DATA INSIGHT NO 13

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL REMEDIES FOR CHILDREN SUBJECTED TO TECH-FACILITATED SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE



DISRUPTING HARM

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In a nutshell



States have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that children subjected to tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse can access justice, effective remedies, and child-centred procedures that protect their rights, well-being and dignity throughout the justice process.



Disrupting Harm research demonstrates that governments must take further action to remove these barriers and pave the way to truly child-centred and survivor-centred justice for those subjected to (tech-facilitated) sexual exploitation and abuse.



While Disrupting Harm research identified promising laws, policies and practices, all countries studied still need to do more to consistently ensure that this right is fully upheld. Common insights were developed by conducting a narrative review of research presented in each country report. Gaps for States to address are pinpointed.



Access to justice should not depend on children having to overcome fear, stigma, procedural obstacles, or systems that fail to respond to their rights and needs. Governments must ensure that children feel safe and confident to report abuse, receive protection and support throughout proceedings, and can access effective remedies for the harm they have been subjected to.



According to the children and professionals interviewed, significant barriers remain. These include low levels of reporting, distrust in formal systems, inadequate training and harmful attitudes among justice professionals, revictimization during proceedings, insufficient protection from perpetrators, procedural delays, and limited access to legal representation, compensation and other remedies.

On average, children reported to the police in fewer than 1 per cent of cases.

DEFINING TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

The Disrupting Harm project uses the term "technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse" to refer to situations involving digital, internet and communication technologies at some point during the sexual exploitation or abuse of a child. This type of violence is sometimes referred to as "online" child sexual exploitation and abuse. However, the term "technology-facilitated" is now preferred, to convey that this violence against children does not only occur in online spaces; it can occur fully online, or through a mix of online and in-person interactions between perpetrators and children.

REPORTING CHANNELS: AVAILABLE BUT NOT ALWAYS UTILIZED

The first step towards accessing any justice system is for the offence to be reported. Across all countries surveyed, Disrupting Harm identified promising practices in the establishment of child-centred reporting mechanisms, including helplines and online portals that can receive reports and refer cases to the relevant authorities.

In addition, all jurisdictions covered by this data insight classify sexual offences against children as offences subject to public prosecution, ensuring that investigations and proceedings can be initiated without a formal complaint. Yet children surveyed in the nine countries listed in Table 1 rarely reported to the police the tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse they were subjected to in the year prior to being surveyed. On average, children reported to the police in fewer than 1 per cent of cases.

TABLE 1: PROPORTION OF CASES OF TECH-FACILITATED CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE THAT WERE REPORTED TO POLICE

	Percentage reported to the police	Number of cases of tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse (N)
Armenia	0.00%	83
Colombia	0.09%	379
Brazil	0.23%	457
Montenegro	0.23%	214
Serbia	0.56%	149
North Macedonia	1.13%	367
Dominican Republic	0.43%	427
Mexico	0.58%	232
Pakistan	0.00%	77

Basis: Cases of tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse that occurred in the year prior to the child being surveyed. N varies depending on the country.

The main barriers to reporting identified across survey and interview data collected included limited awareness of existing reporting channels, as well as limited understanding among children that what happened to them was abusive. Notably, some children surveyed did not report because they did not consider the incident "serious enough". This may reflect broader normalization and minimization of technology-facilitated forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, which are not always recognized as warranting protection or legal intervention, including by children themselves.

In addition, interviews across several countries pointed to significant distrust in police and formal reporting mechanisms. Young people and justice professionals described situations in which police officers were reluctant to register complaints or expected children to already provide strong evidence before they would initiate investigations. Such responses may reinforce children's perceptions that reporting will not lead to protection, accountability or meaningful support. Fear that justice proceedings themselves could further harm the child may discourage children and caregivers from formally reporting cases of tech-facilitated sexual exploitation or abuse:

> ***Sometimes lack of trust in the system, sometimes the idea that those procedures will last for an infinitely long time, that these procedures will be something that actually causes harm to the child, sometimes even more than the act that is reported.***
>
> **(Frontline worker, Serbia)**

Threats, coercion and fear of social consequences also emerged as significant challenges. Concerns about lack of confidentiality were repeatedly raised by young people and professionals interviewed, particularly in contexts marked by strong community stigma surrounding sexuality and abuse, fears of damage to family reputation, and social norms linked to notions of family honour:

