



# Access to Justice for Girls and Young Women

Research Report

# Introduction

Across the world, girls and young women continue to face unique and often invisible challenges when they come into contact with justice systems. While international law and standards affirm their right to be treated with dignity, fairness and equality, the lived reality often tells a different story. In many contexts, girls are criminalized for behaviours that would not be considered crimes if committed by adults, such as running away, being disobedient or violating morality-based laws. Once within the justice system, they are at heightened risk of violence, discrimination and neglect, with very few programs tailored to their specific needs or designed to support their reintegration.

Understanding this reality requires asking critical questions. One central concern is whether governments are collecting and publishing reliable data on the number of girls in detention or in conflict with the law, or whether they remain statistically invisible. Another is whether national laws explicitly take into account the gendered realities of children, for example by ensuring that sentencing, diversion or protection measures are adapted to the needs of girls. Beyond the law, it is essential to ask whether justice institutions such as police, courts and detention centres apply gender-sensitive rules and training, or whether girls continue to face bias and unsafe conditions. Evidence from many contexts shows that violence, harassment and discriminatory treatment are common risks for girls deprived of liberty. Equally urgent is the question of what happens after their release. Do reintegration programs exist that genuinely support their education, livelihoods and well-being, or are girls left without pathways to rebuild their lives?

These questions point to the persistent gap between commitments made at the international level and the realities experienced by girls on the ground. By examining them across countries as diverse as Belgium, Benin, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom, this document seeks to highlight patterns, expose shortcomings and inspire reforms that make justice systems more responsive to girls.

It is precisely in this spirit that the International Centre for Justice Alliances was created during the Fifth World Congress on Justice with Children, a process that engaged more than six thousand people worldwide. The Congress highlighted the urgent need to move beyond dialogue and to build enduring alliances that amplify a shared political message while supporting actors at the local level. Inspired by this vision, the Centre has taken up the challenge of addressing pressing issues where justice systems fall short. The situation of girls and young women is one such issue, where coordinated expertise and collective advocacy are essential.

With the pro bono support of Baker McKenzie, *Access to Justice for Girls and Young Women* offers an initial mapping of practices and gaps. By shedding light on how different jurisdictions are treating girls in conflict with the law, the report aims to advance global conversations and strengthen local actions towards truly child-centred and gender-sensitive justice.

This document is not intended as a final report but rather as a living resource. It was developed through the voluntary engagement of colleagues from L'Oréal, working alongside Baker McKenzie during a collaborative sprint session. The research presented here represents a first step towards building stronger, data-based knowledge on the situation of girls and young women in justice systems. By initiating this process, the International Centre for Justice Alliances hopes to encourage further contributions, deepen the evidence base and strengthen collective efforts towards child-centred and gender-sensitive justice.

# Table of contents

Belgium .....	2
Benin .....	5
Cameroon.....	9
Canada.....	12
Colombia .....	18
France .....	22
Germany.....	26
Netherlands .....	32
New Zealand .....	36
South Africa.....	40
Switzerland.....	43
Turkey .....	46
United Arab Emirates .....	51
United Kingdom.....	54



# Belgium

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

Yes, while UNICEF statistics primarily focus on children generally, rather than gender, data from Belgian authorities (i.e., Belgian Federal Public Service and Belgian Ministry of Justice) provide more specific information on girls involved in FQI (facts qualified as an offense) and MD (minors in danger) cases in 2023 and prior. For instance, the ratio of boys to girls in FQI cases in 2023 was 77/23. This means 23% of FQI cases involved girls, which is an increase from previous years (19% in 2022 and 21% in 2014). The specific number of FQI cases involving girls rose from 12,369 in 2022 to 15,285 in 2023.

Source: [Ministère public | Service public fédéral Justices](#)

[Justice for children - UNICEF DATA](#)

2. Does the law in explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

The law does not explicitly consider gender in child justice procedure or sentencing, it does not make distinction based on gender for minors. The only time it mentions specifically female is in article 409 of the criminal code regarding female genital mutilation given the nature of the acts themselves.

