16,2 %	14,2 %
Rape	12,5 %	13,0 %
Other crimes against sexual dignity	9,8 %	8,0 %
Rape by domestic / family violence	1,7 %	1,2 %
Prostitution / sexual exploitation of vulnerable	0,4 %	0,2 %
Sexual harassment	0,4 %	0,4 %

SOURCE: Government of Pernambuco / Secretariat of Social Defense - SDS / GACE / INFOPOL System Period: January 2016 to March 2019.

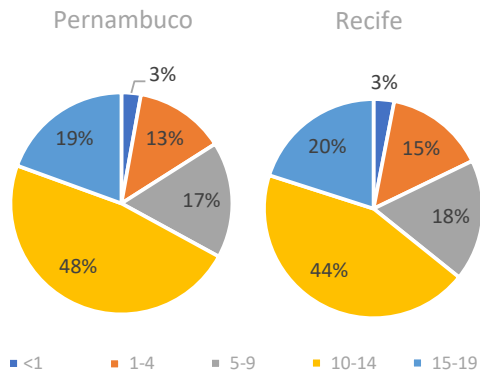
**sexual exploitation
of children and
adolescents is a
crime that remains
unpunished.**

The sexual exploitation of children and adolescents is still one of the most permissive and largely accepted practices in society. In both Recife and Pernambuco, cases of sexual exploitation do not reach even 0.5% of the reports of crimes against the sexual dignity of children and adolescents, showing that this is a criminal action that remains largely unpunished.



THE VICTIMS

Sexual violence against children and adolescents in Pernambuco and Recife, by age group



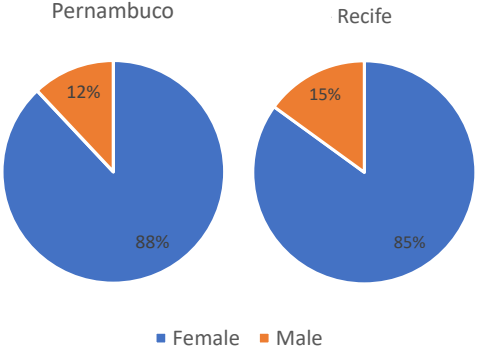
SOURCE: Ministry of Health / SINAN Net. Years: 2011 to 2016.

BY AGE

MORE THAN 80% OF THE VIOLENCE OCCURRED BELOW THE AGE OF 14, WITH A HIGHER CONCENTRATION BETWEEN 5 AND 14.

In the records of social assistance, most victims of sexual abuse are children, especially in the age group of 7 to 12 years, while the victims of sexual exploitation are mostly adolescents.

Sexual violence against children and adolescents 0 to 19 years, in Pernambuco and Recife, by sex.



SOURCE: Microdata of the Ministry of Health / SINAN Net. Years: 2011 to 2016.

BY SEX

OVER 80% ARE FEMALE VICTIMS.

The *sexual identity* of the victims was reported in only 2% of complaints to Dial 100. In those reports, 89% of the victims were identified as having a heterosexual identity and 11% LGBT+.

BY RACE/ETHNICITY

The incidence of reports of sexual violence is **higher among afro descendants**, showing that this population is even more vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

According to reports in the health system between 2014 and 2018, 6% of the victims in Recife had some type of disorder or disability, mostly mental. This may indicate that **children with disabilities or mental disorders are at greater risk** of being abused.

Race/ethnicity of child and adolescent victims in Recife and Pernambuco

Race / ethnicity	PERNAMBUCO			RECIFE	
	Infopol	Sinan	Disque 100	Infopol	Sinan Recife
Brown	55,42 %	54 %	30,84 %	45,15 %	56,9 %
White	20,27 %	16 %	23,11 %	21,81 %	16,7 %
Unknown	18,29 %	18 %	39,68 %	27,75 %	14,6 %
Black	5,09 %	10 %	5,77 %	4,63 %	10,4 %
Yellow	0,70 %	1 %	0,36 %	0,66 %	0,8 %
Red / indigenous	0,23 %	1 %	0,25 %		0,6 %

SOURCE: Government of Pernambuco / Secretariat of Social Defense - SDS / GACE / INFOPOL System (January 2016 to March 2019), Health Secretariat of Recife - Epidemiological Surveillance Management / Health Surveillance Executive Secretariat - SINAN / DANT / UVEPI / DEVS / Sesau Recife (2016 to 2018) and Human Rights Hotline (January 2011 to April 2019).

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PLACE OF OCCURRENCE

More than 60% of sexual crimes occur in the residence, where children should feel safe.

INFOPOL

In Pernambuco and in the capital, as in the rest of the country, **abuses occur mainly in the home itself**, where children should feel safe. Often, they had been happening before. Public roads are the second most frequent place.

RECIFE

In the capital, 72.9% of sexual crimes occur at home, 6.5% on public roads, 3.4% at educational institutions.⁷

A study by Sena CA et al⁸ found the highest incidence in neighborhoods of Health Districts II and III, with more than 5.71 victims per neighborhood. A mapping by the Public Ministry of Pernambuco based on criminal data from 2016-2018, identified the highest rates in the Ibura neighborhood.