> ***[Tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse is] common but underreported. They're not reported because families feel it will bring shame. Sometimes cases are reported and later withdrawn under pressure or due to settlements. Threats are often involved, and we are unable to pursue these cases further.***
>
> **(Frontline worker, Pakistan)**

Several interviewees further pointed out that rigid gender norms and related expectations may shape reporting patterns, with boys facing additional stigma when coming forward, as highlighted by a justice professional in North Macedonia: "There have been cases involving boys as well, but somehow, they're more ashamed to admit it. I don't know, they tend to come forward less. They report it less." In countries where homosexuality is criminalized, this may be further compounded by fears of self-incrimination, making boys even less likely to report abuse.

Considering the complex and sometimes overlapping barriers faced by children and their families, it is not surprising that it may take years to disclose childhood sexual abuse, let alone report it. In this context, it is critical to consider that most countries where the study was conducted retain statutes of limitation, i.e. establishing time limits after which proceedings can no longer be initiated for a criminal offence. The existence of such deadlines risks shielding perpetrators from accountability, as by the time some survivors feel ready to report the abuse, the legal window for prosecution may already have expired. Reflecting growing recognition that legal systems must adapt to the realities of how and when individuals disclose childhood abuse, Serbia and Mexico have abolished statutes of limitation for sexual offences against children, thereby preventing survivors from being denied access to justice solely because of delayed reporting.

DELIVERING CHILD-CENTRED JUSTICE: CHALLENGES AND PROMISING INITIATIVES

All countries have some safeguards in place aimed at protecting the rights of child victims of crime throughout criminal proceedings. However, the findings suggest that the existence of protections in law does not necessarily guarantee child-centred proceedings in practice. Across countries, interviewees described gaps in implementation. As a result, proceedings can be retraumatizing or insufficiently responsive to the rights, protection needs and psychological well-being of children, including the specific needs of those subjected to tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse.

Lack of specially trained personnel and harmful attitudes like victim blaming

Interviewees in several countries reported that cases of tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse are not always handled by adequately trained justice professionals. Some of the cases described raise concerns about the potentially limited understanding of the nature and dynamics of tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse, which may contribute to the mischaracterization or minimization of offences.

In addition, limited familiarity with child-sensitive procedures and trauma-informed approaches may result in insensitive interactions with children, as recalled by one young woman. In this case, she recalls being pressured not to cry in court so that the judge would not discredit her case:

> ***[S]he [the prosecutor] told me, 'You do not even dare to cry tomorrow, eh? No, you are not crying, I do not want to see you crying, don't you dare. Because if the judge sees you crying, she is going to suspend the hearing and that is a good thing for him.'***
>
> **(Young person, Mexico)**

Insufficient specialized training may intersect with broader harmful age-based assumptions surrounding (tech-facilitated) child sexual exploitation and abuse. Several respondents described situations in which police officers or other justice professionals minimized allegations, blamed children for what had occurred, or treated reports with scepticism.

The minimization of allegations may also reflect a broader tendency to perceive tech-facilitated forms of child sexual exploitation and abuse as less serious or harmful than offences involving direct physical contact, as noted by a frontline worker from Colombia: "(A)s officials and our judicial system say, the virtual is not real, no, those are the answers they have given us." Some professionals also explained that, in their experience supporting cases, such attitudes may be particularly pronounced in cases involving older adolescents, who can be perceived as being in less need of protection compared to younger children:

> ***If a child, for example, is more than 15 years old, … we know that the process will go wrong. That is, there will definitely be accusations in the way she is addressed [her story will be doubted], she will definitely feel bad. In cases where the child is younger, they [law enforcement officials] are very helpful, understanding and so on.***
>
> **(Frontline worker, Armenia)**

These perceptions can also shape access to justice more broadly. One frontline worker in Colombia described how some lawyers appeared reluctant to take on cases involving children who were close to adulthood because they were perceived as harder to win, suggesting that such biases may influence both legal representation and prospects for a successful outcome:

> ***[M]any [lawyers] say, 'I will take the case, but only if [the victim] is still a minor, because as a minor I can win, but if they are already of age, no, because that becomes difficult.' So imagine: if it happened to you at 17, at 18 years old nobody wants to defend you anymore.***
>
> **(Frontline worker, Colombia)**

Beyond undermining children's trust in justice processes, these responses may contribute to feelings of shame, self-blame and revictimization and may lead to children abandoning the justice process altogether. Some countries have introduced safeguards aimed at ensuring that proceedings involving child victims are handled by specialized professionals. For example, North Macedonia requires proceedings involving child victims of crime to be conducted by judges, prosecutors, and police officers with at least ten years of relevant professional experience.[1] However, such requirements alone may not be sufficient without sustained investment in continuous capacity-building efforts and adequate staffing. In contexts characterized by high caseloads and lack of human resources, justice and law enforcement professionals are often required to handle a broad range of matters, making specialization more difficult to achieve.

