

Prosecution of Sexual Violence and Child Abuse cases in the Western Area



Situation Report

January to June 2018

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SitRep date : October 2018

Activity: Monitor ,collect data and report on the situation of prosecution of Sexual Violence and Child abuse cases in the Western Area

Inside this issue:		
The situation	2	The purpose of this Sitrep is to provide specialized information to our targeted audience on the situation of prosecution of Sexual Violence and abuse cases
The action	2	Our audience benefitting from this information includes Staff of the Girls Advocacy Alliance, Plan International Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leone Police, Civil Society Organizations, YACAN-SL, parents, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs, Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, project communities, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and the general public
The actions to be completed	2	
The issues	3	
The significant achievements	4	This SitRep will now be published starting 2018 at least half yearly and our audience should look forward to receiving it as a consistent source of information relating to the situation of prosecution of Sexual Violence and abuse cases in the Western Urban and Rural area.
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1. "Perhaps we cannot prevent our community from being a community in which girls and young women are abused and tortured on a daily basis of their lives, but we as stakeholders will use the existing bye laws and the national laws to name and shame perpetrators in order to reduce the incidence of abuse and torture on girls and young women" – Chief Dwarzack Community -Chief Dwarzack Community

2. "If you ever think we are too small to talk about sensitive issues that pertain our protection and development, then we will continue to suffer in silent in the hands of those we expect to protect us from abuse"
Anderson, GAA School Club Member

Meaningful and inspiring quotes from people impacted by the GAA Project:

Sexual violence and Child abuse at a glance

Background

Sexual violence against children in our communities the world over is a gross violation of the children's rights. It has become a universal reality across all countries and social groups. Sexual violence takes the form of sexual abuse, sexual penetration, harassment, rape or sexual exploitation in prostitution or pornography. Usual places it occurs are homes, our communities, institutions, schools, workplaces, in travel and hotel facilities and within communities. Today with the advent of internet and mobile phone technology, children are put at the risk of sexual violence as some adults look to the internet to pursue sexual relationships with them. There is also an increase in the number and circulation of images of child abuse. Children themselves also send each other sexualized messages or images on their mobile phones, so called 'sexting', which puts them at risk for other abuse.

In Sierra Leone, women and girls are subjected to structural discrimination by practice, custom and law. Both customary law, which governs the majority of the population, and general law, which was inherited from the United Kingdom and is primarily applied in Freetown, discriminate against women and girls in terms of family law, as well as property and inheritance rights. In addition, the provisions pertaining to rape under general and customary law offer inadequate protection. The misinterpretation of the complicated provisions of general law by the police and courts means, for example, that those who are alleged to have sexually assaulted a minor are generally charged with "unlawful carnal knowledge of a child," for which the sentence is lighter, rather than rape.

"Evidence shows that sexual violence can have serious short- and long-term physical, psychological and social consequences not only for girls or boys, but also for their families and communities. This includes increased risks for illness, unwanted pregnancy, psychological distress, stigma, discrimination and difficulties at school " (UNICEF 2018)

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The Situation: [What has happened?]

A. Broad Spectrum

- 15 police stations and 1 Police post were involved in data collection on the situation of sexual offence and child abuses
- 162 sexual offences reported
- 45 child abuse cases were reported
- 154 sexual penetration involving girls
- 137 prosecutions trending at the court