Source: art. 409 Belgium Criminal Code

URL: [Banque de données Justel](#)

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

In Belgium, existing regulations do not establish measures specifically dedicated to underage girls

who have committed offenses (see Decree of 15 February 2019).

The measures applied, whether outpatient educational measures or placement in an institution, are the same for girls and boys. The approach is individualized and based on the specific needs of each young person, taking into account their personal, family and social situation, as well as the nature of the offence committed.

The Public Institutions for Youth Protection (IPPJ) exclusively accommodate, in open and/or closed regimes, young people prosecuted for acts classified as offenses, aged at least 14 years, or from 12 years in exceptional circumstances. In Brussels and Wallonia (the French Community), there are 5 IPPJs for boys and 1 for girls.

The IPPJs pursue a goal of social reintegration for the young people entrusted to them, addressing recognized needs particularly in the area of juvenile delinquency and adopting an educational and restorative approach.

[CFL LEG 3 décret mineur délinquant flamande version avr 19](#)).

[IPPJ – Portail de l'aide à la jeunesse en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles](#)

[IPPJ - Institution Publique de Protection de la Jeunesse -](#)

4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

In Belgium, child justice institutions—including courts, police, and detention centers—seem to incorporate some gender-sensitive protocols within their broader child-friendly and rights-based approaches, though these are often practical adaptations rather than fully developed, formalized gender-specific protocols across all institutions. Here's a breakdown by institution:

1. Mara Ghiroghies
  - Child-friendly and gender-sensitive policing is encouraged through training and internal guidelines.

- Special youth police officers are often trained to handle child cases with sensitivity to trauma, gender, and vulnerability.
- In cases involving gender-based violence, girls may be treated with additional care, and female officers are often assigned to interviews where appropriate.
- However, there is no national standardized gender-sensitive protocol specifically for children; application can vary by region or police zone (Law of 8 April 1965 updated on 1st July 2024 regarding protection of minors having committed an act qualified as an offence and to compensation for the damage caused by this act).

## 2. Courts (Juvenile Justice System)

- The juvenile court system prioritizes individualized justice, which allows judges to consider gender-specific needs.
- Court proceedings aim to be non-intimidating and child-appropriate, and gender-sensitive considerations (e.g., trauma-informed care, sexual exploitation risks) may be integrated, especially in protective rather than punitive cases.
- Some courts apply informal gender-sensitive practices, but there is no unified national framework requiring gender-sensitive approaches systematically.

## 3. Detention Centers and Youth Institutions (e.g., Fédérations Wallonie-Bruxelles and Agentschap Opgroeien in Flanders)

- Detention centers are typically segregated by gender, and efforts are made to adapt programming to gender-specific needs (e.g., psychological support for girls with histories of abuse).
- Institutions often follow the “child-friendly justice” guidelines by the Council of Europe, which indirectly support gender-sensitive practices.
- Some institutions have specific protocols or care plans for girls, especially around issues like self-harm, pregnancy, or sexual abuse—but again, standardization is limited and often depends on the center.

URL: [Justel databank](#)

## 5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or

## discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

Based on our preliminary search, such documents exist at the European level, but not at the country-specific level (i.e., for Belgium). For instance, the document “Criminal Detention in the EU: Conditions and Monitoring” does not explicitly isolate data on girls but offers relevant insights regarding discrimination against women in detention, i.e., hygiene and sanitary conditions, healthcare and special measures for female detainees.

**Source:** (1). “Criminal Detention in the EU: Conditions and Monitoring,” authored by Tom Daems of the Leuven Institute of Criminology (LINC), KU Leuven, dated April 2024. It was commissioned by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), [belgium-criminal-detention-2024-country-study\\_en.pdf](#).

(2). “Integrating the Issue of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Detention Monitoring” published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in 2021, [476676.pdf](#).

## 6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

There is no specific “status offenses” or morality-based laws criminalizing girls or minors in general in Belgium.