Limited opportunities for specialization are particularly concerning in cases involving tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse, given their evolving nature and complexity. Insufficient understanding of their nature and scope may contribute to the mischaracterization of offences, raising concerns as to whether all relevant aspects of offending are recognized and reflected in the charges brought against perpetrators:

1 North Macedonia, Law on Justice for Children, art. 172 (2024).

The recording was taken as evidence in the procedure, but it was not qualified as a separate offence for which we insisted – for creating pornography and distributing pornographic material. No such indictment was filed by the Prosecutor's Office. I don't know why.

(Justice professional, North Macedonia)

Challenges in accessing legal representation

While mechanisms for accessing free legal representation exist across all countries, interview findings and legal analysis suggest that barriers to timely and adequate access to such representation remain. For example, in Jordan, legal aid systems are designed primarily for children who are in conflict with the law. In other contexts, access to free legal aid may depend on financial eligibility assessments or formal application procedures that can themselves create barriers to access, particularly where children and their families are unaware of available mechanisms or lack the capacity to navigate administrative requirements. Such concerns were identified, for example, in North Macedonia and Pakistan.

One promising practice identified is Montenegro's 2024 legislative reform, which guarantees free legal aid for all victims of sexual offences.[2] The amendments further require public defenders involved in proceedings concerning children to have both prior legal experience and specialized training.[3] Such frameworks may help strengthen both the accessibility and quality of legal representation available to survivors, thus ensuring that their rights and interests are effectively protected throughout proceedings.

Information gaps undermine access to legal safeguards

Ensuring that children and their families receive clear information throughout justice proceedings is an important component of child-centred justice and a right for children. Beyond helping children understand the process, clear information can play a key role in enabling them to exercise their rights and benefit from support services and safeguards available to them. This requires not only that relevant information be adapted to children's evolving capacities, but also that it be communicated consistently at different stages of the proceedings. While Brazil explicitly guarantees children's right to receive this information in an age-appropriate manner,[4] not all countries have similar safeguards. Interviewees described situations in which failures to provide such information directly limited access to protections and support services, as in one case described by a frontline worker in Serbia:

She can get the status of a particularly vulnerable witness, in the sense that she doesn't have to testify more than once, but someone needs to tell her that she can get that. [S]ome information was not forwarded to the child's mother … and the girl was not treated in such a way.

(Frontline worker, Serbia)

Issues related to the handling of digital evidence

Handling of digital evidence itself may become a source of revictimization for children. Fear that intimate material would be unnecessarily viewed or mishandled by justice professionals emerged as a significant concern among young people and frontline professionals in some countries. For example, in Pakistan, professionals described instances in which such material was allegedly circulated within police networks or unnecessarily viewed by multiple individuals. This led some interviewed lawyers to limit the sharing of evidentiary material to reduce the risk of further exposure:

I consider it my responsibility that the incriminating material coming to me does not unnecessarily reach male law enforcement … If objectionable images are printed and copied, the child's identity is leaked. We need to be more victim-protective, not reckless.

(Justice professional, Pakistan)

2 Malović, Bojana, *Free Legal Aid in Montenegro: Progress, Challenges and Recommendations*, Akcija za ljudska prava – Human Rights Action (HRA), Podgorica, Montenegro, 2025, p. 5, www.hraction.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Free-legal-aid-in-Montenegro-4-7-2025.pdf.