B. Specific Cases

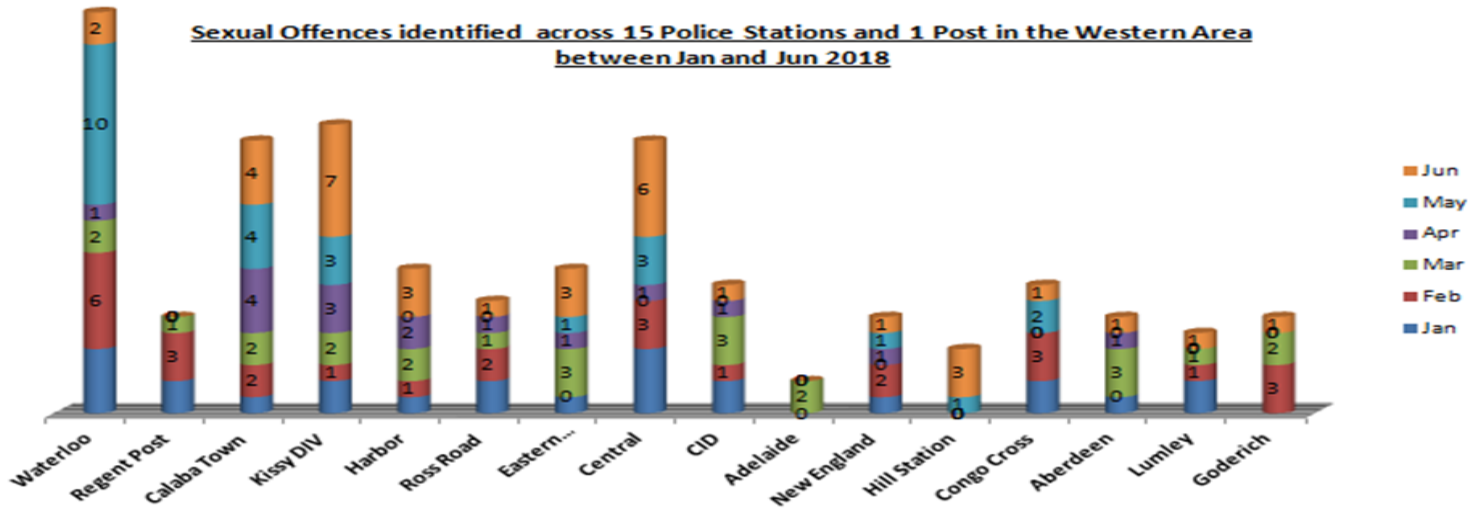
We collected data and reporting on:

1. Sexual Offences

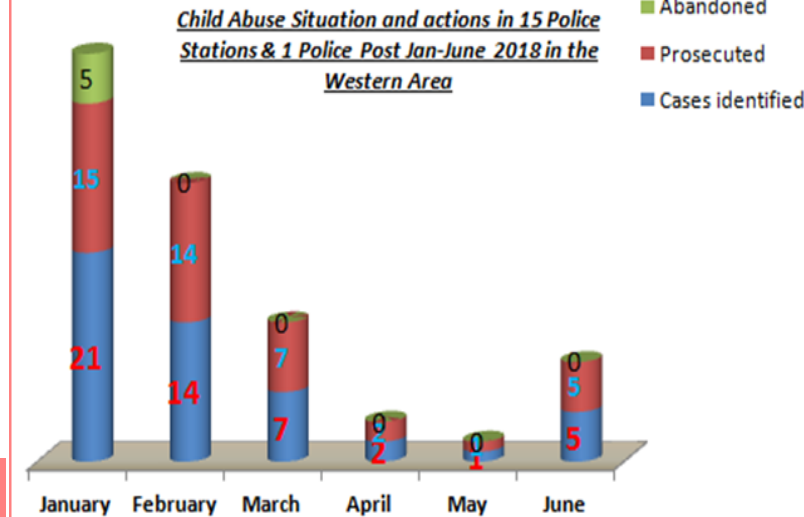
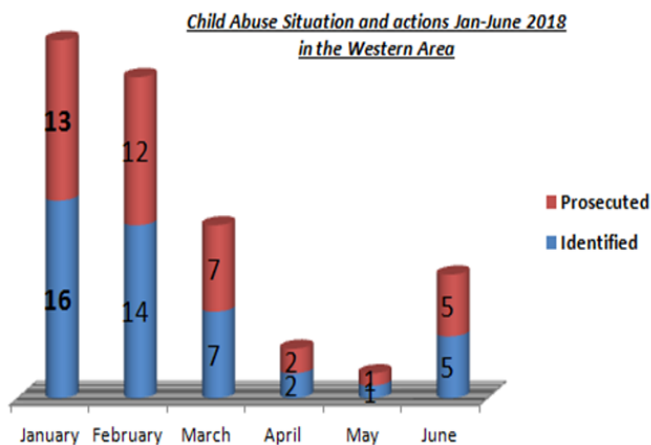
- 2 cases of girls raped
- 8 cases of young women raped
- 5 peer-to-peer sexual penetration
- 10 sexual penetration of girls aged 0-12 years
- 77 sexual penetration of girls aged 13-18 years
- 39 caregivers involved in sexual penetration of girls
- 16 family members involved in sexual penetration of girls

2. Child Abuses

- 8 cases of Cruelty
- 16 cases of Domestic Violence
- 0 cases of Early Marriage
- 7 cases of Harboring
- 11 cases of Child Trafficking
- 4 cases of Abandonment



The Action: [What has been done on the sexual offences and child abuses?]



