

# Cameroon

## 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) | 3,790 |
| Population (m)  | 37    |
| Population under 19 (%)                                 | 32.9  |
| Access to broadband Internet (%)                        | 0.2   |

Source: EIU



### Brief summary

**Cameroon has taken significant steps to prevent sexual violence against children through its legal framework, but it has little institutional capacity and requires industry engagement with the issue.**

#### Where has progress been made?

**Civil society engagement:** Civil society organisations provide support services for victims, including medical support, legal aid, and education and awareness initiatives. Reports from the *Association Enfants, Jeunes et Avenir* (ASSEJA) and ECPAT suggest that services for victims are mostly organised and funded by international aid agencies and/or non-governmental organisations.

**Reporting:** The government collects and regularly publishes data on incidents of reported child sexual abuse offences through the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Justice.

**Laws to prevent child sexual exploitation:** Cameroon's penal code and cybercrime laws protect children against procurement for sexual activities and depiction in sexually explicit material.

#### What more needs to be done?

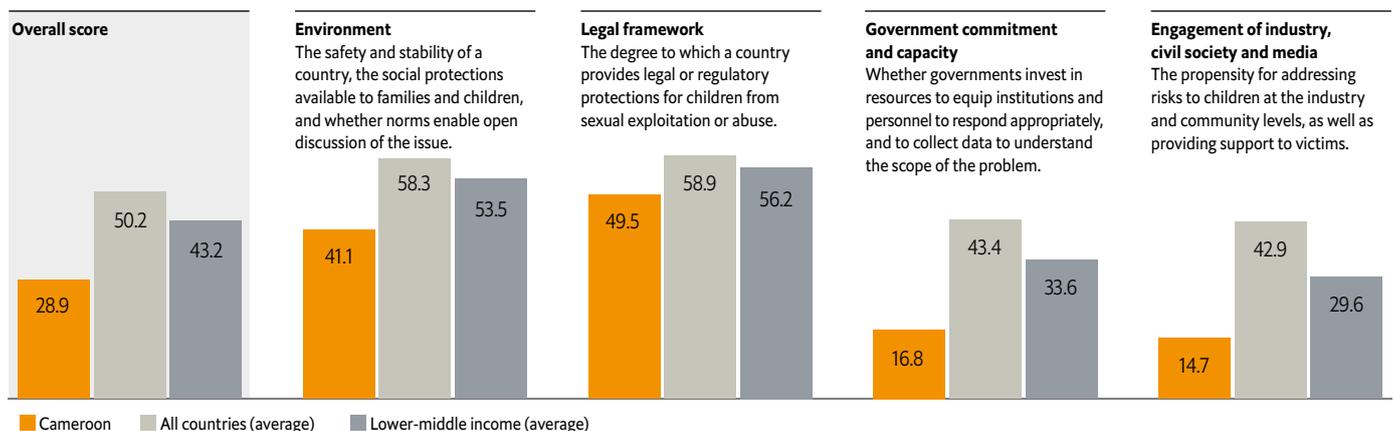
**Data collection:** The government collects data on reported incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation, but prevalence data is unavailable. Representative survey data on child marriage and on sexual violence against women (from the age of 15) is available but is not disaggregated for those under 18.

**National plans and policies:** There is no national plan to combat sexual violence against children, although a 2017 report by ASSEJA and ECPAT states that the "National Action Plan for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights" includes some child sexual exploitation countermeasures.

**Resources for professionals and frontline support workers:** The country does not provide guidelines or instructions for those responsible for prosecuting cases of child sexual abuse or exploitation, or for those who may encounter such incidents in their day-to-day work.

**Government and law enforcement capacity:** Cameroon does not have a dedicated government agency or ministry to co-ordinate efforts to combat child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.

### Index scores



All countries average includes 60 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. Lower middle income average (as classified by the World Bank) includes 20 countries. Full methodology at <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com>.

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| Indicator  | Score / 100 | Indicator  | Score / 100 |
|--|-------------|--|-------------|
| 1.1) Instability   | 42.5        | 2.11) Online grooming                                  | 0.0         |
| 1.2) Livelihoods   | 55.6        | 2.12) Protecting child interests                       | 0.0         |
| 1.3) Social protections  | 26.5        | 2.13) Internet protections                             | 0.0         |
| 1.4) Consumption of stimulants                                 | 86.5        | 3.1) International standards or conventions            | 70.0        |
| 1.5) Societal attitudes  | 40.7        | 3.2) National plans and policies                       | 40.0        |
| 1.6) Perceptions of violence                                   | 42.5        | 3.3) Resources for legal and enforcement professionals | 0.0         |
| 1.7) Attitudes to law enforcement                              | 31.6        | 3.4) Data collection: prevalence                       | 0.0         |
| 2.1) Contextual legal framework                                | 28.6        | 3.5) Reporting   | 50.0        |
| 2.2) Age of consent  | 100.0       | 3.6) Government and law enforcement capacity           | 0.0         |
| 2.3) Child sexual offenses                                     | 40.0        | 3.7) Complaint mechanisms                              | 0.0         |
| 2.4) Child marriage  | 75.0        | 3.8) Access to victim support programmes               | 8.0         |
| 2.5) Child-specific rape laws                                  | 100.0       | 3.9) Access to offender support programmes             | 0.0         |
| 2.6) General sex laws  | 66.7        | 4.1) Technology industry engagement                    | 0.0         |
| 2.7) Exemptions and qualifiers                                 | 62.5        | 4.2) Travel and tourism industry engagement            | 33.3        |
| 2.8) Purchasing sexual services                                | 0.0         | 4.3) Frontline support workers                         | 0.0         |
| 2.9) Procurement of minors                                     | 100.0       | 4.4) Civil society engagement                          | 40.0        |
| 2.10) Visual depiction of minors engaging in sexual activities | 80.0        | 4.5) Media industry engagement                         | 0.0         |

First quartile (75-100)    Second quartile (50-74.9)    Third quartile (25-49.9)    Fourth quartile (0-24.9)

**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 60 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/](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. 2019. Out of the shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation- a 60 country benchmarking index. Cameroon 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