⁷ Government of Pernambuco / Secretariat of Social Defense - SDS / GACE / INFOPOL System. January 2016 to March 2019.

⁸ Sena, Cláudia & Silva, Maria & Falbo, Gilliatt. (2018). [Incidência de violência sexual em crianças e adolescentes em Recife/ Pernambuco no biênio 2012- 2013](#). Ciência & Saúde Coletiva. 23. 1591-1599. 10.1590/1413-81232018235.18662016. Maio, 2018.

Reports of Sexual violence against children in Disque 100, by place of occurrence - Pernambuco.

Place occurrence	Occurrence Index
Victim' s house	36.8 %
Suspect' s house	32.5 %
Others	11.2 %
House	8.5 %
Street	7.9 %
School	1.9 %
Workplace	0.5 %

SOURCE: Disque 100. Period: January 2011 to April 2019.

PERNAMBUCO

Across the state, 67.2% of sexual crimes occur at home, 10.2% on public roads, 2.6% on rural property, 2.1% at educational institutions⁹. A close situation can be found in the reports to Dial 100 (table).

⁹ Government of Pernambuco / Secretariat of Social Defense - SDS / GACE / INFOPOL System. January 2016 to March 2019

The background is a solid dark blue color. It is decorated with a pattern of white and dark blue squares and rectangles of various sizes, scattered across the page. The shapes are irregularly placed, creating a pixelated or mosaic-like effect. The text is positioned on the right side of the page.

**THE
PERPETRATORS**

**Most of the cases
are associated with
known persons or
close relatives.**

Almost all (98%) of crimes against the sexual dignity of children and adolescents in Recife and Pernambuco have only one perpetrator.

In the records of the health system, it is possible to confirm that most of the cases are also associated with known persons or close relatives, such as boyfriend, father, stepfather, caretaker, mother and brothers, especially for the 0 to 14-year-olds (67% of reports). Half of the reported sexual violence against people between 15 and 19 years old is committed by strangers, a rate well above the national average.

Relationship / degree of relationship of the perpetrator with the victim of sexual violence in Recife and Pernambuco, according to the age group of the victim.

Victim and perpetrator link	PERNAMBUCO		RECIFE	
	0-14 years	15-19 years	0-14 years	15-19 years
Friends / acquaintances	22,8%	20,8%	24,7%	21,2%
Boyfriend	15,8%	5,4%	11,2%	4,5%
Other Links	12,8%	6,6%	12,0%	6,6%
Unknown	11,3%	47,2%	14,8%	50,0%
Father	7,2%	4,4%	8,5%	5,1%
Stepfather	7,2%	4,5%	6,7%	3,0%
Spouse *	4,4%	3,1%	2,5%	2,0%
Caregiver	3,2%	0,7%	5,8%	0,0%
Mother	2,0%	0,7%	3,4%	1,0%
Ex-boyfriend	1,8%	2,0%	1,0%	3,0%
Brother /sister	1,7%	1,1%	1,8%	0,5%
Person with institutional relationship	0,8%	0,7%	1,5%	2,5%
Ex-spouse	0,5%	1,2%	0,0%	0,0%
Police Officer / Law Enforcement Agent	0,2%	0,1%	0,1%	0,0%
Other / Uninformed	8,5%	1,4%	5,8%	0,5%

SOURCE: Ministry of Health / SINAN Net. Period : 2011 to 2016

CHALLENGES FOR CONFRONTING THE PROBLEM

- ▶ High turnover of professionals, and lack of investment in ongoing education
- ▶ Difficulty in managing the monitoring of results
- ▶ Integrated and continuous Social, Psychological and Legal assistance not always available to victims, perpetrators and families
- ▶ Weakening and extinction of Councils, Forums, Committees, Public Policies Monitoring Commissions

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE ACTION

- ▶ Part of society has reacted and engaged and is sensitive to the issue
- ▶ The feminist movement is a strong catalyst for the issued in Recife and has expanded its reach and influence.
- ▶ Proposing joint solutions based on accumulated experience in the city, with indicators for monitoring.
- ▶ Investing in diagnostics, research, baselines to design more efficient and effective actions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Investing in baselines, diagnostics, monitoring databases and impact assessments, annual analytical reports.
- ▶ Putting more focus on primary prevention actions, which seek to prevent abuse before it happens.
- ▶ Carrying out preventive actions by creating educational materials for all age groups that help children develop self-protection skills, learn to prevent themselves, ask for help and participate in collective prevention actions.
- ▶ Implementing self-protection programs and projects (in schools and other spaces).
- ▶ Broadly engage boys in discussing new masculinities
- ▶ Work with perpetrators of violence is necessary and a fundamental part of the search for solutions to the problem. Law enforcement agencies, NGOs and government programs can work together to prevent recurrence.
- ▶ Engaging schools and families in learning to identify and refer cases
- ▶ Ongoing training for SGD operators
- ▶ Better networking of services.
- ▶ Promoting innovative ideas, researching new languages, including technology in preventive actions
- ▶ Adapting evidence-based solutions, potentially using a public health model for prevention.