The Issues: [What are the issues while carrying out this activity?]

The issues highlighted during this period are as follows:

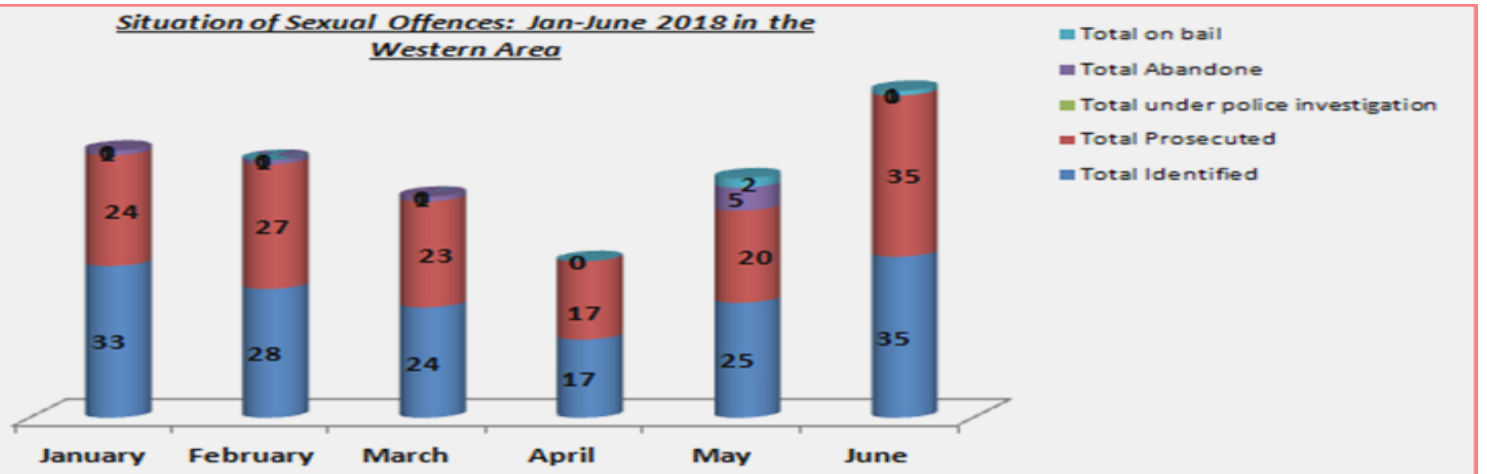
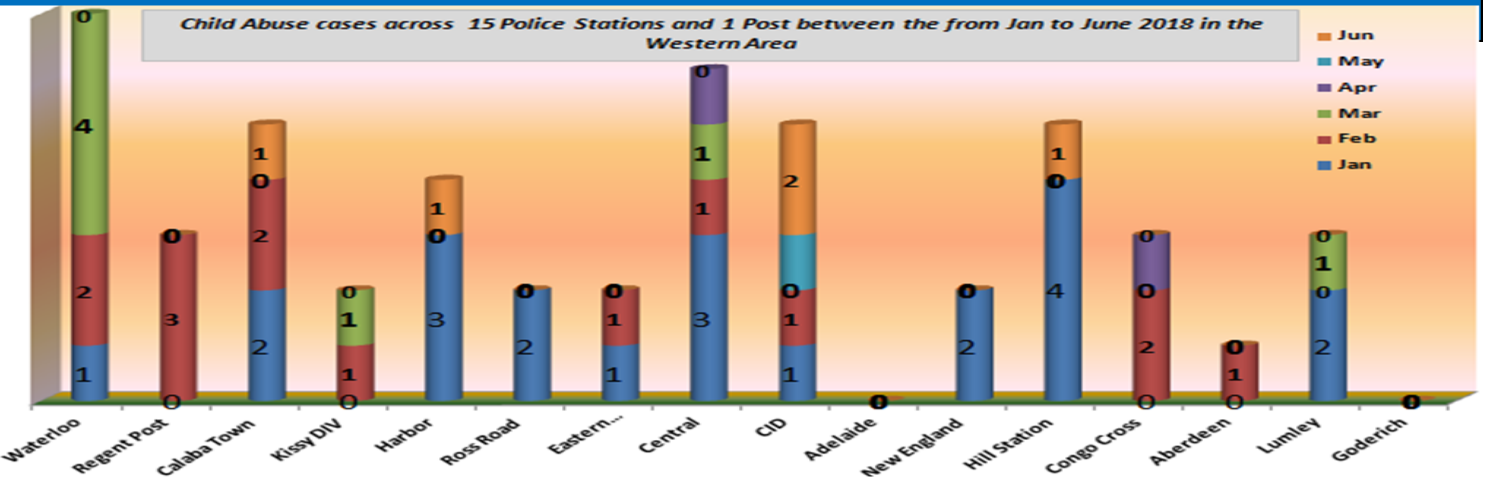
- Family members of perpetrators increase pressure of family support unit (FSU) to compromise justice
- Teenagers are reported as offenders of sexual penetration
- Children are abused by some caregivers who should be protecting them
- Inadequate medical facilities available .
- Delay in sending files and review by Legal 1 for Police review action.
- discrepancy with of victims
- Limited or non holding centres/ remand for juveniles (sometimes resulting in escape of suspects from custody)