[Accueil - Portail officiel de l'aide à la jeunesse en fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles](#)

## 7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

Given the limited number of women incarcerated in Belgium (500 over 11,000) there are only few specific programs dedicated to women reintegration. Most of them are driven by private associations often seeking for donations:

- Several cities in Belgium have “transition” / halfway houses to support the rehabilitation of people who were just released from jail. It’s worth noting there are few specific initiatives for women. For example, La Maison Bambou is a community-based alternative for women leaving prison or prostitution. Supported by the Brussels-Capital Region’s Commission Communautaire Commune, it offers temporary accommodation and personalized support to help women reintegrate society. [La « maison Bambou » une alternative communautaire pour femmes, à la sortie de prison](#)
- Freedom is a dedicated platform created in the Brussels region providing access to psychological support to help the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners. That said, this initiative isn’t specifically made for women. [FREEDOM | Plateforme Bruxelloise pour la Santé mentale](#)

#### 8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

Yes, at the European level, the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) offers courses. The EJTN is the principal platform and promoter for the training and exchange of knowledge of the European judiciary. For instance, they have an online course named “Victim’s Rights in the EU in practice: violence against women and children sexual abuse” in 2025, focusing on vulnerable victims who require targeted and integrated support and protection.

At the country-specific level (for Belgium particularly), there is a national action plan to combat gender-based violence where training courses will be created for professionals in

contact with people who have experienced gender-based violence (both adults and children).

Source: [Seminars and webinars - EJTN](#)

[Belgium adopts a national action plan to combat gender-based violence – Pour la Solidarité](#)

#### 9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

Our searches did not enable to confirm with official sources / data that girls are more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns. As an example (see below), many websites / studies report statistics on children/women but do not clearly identify whether young girls in Belgium are concerned.

[Child trafficking in Belgium claims around hundred victims per year - United Nations Western Europe](#)

#### 10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Multiple NGO and groups are active in Belgium and working on children and youth rights protection, such as the Defence for Children International - Belgium, the Flemish Child Rights Coalition (Kinderrechtencoalitie), and the French-speaking counterpart Plateforme des Droits de l’Enfant.

[DCI-Belgium - Defence for Children](#)

[Home - Kinderrechtencoalitie Vlaanderen](#)

These organizations are working on children’s rights including the rights of girls.

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# Benin

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

Yes:

A [study](#) conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance in 2017 provides detailed information on the situation of children and women in detention. The report highlights the profiles of minors in civil prisons, including gender-specific data. Source: [Etude sur la Situation des Enfants et des Femmes en Milieu Carceral au Benin](#)

A [booklet](#) published in 2022 by the National Institute of Statistics and Demography includes information on gender-based breakdowns in the detention and justice systems between 2015 and 2020. Source: [Livret sur les Indicateurs de Genre au Benin](#)

2. Does the law in explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

Benin has enacted laws related to child justice and protection, though explicit gender considerations in sentencing or procedures are not always clearly outlined. Benin's approach is generally gender-neutral in its legal texts, focusing on the best interests of the child regardless of gender.

Here are some key legal frameworks:

- **Code for the Rights of the Child:** While it does not explicitly outline gender-specific procedures or sentencing, this Code emphasizes the principle of non-discrimination and the best interests of the child, which should ideally ensure equal treatment for both boys and girls. Source: [Committee on the Rights of the Child considers the report of Benin | OHCHR](#)
- **Juvenile Justice Policies:** Benin has been working on strengthening juvenile justice, including policies aimed at protecting minors

in legal proceedings. Source: [MINISTÈRE DE LA JUSTICE ET DE LA LÉGISLATION: LE BÉNIN BIENTÔT DOTÉ D'UNE POLITIQUE PÉNALE DES MINEURS | Ministère de la Justice et de la Législation](#)

- **Criminal Code:** While the criminal code addresses various offenses, specific gender-based considerations in child justice procedures are not prominently highlighted. There are concerns about the implementation of these laws, particularly regarding harmful practices affecting girls, such as early marriage and female genital mutilation. Source: [Committee on the Rights of the Child considers the report of Benin | OHCHR](#)

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

In Benin, there are some initiatives and measures to promote alternatives to detention, though they do not seem to be aimed at women and girls in particular.

Organizations like Changement Social Bénin (CSB) advocate for the use of alternative measures to detention, such as community service or probation, particularly for minor offenses. This organization has published a [national study report](#) on the context for the application of alternatives to pretrial detention in 2022, though this report does not focus on gender-based initiatives.