3 Ibid., p. 6.

4 Brazil, Decree No. 9,603, art. 19 § 1 (2018).

In Mexico, one young woman in a case related to child sexual abuse material described a situation in which a justice professional's request to access the material appeared to disregard her clearly expressed discomfort and preference for the digital evidence to be reviewed by a woman instead:

> ***The prosecutor [a man] was very persistent and began to tell me in a creepy way that to proceed with the complaint, he needed to see the content, or he could not help … me. I told him: 'OK, then, … [is it] not possible for a woman [to] come and I can show it to her, and she could verify it is me', and he insisted, in [a] very persistent way.***
>
> **(Young person, Mexico)**

Findings also suggest that digital evidence may at times be minimized, dismissed, or not treated by police and justice professionals as serious enough to warrant legal action. In some cases, discussed in the interviews with professionals and young people, this appeared less linked to formal evidentiary barriers than to limited understanding of the dynamics and harms associated with tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly where exploitation and abuse occurring through digital means was perceived as less harmful or children's experiences were treated as less credible.

Lengthy proceedings

Some interviewees described justice proceedings as lengthy and emotionally exhausting for children and their families. Delays were linked to broader structural challenges, including overburdened justice systems and understaffing. Protracted proceedings may increase revictimization risks by requiring children to remain engaged with justice processes over extended periods of time, while also prolonging uncertainty regarding outcomes and contributing to families disengaging from proceedings. The impact of this prolonged uncertainty was described by one justice professional:

> ***Because she attends psychotherapy, she's doing well, but there are moments when she calls and says, 'I can't do this anymore. I know they'll be released – this is taking so long – what will happen?' She experiences the same old thoughts, gets frustrated, but then stabilizes. Still, the waiting for so many years for things to unfold really affects her a lot.***
>
> **(Frontline worker, North Macedonia)**

Several countries require proceedings involving children to be prioritized, but these often remain broad obligations rather than enforceable timelines. In this regard, Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act represents a comparatively stronger safeguard, as it requires police to complete investigations within 45 days and courts to decide cases within three months. If not, the matter must be referred to a High Court. However, interviews with justice professionals and frontline workers in Pakistan suggest that even this more robust procedural safeguard remains ineffective where adequate institutional resources are not in place to support its implementation.

Forensic interviews as a source of revictimization

Forensic interviews can carry significant risks of revictimization for children subjected to (tech-facilitated) sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly where questioning is insensitive or excessively intrusive, or where children are required to recount their experiences repeatedly to multiple professionals. These challenges were reflected in the accounts of professionals and young people alike:

> ***[T]he rule is actually the exception, and the exception is the rule, and minor victims are heard much more than they should be.***
>
> **(Justice professional, Serbia)**

> ***The Public Ministry, I feel they don't take anything serious[ly], really, they would see me cry, and cry, and cry and they didn't care. And there were (…) around 10 people [to whom] I had to tell the same story, about how it happened and this and that, to see how we could proceed; that is a lot, really a lot, of people [who] I had to tell.***
>
> **(Young person, Mexico)**

Several countries have introduced procedures to reduce these risks. This includes requiring forensic interviews to be conducted by trained professionals, limiting the number of interviews and systematically recording them for later use during proceedings. Examples of legal instruments containing such safeguards include the Protocol for Conducting Forensic Interviews with Witnesses and Victims in Situations of Vulnerability in the Dominican Republic,[5] the Protected Listening Law in Brazil[6], the Law on the Treatment of Minors in Criminal Proceedings in Montenegro and protections contained in the Criminal Procedure Codes of Armenia[7] and Colombia.[8]

Despite the existence of such safeguards, interviewees across the countries surveyed described implementation gaps, including this young person interviewed in Colombia:

> ***It was a very hard process, very hard, because, … well, I had to have many interviews and everything, then remembering each moment that … and it was a moment that I had not managed to heal that; then I felt bad [that] they asked me for many, many details of what had happened; that is, they asked for details [that were] … unnecessary and that made me feel very uncomfortable.***
>
> **(Young person, Colombia)**

Gaps in training, lack of standardized protocols, limited coordination between institutions, and resource constraints can all undermine the implementation of existing legal safeguards. One promising practice identified is the Professional Support Service in Montenegro. This multidisciplinary service assesses whether children are able or willing to testify and how. They also determine appropriate interviewing approaches, conduct interviews using audiovisual equipment, and identify needs for additional psychosocial support and referrals to ensure that interviews are more responsive to their well-being and needs.

Allowing children greater agency over how they testify may help reduce distress and support more child-centred justice processes. Relatively simple measures can include allowing children to choose who is present when they provide statements, limiting the number of people in the room to those strictly necessary and, where possible, giving children the opportunity to choose the gender of the justice professionals or police officers with whom they interact.

