



IJM CASEWORK SERIES

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

**Sexual violence affects millions around the world, and children in poor countries are some of the most vulnerable.**

They are at risk in their homes, schools and in their communities. But, with no money for a lawyer, it's harder for impoverished children and their families to get justice.

In many places, there is no meaningful justice system response to sexual violence against children. Police are often untrained on investigations, and courts don't protect children during the intense trial process. As a result, rapists know they can target children without fear of the law.

## OUR IMPACT AROUND THE WORLD



**781**

Children restored to safety and strength through IJM's aftercare program and partners since 2013



**742**

Child abusers and rapists convicted globally with IJM's help since 2001



**860**

Children relieved from sexual assault since 1997, working alongside local authorities

## QUICK FACTS



Nearly **1 in 5 girls** is sexually abused at least once in her life.<sup>1</sup>

**Worldwide, up to 50%** of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16 years old.<sup>2</sup>

Sexual violence, particularly during childhood, can lead to **increased drug or alcohol misuse** later in life.<sup>3</sup>



## GUATEMALA JUSTICE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE STUDY, 2013

Justice is out of reach for the vast majority of sexual assault victims in Guatemala. IJM's comprehensive review of reports of sexual violence made to Guatemalan authorities between 2008 and 2012 found that **94.1% had not reached a verdict.**



“My dream would be that so much violence would end, so much inequity, so much injustice...”

– Griselda, defended after a terrifying sexual assault in Guatemala

## Meet Griselda\*

**OUT OF NOWHERE**, three men grabbed 13-year-old Griselda off the street, held her at gunpoint and violently assaulted her. Police found her just in time, but the terrifying assault left her paralyzed with fear for months. She avoided all men, and her family was devastated by the pain she was facing. “I felt very lonely,” she remembers, “dare I say it—filthy, guilty for what happened to me.”

Many families in Guatemala do not report sexual assaults because they fear retaliation from the perpetrator. But Griselda’s parents knew they had to try to get justice. “Otherwise,” her mother said, “there will be more little girls who will be harmed.”

Griselda’s family came to IJM for help. Our lawyers built a strong legal case, and social workers helped Griselda overcome her fear and shame. Her mother says tearfully, “IJM stood with us in every moment. We were never alone.” With Griselda’s brave testimony in court, all three men were eventually found guilty.

Today Griselda is a strong and hopeful young woman, a living testimony that justice really is possible. Watch her story at <https://youtu.be/G-erpm4bUgw>.

### WHERE WE WORK: SEXUAL VIOLENCE



#### AFRICA

Nairobi, Kenya  
Fort Portal, Uganda



#### LATIN AMERICA

Guatemala City, Guatemala  
La Paz, Bolivia

### JUSTICE SYSTEM STRENGTHENING *Bolivia*

In 2018, IJM launched a Justice System Strengthening Program training a total of 63 Community Volunteers who are now equipped to provide accompaniment to survivors and their families.

### JOIN US

Help us prove justice for the poor is possible. Join us at [IJM.org/](https://www.ijm.org/)  
[Get-Involved](#)



#### LEARN MORE: [IJM.ORG](https://www.ijm.org/)

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**INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION** is a global organization that protects the poor from violence throughout the developing world. IJM partners with local authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems.

\*A pseudonym. All text and images © 2019 International Justice Mission