4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

Most of the guidelines and frameworks mentioned by child justice institutions, such as those from the Council of Europe, OECD, and UNICEF, are designed to ensure child-friendly justice systems for all children. While they emphasize inclusivity and gender sensitivity, they do not focus exclusively on girls. Their aim is to adapt justice

systems to the specific needs of children in general, including both boys and girls, and ensure age-appropriate, accessible, and rights-respecting processes.

1. The Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice emphasize adapting justice systems to the specific needs of children, including gender-sensitive approaches. Source: [Child-friendly justice - Children's Rights](#)
2. The OECD Child-Friendly Justice Framework provides guidance on designing justice services that are accessible, age-appropriate, and focused on the needs of children, including gender-specific considerations. Source: [OECD Child-Friendly Justice Framework | OECD](#)
3. UNICEF's report on Children Deprived of Liberty highlights the importance of gender-sensitive measures in detention and rehabilitation processes.
5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

There are reports documenting gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls in Benin. There are also reports about the prison conditions, arrest procedures and treatment of detainees in Benin. However, specific documentation on gender-based violence during detention or arrest is limited / nonexistent.

The U.S. Department of State's 2022 Human Rights Report on Benin highlights concerns about gender-based violence, including domestic and sexual violence. Source: [BENIN 2022 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT / Benin - United States Department of State](#).

Additionally, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has expressed concerns about the high prevalence of gender-based violence in Benin. Source: [UN women's rights committee publishes findings on Benin, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Japan, Lao, New Zealand and Saudi Arabia | OHCHR](#).

6. Are girls criminalized for "status offenses" or morality-based laws (e.g.,

running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

We have not found indications that girls can be criminalized for status offenses in Benin.

7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

Yes, Benin has several national policies and programs aimed at supporting the reintegration of girls after their involvement in the justice system.

These initiatives focus on reentry programs, vocational training, and psychological support:

**Reentry Programs:** The Beninese government, with support from international organizations, has implemented reentry programs that provide comprehensive support to girls reentering society. These programs often include crisis stabilization and community reentry services, addressing the unique needs of youth and young adults with behavioral health issues. Source: [Supporting Crisis Stabilization for Youth and Young Adults during Reentry - CSG Justice Center](#)

**Vocational Training:** There are vocational training programs specifically designed for girls and young women in Benin. For example, the "Foyer Abèni" center in Djougou offers training in tailoring and other skills, helping young women to become self-sufficient and independent. Source: [Vocational Training and Education for Strong Women - help alliance](#)

**Psychological Support Initiatives:** Psychological support is a critical component of reintegration programs. Initiatives like the USAID's EMPOWER II project provide comprehensive care for victims of gender-based violence, including medical, psychosocial, and justice services. Source: [Ending Gender-Based Violence Key to Women's Empowerment in Benin](#)

8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice?

(Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

There is limited information on academy curricula or bar association activities specifically focused on gender and child justice. However, searches identified several initiatives providing gender-sensitive training for justice professionals working in child justice.

- The École de Formation des Professions Judiciaires (EFPJ), under the Ministry of Justice, offers initial and continuous training for magistrates and judicial personnel. While details on gender-sensitive approaches are not widely available, the institution does train professionals in child protection and juvenile justice. Source: [Ecole de Formation des Professions Judiciaires | Ministère de la Justice et de la Législation](#)
- The Ministry of Justice and Legislation validated a juvenile justice report with input from juvenile judges, judicial police officers (OPJ), and women lawyers that outlines recommendations for gender-sensitive legal treatment of minors. Source: [PROTECTION ET PROMOTION DES DROITS DE L'ENFANT: LE RAPPORT DE LA JUSTICE POUR MINEURS ANNÉE 2020 et 2021 VALIDÉ | Ministère de la Justice et de la Législation](#)
- The International Association of Women Judges (AIFJ-Benin) has conducted specialized workshops for OPJ, prosecutors, and social workers on gender-sensitive legal approaches, particularly focusing on Law No. 2022-11, which addresses gender-based offenses and women's protection. Source: [RÉPRESSION DES INFRACTIONS COMMISES À RAISON DU SEXE DES PERSONNES AU BÉNIN: L'AIFJ-BÉNIN RENFORCE LES CAPACITÉS DES OPJ, DES PROCUREURS ET DES ASSISTANTS SOCIAUX | Ministère de la Justice et de la Législation](#)
- Specific police academy curricula on gender-sensitive child justice were not found.
- No direct evidence of the Benin Bar Association conducting formal gender-sensitive child justice training was found. However, advocacy groups like Social Watch Benin conduct awareness campaigns, legal training, and policy advocacy on gender equality in legal frameworks, which indirectly