> ***In this specific case, I think the judge should have been a woman, at least. It is easier for a girl to talk to a woman. There is always that moment of shyness, nervousness. She was abused by a man, and then many men are gathered there, and that makes her feel psychologically depressed.***
>
> **(Justice professional, Armenia)**

Where possible, children should also be interviewed in settings adapted to their age. However, such environments are not yet systematically available across the countries included in this brief. One promising practice identified is the establishment of Safe Corners in Yerevan and Kapan, Armenia, in 2023. Based on the Barnahus model, these centres function as one-stop facilities where child-centred interviews can be conducted with the involvement of multidisciplinary teams. Brazil has also established a nationwide network of more than 1,500 dedicated special deposition rooms for children.

5 Dominican Republic Judiciary Council, Protocol for Conducting Forensic Interviews with Witnesses and Victims in Situations of Vulnerability, Dominican Republic, 2020.

6 Brazil, Law No. 13,431, art. 8 (2017).

7 Armenia, Criminal Procedure Code, art. 214 & art. 217, part 3, para. 2 (2021).

8 Colombia, Criminal Procedure Code, art. 206A (2004).

Uneven protection from perpetrators

All countries have at least some legal provisions and mechanisms aimed at protecting the safety of child victims of crime throughout justice proceedings. For example, Colombian law requires prosecutors to proactively adopt measures necessary to protect victims of crime and empowers judicial authorities to order additional protection whenever necessary.[9] Victims may also request protection directly.[10] However, interviewees in several countries described situations in which perpetrators threatened or pressured children and their families during proceedings, raising concerns about the effectiveness of existing protection frameworks. A few examples of such cases are presented below:

> ***He [the perpetrator] would say, 'Why did you file the report?' He told me, 'The day you come back, or the day you return, you won't get away with it.' He'd reminded me, 'You know what I'm capable of. You left your family behind, and you don't know what I could do to them.'***
>
> **(Young person, Mexico)**

> ***And then we had, on several occasions, situations where the perpetrator threatened her, threw stones at the girl and so on.***
>
> **(Justice professional, North Macedonia)**

> ***Because when [the perpetrator] ended up in prison, [the perpetrator] gave my number to about two people and they started sending me videos and harassing me and telling me that if I did not turn up where they were, they would kill me.***
>
> **(Young person, Dominican Republic)**

Being exposed to the alleged perpetrator during justice proceedings can understandably cause fear, distress and revictimization for children who have been abused. Several interviewees described the significant emotional toll such encounters may have on children, including heightened anxiety, fear of retaliation, difficulties providing testimony and the reactivation of traumatic experiences:

> ***Children who were exposed to abuse will more likely have to stand before the prosecutor to formally register their complaint and they will have to face the abuser, and this might cause them psychological harm or trauma.***
>
> **(Frontline worker, Jordan)**

> ***He got hysterical, he was pushing his mother, shouting 'Let's get out of here.'***
>
> **(Frontline worker recounting children's reactions during confrontations with perpetrators, Armenia)**

Several countries included safeguards aimed at preventing direct contact between children and alleged perpetrators during proceedings. In Brazil, for example, protections during the special deposition procedure extend beyond the accused themselves to any person whose presence may pose a risk of intimidation, coercion, or emotional distress to the child.[11] However, legal protections remain uneven across countries. Some jurisdictions, such as Armenia,[12] still lack explicit provisions prohibiting direct and face-to-face confrontations in court between children and alleged perpetrators altogether. In others, such as Serbia[13] or Montenegro,[14] direct confrontations may still occur under certain circumstances, sometimes depending on the child's age or at the discretion of judicial authorities.

9 Colombia, Criminal Procedure Code, art. 133 (2004); Colombia, Code for Children and Adolescents, art. 193-199 (2006).
10 Colombia, Criminal Procedure Code, art. 133 (2004).
11 Brazil, Law No. 13,431, art. 9 (2017).
12 Armenia, Criminal Procedure Code, art. 224 (2021).
13 Serbia, Law on Juvenile Criminal Offenders and Criminal Protection of Juveniles, art. 153 (2005).
14 Ibid., art. 94-2.

Barriers to financial compensation

Legal analysis indicated that children subjected to tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse may seek court-ordered compensation across all the countries where the research was conducted. Although no direct questions were asked about compensation during the interviews, most interviewed professionals did not discuss cases in which it had been pursued or awarded, which may indicate that it is not yet a well-established practice. Where professionals provided insights, they highlighted significant challenges.

