

# Democratic Republic of the Congo

## 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)	903
Population (m)	84
Population under 19 (%)	51.4
Access to broadband Internet (%)	–

Source: EIU



### Brief summary

**The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has a national plan, dedicated child-specific legislation and a strong partnership with civil society organisations. However, its institutional capacity to combat sexual violence against children is in need of significant improvement.**

#### Where has progress been made?

**Laws to prevent child sexual exploitation:** The country's laws provide protections for children against trafficking and exploitation for sexual purposes, including laws that prohibit a child from participating in sexually explicit material, the purchase and sale of a child for sexual exploitation, and facilitating or mediating the trafficking of underage children and procuring children for trafficking.

**Civil society engagement:** Civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations have a strong presence in the country. These organisations—including Action Aid, Doctors without Borders and the International Committee of the Red Cross—provide medical and emergency services, therapy, legal aid and education, and raise awareness about child sexual abuse issues.

**National plan:** The 2009 "National Strategy to Fight Against Gender-Based Violence" and the National Agency to Fight Violence Against Women, Young and Little Girls both include a focus on tackling sexual violence against women and girls.

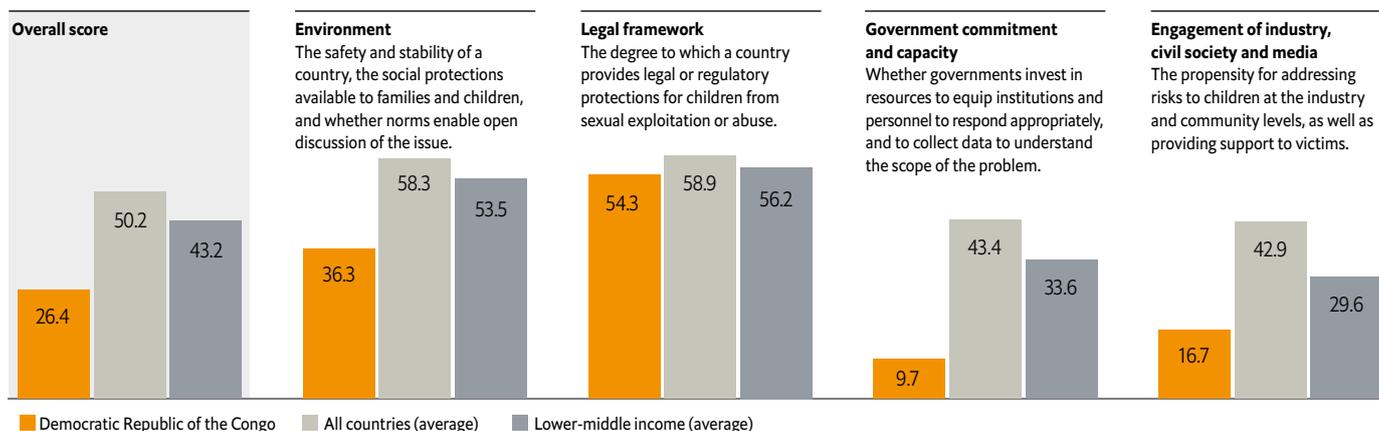
#### What more needs to be done?

**Internet protections:** There is no evidence that Internet service providers are specifically and explicitly required by law to report any suspected or detected representations of sexual abuse and exploitation.

**Reporting:** The country collects data on the number of recorded/reported sexual abuse offences against children, but this is not publicly available. Gender-disaggregated data on children or adolescents who seek institutional or professional help for sexual violence is not collected by the government.

**Frontline support workers:** The country does not provide any guidelines for responding to sexual violence against children for frontline support workers. However, Law N° 09/001 requires professionals (e.g. doctors, teachers, social workers, law enforcement officers) to report incidents of child sexual abuse to the authorities.

### 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	35.9	2.11) Online grooming	25.0
1.2) Livelihoods	34.4	2.12) Protecting child interests	0.0
1.3) Social protections	24.7	2.13) Internet protections	0.0
1.4) Consumption of stimulants	85.2	3.1) International standards or conventions	60.0
1.5) Societal attitudes	37.5	3.2) National plans and policies	10.0
1.6) Perceptions of violence	41.8	3.3) Resources for legal and enforcement professionals	0.0
1.7) Attitudes to law enforcement	29.7	3.4) Data collection: prevalence	0.0
2.1) Contextual legal framework	42.9	3.5) Reporting	0.0
2.2) Age of consent	100.0	3.6) Government and law enforcement capacity	7.1
2.3) Child sexual offenses	60.0	3.7) Complaint mechanisms	0.0
2.4) Child marriage	100.0	3.8) Access to victim support programmes	20.0
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	75.0	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	50.0	4.4) Civil society engagement	50.0
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. Democratic Republic of the Congo 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