impacts child justice. Source: [Équité et genre | Social Watch Bénin](#)

## 9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

Yes, in Benin girls are more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns, such as trafficking, abuse or exploitation.

Reports indicate that gender-based violence, including trafficking and abuse, remains a significant issue in the region. Many girls face vulnerabilities stemming from poverty, lack of education, and societal norms, which can lead to their involvement in the justice system as victims rather than offenders.

Several reports highlight the victimization and pathways into the justice system for girls in Benin, particularly concerning trafficking and abuse. For instance:

1. The 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report by the U.S. Department of State discusses how Beninese girls are often subjected to domestic servitude and sex trafficking. Source: [2014 Trafficking in Persons Report - Benin | Refworld](#)
2. The 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report also provides insights into the exploitation of girls in Benin, including forced labor and trafficking. Source: [2016 Trafficking in Persons Report Country Narrative: Benin](#)

The Report on Human Rights and Political Repression in Benin highlights several challenges faced by women in the country:

1. **Gender-Based Violence:** Women in Benin face significant risks of domestic violence, sexual violence, and harmful practices like child marriage. These issues are often underreported due to societal stigma and limited access to justice.
2. **Access to Justice:** Women encounter barriers in seeking justice, including a lack of legal representation, societal norms that discourage reporting, and an under-resourced judicial system.

3. **Economic Vulnerability:** Many women in Benin are economically disadvantaged, which exacerbates their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. This economic inequality also limits their ability to escape abusive situations.
4. **Political Participation:** Women are underrepresented in political and decision-making roles, which impacts their ability to advocate for gender-specific issues effectively.

These factors create a challenging environment for women, particularly in accessing justice and achieving equality. Source: [Report on Human Rights and Political Repression in Benin](#)

## 10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Yes. In Benin, there are organizations and initiatives working on gender equality and the rights of girls, including in the justice system, such as:

1. **Association des Femmes Juristes du Bénin (AFJB):** This group focuses on legal aid and advocacy for women's and girls' rights, including access to justice. Source: [Fiche de présentation de l'Association](#)
2. **Plan International Benin:** They work on various projects to empower girls and ensure their rights are protected, including initiatives related to education and justice. Source: [Joint statement on the Transformative Actions by girls and young women | Plan International](#)
3. **Women's Rights NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa:** Many organizations in the region, including Benin, tackle issues like gender-based violence and access to education and justice. Source: [Parrainage d'enfant, aide humanitaire au Bénin - ONG Plan International France](#)

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# Cameroon

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

There is limited official information. The Ministry of Justice of Cameroon issues an annual report (latest 2022) that offers some statistics on the number of people incarcerated by age and gender (page 242). Source: [Rapports - Rapport du Ministère de la Justice sur l'état Droits de l'Homme au Cameroun en 2022](#)

2. Does the law in explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

No. Cameroon has various legislative acts regulating juvenile justice in Cameroon, including the 1996 Cameroon Constitution, the 2005 Cameroon Criminal Procedure Code and the 2016 Penal Code, but they do not explicitly set forth gender considerations for child justice procedures and sentencing. Source: [cameroon law report v3 \(september 2024\).pdf](#)

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

No, there are no alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for women or girls in Cameroon. There are no women-only prisons except the prison Mfou, in Yaoundé, although some prisons have special quarters for incarceration of women and of juveniles.