For instance, in Armenia, professionals described compensation mechanisms as not being widely used due to procedural complexities and lack of awareness. The only reference to children subjected to tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse receiving compensation is from a justice professional in Mexico, who, however, indicates that the amounts awarded can be insufficient to cover the costs incurred by families throughout the process. This can result in feelings of injustice and disappointment.

> ***The reparation plan is a very symbolic economic issue, nothing more. For example, if the girl was receiving psychological support, then at least the payment of her therapy. In this case five thousand pesos [US$296 in September 2026] were given, which is very symbolic, right?***
>
> **(Justice professional, Mexico)**

Ensuring that children and their families receive clear information throughout justice proceedings is an important component of child-centred justice.

In most jurisdictions, compensation may be awarded within the criminal procedure, without requiring a separate civil suit. However, the availability of this avenue does not guarantee its use in practice; in North Macedonia, for example, justice professionals explained how in some cases judges directed survivors towards separate, potentially lengthy civil proceedings, undermining the swift access to compensation that this mechanism is intended to secure:

> ***I keep seeing this inconsistent practice. Even when there is expert testimony and a clear request for damages during a criminal trial, victims are denied compensation. … [The courts] say: 'Just file a civil lawsuit. Sue [the accused] separately.' As if [the child] can now spend another three years in civil court, facing [the accused] and [their] lawyer.***
>
> **(Justice professional, North Macedonia)**

The reliance on courts as the primary pathway to compensation may itself create barriers to recovery, as it means that children have to wait until the conclusion of the proceedings before receiving any financial redress. A best practice is to set up an accessible, government-run compensation fund for victims of crime, through which payments can be made quickly. Such funds have been established in Mexico,[15] Colombia[16] and North Macedonia,[17] although in the latter country compensation for cases of tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse would likely be capped at EUR 2,500.[18] Interview data did not allow for an assessment of the extent to which survivors are able to access such funds in practice.

15 Mexico, General Law of Victims (latest amendment published on April 1, 2024), art. 67 & 68 (2013).

16 Ibid., art. 99.

17 North Macedonia, Law on State Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes, art. 9 (2022).

18 North Macedonia, Law on State Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes, art. 16 & 20 (2022). The Law establishes several categories of compensation for victims of violent crime. Children subjected to tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse would likely be eligible only for compensation for medical treatment expenses (up to EUR 2,000) and solidarity assistance (up to EUR 500), depending on the circumstances of the case.

CONCLUSIONS



The Disrupting Harm research identified a range of promising legislative approaches and practical measures that may help children feel safer and more confident to report tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse, strengthen the capacity of justice systems to uphold their rights throughout proceedings, and support access to accountability and reparations. However, the findings also demonstrate that legislative reform alone is insufficient without sustained efforts to ensure effective implementation, adequate resourcing and the consistent application of child-centred practices in reality.



Disrupting Harm also provides unique insight into these challenges through the experiences and perspectives of young people and professionals themselves. Each country report further identifies a set of actionable, country-specific recommendations intended to support policymakers and practitioners in strengthening child-centred justice responses to tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse.

ABOUT THE *DATA INSIGHTS* SERIES FROM DISRUPTING HARM

Disrupting Harm is a research project conceived and funded by Safe Online. The project and its research methodology is designed and implemented by ECPAT International, INTERPOL and UNICEF Office of Strategy and Evidence – Innocenti (UNICEF Innocenti). This research generates national evidence on tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse.