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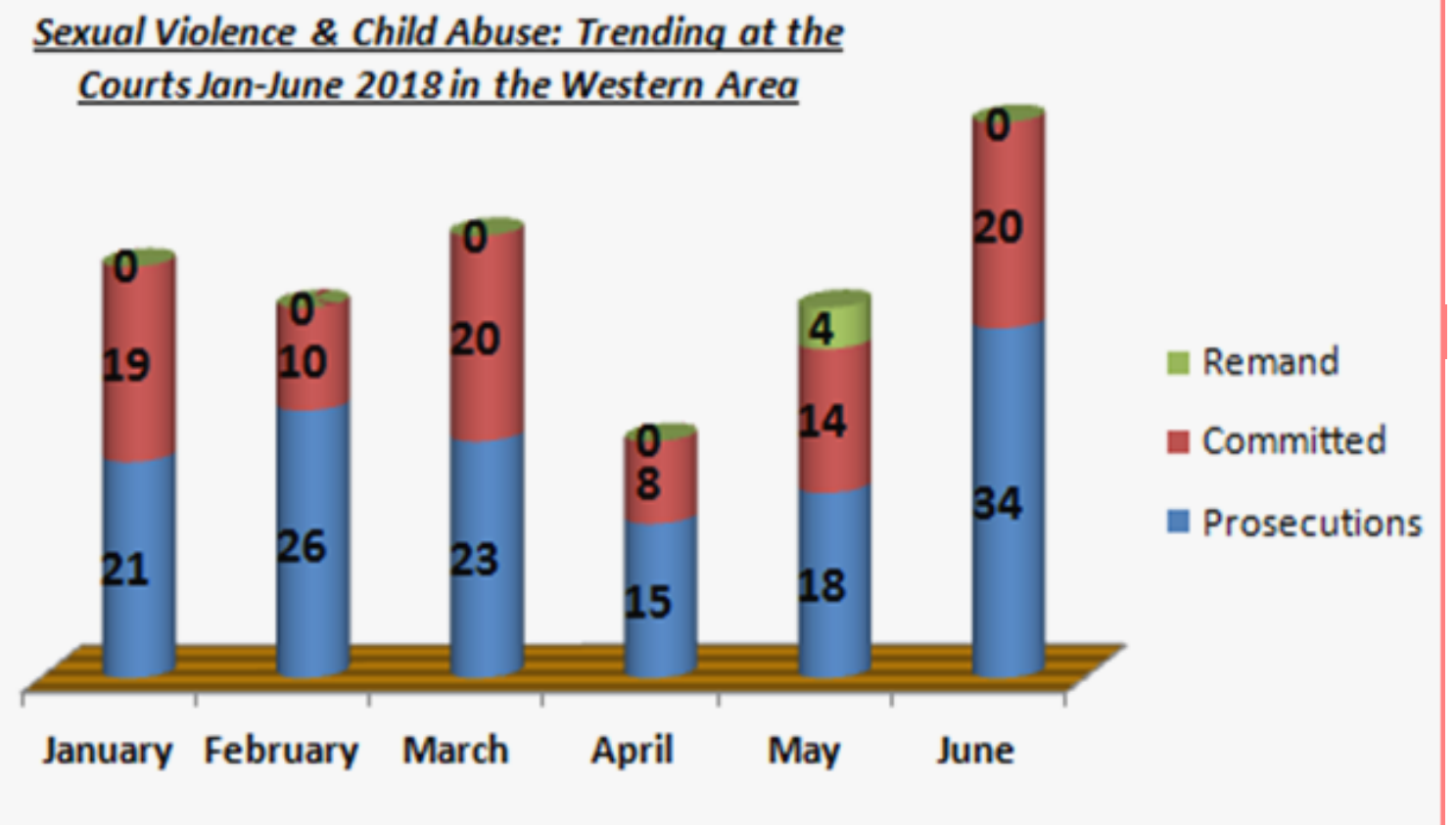
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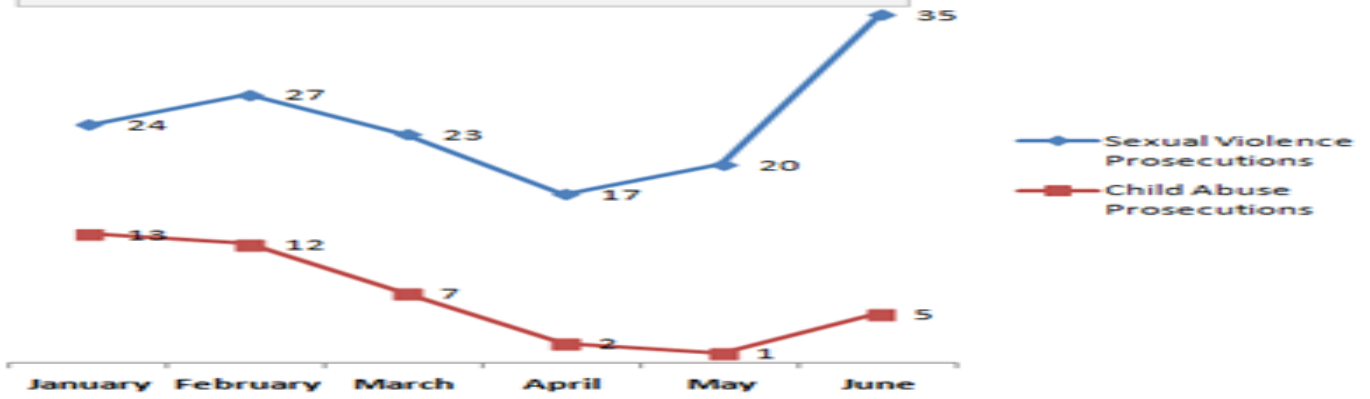
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The Issues: [What is proposed or will be done?]