Sources:

- [Conditions de détention et respect des droits humains au Cameroun selon le Comité contre la torture](#)
- [JS10 UPR44 CMR E Main.pdf](#)

- [les condions de vie des prisonniers au cameorun: LES FEMMES ET LA PRISON AU CAMEROUN](#)
- [cameroon tahr ceprod crc loi july 2016 2.pdf](#)

4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

Cameroon has a juvenile justice system of administration which in principle seems to guarantee a peculiar treatment for children in conflict with the law, but it is not gender differentiated, and there are no specific protocols for girls. Sources: [Compliance of Juvenile Justice Administration in Cameroon with the Human Rights Based Approach](#) and [Cameroon - United States Department of State](#)

5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

Women and girls are subject to difficult prison conditions, including overcrowding, poor hygiene, limited access to medical care and violence from guards or other inmates. Women in detention centres, who are held in the same cells as men, are particularly subjected to gender-specific forms of torture such as rape and other forms of sexual violence by both prison guards and other inmates. According to some reports, there are cases in which women have been housed naked in mixed cells with men, stripped naked, stripped naked and forced to dance, their bodies insulted and mocked or forced to stand in the sun naked. This may affect girls as well, given that girls are not always separated from other detainees and minors are vulnerable to sexual abuse by older inmates. Source: <https://www.emmanuel-freudenthal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/JADE-Geoles-d-Afrique-droits-humains-en-milieu-carceral-au->

[Cameroun.pdf](#) and [Cameroon - Press Release: Violence Against Women | OMCT, CAMEROON / JUVENILE PRISONS | UNifeed.](#)

6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

In Cameroon, individuals, including girls and women, can be criminalized under status offenses or morality-based laws. Specifically, Article 347-1 of the Cameroonian Penal Code criminalizes same-sex relations, punishing such acts with imprisonment from six months to five years and fines ranging from 20,000 to 200,000 CFA francs.

Source:

[ILGA State Sponsored Homophobia 2019.pdf](#).

Additionally, Article 263 of the Cameroonian Penal Code addresses offenses against public morality, potentially leading to penalties for women whose dress is considered too provocative. This article stipulates imprisonment from fifteen days to two years and/or fines from 10,000 to 100,000 CFA francs. Source: [Ministère des Transports : chasse ouverte contre les « tenues indécentes », Indécence vestimentaire : le Cameroun en bataille](#)

7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

The government of Cameroon lacks a system for reintegration for children, especially for those involved in armed conflict in Cameroon. Many children who return home are rejected from family and community members because of the fear that they were radicalized in captivity. Girls bearing the children of Boko Haram fighters in particular suffer from discrimination due to the stigma of sexual violence. Source: [Cameroon's Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and [Cameroon - United States Department of State](#)

There are some international programs to support reintegration of children who have exited armed forces sponsored by UNICEF and girls' rights and empowerment generally. Source: [Cameroon-](#)

[2024-2025-02-06](#) and [A new chapter for Girls in Cameroon: historic launch of the Girls' Movement.](#)

8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

There are some resources related to gender-sensitive training programs for justice professionals in Cameroon (see below):

**Judicial Training Programs:** Supported by organizations like UNICEF and UNODC, these programs include modules on gender issues and children's rights. Source: [7 CAMEROON - SW NW GBV SOPs 2019.pdf](#) | [Human Rights & Governance | Reach Out NGO](#)

**Police Academy:** The police training curriculum includes modules on gender-responsive policing. Source: [Handbook on gender-responsive police services for women and girls subject to violence](#) | [Digital library: Publications | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

**Bar Association Activities:** the Cameroon Bar Association raise awareness about gender issues. Source: [cameroon - convention on the rights of the child - loi - july 2016 2.pdf](#)

9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

There is no information currently available that would suggest that girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns, and they are a minority of the prison population. According to statistic published by the Ministry of Justice of Cameroon, juveniles, minors and young prisoners make up 2.6% of the total prison population and female prisoners also make up 2.6% of the total prison population. Source: [Cameroon | World Prison Brief](#)

10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on

the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

There are some local NGOs and civil society groups working to promote gender equality and fight discrimination that may advance the rights of girls in the justice system. Examples include the following:

1. FIDA Cameroon, a federation of international female lawyers, with a vision for society to be free of violence and discrimination against women and girls. FIDA Cameroon operates through training, educating, and counselling women and girls so they are able to assert their own rights, while also providing legal support. Source: [Federation of Women Lawyers FIDA Cameroon - Girls Not Brides](#)
2. Association Camerounaise Des Femmes Juristes (ACAFJ), a non-governmental organisation dedicated to fighting against all forms of discrimination against women and children and to supporting the rule of law in Cameroon. [Association Camerounaise des Femmes Juristes - Acafej | Facebook](#)

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# Canada

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

In Canada, the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA), enacted in 2003, is the legislation that governs how youth aged 12 to 17 years are dealt with by the Canadian justice system. The YCJA provides for a separate youth justice system based on the principle of diminished moral blameworthiness or culpability of youth. Provinces and territories are responsible for administering correctional services for Youth custody and community sentences, including youth who are held while awaiting trial or sentencing. In 2018/2019, there were a total of 716 youths in custody on average per day in the 12 reporting jurisdictions, representing a national incarceration rate of 4 youth per 10,000 population, a 10% decrease from the previous year and a 32% decrease from 2014/2015. As such, Canada does have data that breaks down the percentage of children in detention or in the justice system.

In 2018/2019 in the reporting provinces and territories of Canada, over three-quarters (77%) of youth admitted into correctional services were male, thus 23% correspond to youth girls. Among youth admissions, males accounted for 79% of custody admissions and 77% of community supervision admissions. These proportions were virtually unchanged from 2017/2018.

**Source:** The Youth Custody and Community Services Survey, the Corrections Key Indicator Report for Adults and Youth, the Integrated Correctional Services Survey and the Canadian Correctional Services Survey.

[Adult and youth correctional statistics in Canada, 2018/2019](#)

2. Does the law in explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

Yes, the Canada Youth Criminal Justice Act specifically states that the measures taken against young persons who commit offences

should "...(iv) respect gender, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences and respond to the needs of aboriginal young persons and of young persons with special requirements;"

Canada Youth Criminal Justice Act, Section 3(1)(c)(iv)

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/Y-1.5/page-1.html#docCont>

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

The Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) does not provide for alternatives to detention specifically based on gender, but the statute does contemplate ensuring that the sentence provided is relational to the offense and also has a comparative factor to ensure the sentence given for one crime is similar to those given to "similar" young persons in the area who have committed the same offense. In addition the sentencing guidelines specifically state that "all available sanctions **other than custody** that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all young persons."

The purpose of sentencing under section 42 (youth sentences) of the YCJA, is to hold a young person accountable for an offence through the imposition of just sanctions that have meaningful consequences for the young person and that promote his or her rehabilitation and reintegration into society, thereby contributing to the long-term protection of the public.

#### Sentencing principles

1. A youth justice court that imposes a youth sentence on a young person shall determine the sentence in accordance with the principles set out in section 3 and the following principles:
  - a) The sentence must not result in a punishment that is greater than the punishment that would be appropriate for an adult who has been convicted of the same offence committed in similar circumstances;

- b) The sentence must be similar to the sentences imposed in the region on similar young persons found guilty of the same offence committed in similar circumstances;
- c) The sentence must be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence and the degree of responsibility of the young person for that offence;
- d) All available sanctions other than custody that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all young persons, with particular attention to the circumstances of aboriginal young persons;
- e) Subject to paragraph (c), the sentence must
  - i) Be the least restrictive sentence that is capable of achieving the purpose set out in subsection (1),
  - ii) Be the one that is most likely to rehabilitate the young person and reintegrate him or her into society, and
  - iii) Promote a sense of responsibility in the young person, and an acknowledgement of the harm done to victims and the community;

Canada Youth Criminal Justice Act Sections 38(1) and (2)

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/Y-1.5/page-1.html#docCont>

#### 4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

Canadian police forces, particularly the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), are actively implementing gender-sensitive training and practices. This includes initiatives like Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) and culturally responsive training, with the goal of creating a more inclusive and effective police service. Although we did not find any specific gender-sensitive protocols in child rules for police.