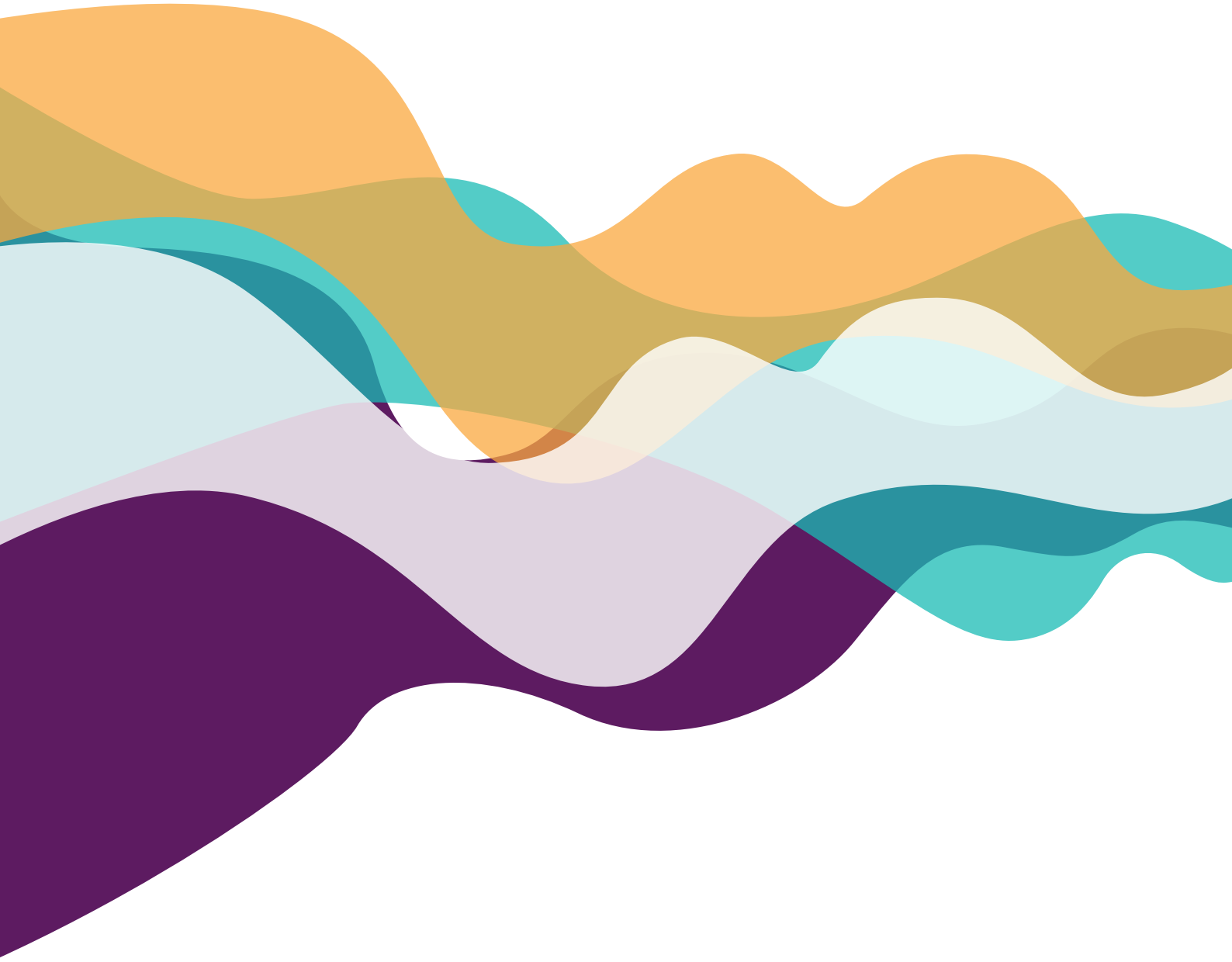
This publication is part of a series of thematic briefs that explores pressing issues emerging from the research and recommends ways for key entities and individuals to improve prevention and response. Evidence about tech-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse was collected in 13 countries between 2019 and 2022: seven in Eastern and Southern Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania) and six in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Viet Nam).

In 2024 and 2025, data was collected in an additional 12 countries: Armenia, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Jordan, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Serbia, and Tunisia.

Since 2019, the Disrupting Harm project, together with national partners and researchers – have conducted surveys and interviews with more than 25,000 children and young people, including those who have been subjected to tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, over 25,000 caregivers were surveyed and around 540professionals with child protection mandates interviewed. More detailed information about the Disrupting Harm research methods can be found here.

This specific brief on access to child-centred justice and legal remedies for children subjected to technology-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse covers only the countries part of the second round of studies. The related data insight for the first set of countries can be found here.

Data collected by ECPAT, INTERPOL and UNICEF Innocenti since 2019 are used as the basis for the Disrupting Harm Data Insights series. Authorship is attributed to the organization(s) that produced each brief. While the Disrupting Harm project is a close collaboration between ECPAT, INTERPOL and UNICEF, the findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the three organizations ECPAT, INTERPOL and UNICEF, individually or as a collaborative group.



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