Comparative trend in Sexual offences and child abuses over the period Jan-Jun 2018



Significant achievements and challenges

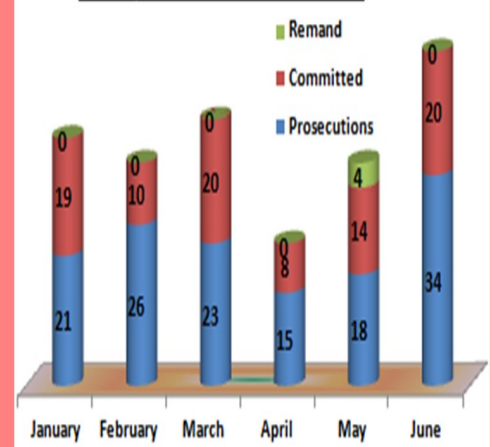
Significant achievements

- Improved access to court data and information
- Increased corporation from the police stations
- Rainbow Centre increased availability of medical report on child abuse cases
- Girls are now making report relating to domestic violence and other related cases
- Children themselves are now making report of abuses
- Increase support from FSU through access to centralized data
- Established relationship with FSU central database unit to access required data on the subject.

Challenges

- Difficulty in obtaining data from the court
- Absence of birthday certificate of victims
- Limited access to girls who are out of YACAN Project area
- Compromise emanating from either the communities or family members themselves
- Obtaining data from the police stations

Trending at the courts - Jan to June 2018



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