Source:

<https://rcmp.ca/en/corporate-information/publications-and-manuals/2024-25-departmental-plan/gender-based-analysis-plus>

Below, a summary of a 3.10 Document on Gender Socialization and Vulnerability (Key Issues and Statistics Affecting Girls) of the Canadian Bar Association, that focuses on Canada's young persons, although its content is archived, and may not be updated, it contains valuable and important insights, and at its core, remains current.

#### Summary of Document on Gender Socialization and Vulnerability in Canada

##### Key Issues and Statistics Affecting Girls

The document highlights how gender and intersecting factors such as age, race, class, ability, and sexual orientation shape the experiences of young people in Canada, especially girls. From early childhood, girls are exposed to conflicting societal expectations—being both liberal and traditional—which can lead to significant physical and emotional health challenges, including eating disorders, depression, and low self-esteem. Marginalized groups, such as rural, Indigenous, racialized, and immigrant girls, face heightened vulnerability.

##### Key statistics include:

- 82% of sexual assault victims under 18 are female.
- Sexual offences are most frequent against girls aged 11 to 14, peaking at age 13.
- Girls are four times more likely than boys to be assaulted by a family member.
- Over 80% of the time, girls know the perpetrator who assaulted them.
- Indigenous girls are especially at risk, with up to 75% under 18 experiencing sexual abuse.

The document emphasizes that women and girls in vulnerable situations, particularly those who are Indigenous, African Canadian, or have disabilities, are disproportionately affected by violence and discrimination.

Canada has sometimes overlooked the specific challenges faced by girls, mistakenly assuming gender equality is already achieved. As a result, policies aren't always sensitive to girls' needs. International bodies have raised concerns about violence and poverty affecting women and girls, especially among Indigenous populations. Recommendations to Canada include creating comprehensive plans to address violence, understanding contributing factors, and improving investigation and data collection on cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

## Summary of International and Canadian Legal Protections for Girls

This section outlines key international and Canadian legal frameworks aimed at protecting the rights and well-being of girls:

### International Law:

Multiple global agreements—including the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)—call on countries like Canada to eliminate discrimination and violence against girls. These agreements urge governments to address harmful stereotypes, guarantee equal access to education and health care, prevent sexual exploitation, and ensure gender-sensitive justice. Specific recommendations include collecting gender-disaggregated data, changing cultural attitudes, and involving men and boys in promoting equality.

### Canadian Law:

Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equality under the law, regardless of sex, reinforcing the protection of girls from discrimination and unequal treatment.

Overall, these frameworks emphasize the need for gender-sensitive policies, comprehensive data collection, and strategies to protect and empower girls, particularly in education, health, and justice systems.

### Practice Essentials

Be aware that girls experience discrimination and violence differently from boys because of persisting cultural attitudes and stereotypes towards male and female roles.

‘The best interest’ of the girl child should be determined with due regard to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of girls in Canada and the principles from the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW.

Understand that intersecting vectors of discrimination and the legacy of colonialism place aboriginal girls among the most vulnerable sector of the population in Canada.

Programming, policies and legislation must be gender sensitive to meet the needs of the girl child.

Violence prevention strategies for girls often require additional life skills, education, safe housing, medical services, mental health

supports, culturally-appropriate and safe health care, and a coordinated and complete approach to service delivery.

Be aware that ‘victim blaming’ attitudes in cases of gender-based violence are persistent within law enforcement, the judiciary, as well as health services; lawyers working with girl victims of sexual violence must strive to eliminate such attitudes.

### Resources

UNICEF, “Women’s and Children’s Rights in a human rights based approach to development” (2005) online.

Public Safety Canada, “Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls” by Red Willow Consulting Inc., Dr. Yvonne Boyer & Peggy Kampouris, (Ottawa, May 2014) online.

UNESCO, 16h Plen Metg, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) online.

Canadian’s Women’s Foundation, “The Facts About Girls in Canada” (January 2014) online.

Helene Berman & Yasmine Jiwani. In the best interests of the girl child, Phase II Report, 2002

Helene Berman & Yasmine Jiwani eds, Violence Prevention and the Canadian Girl Child (Status of Women in Canada, 2002) online.

Government of Canada, “Status of Women Canada” (05 August 2016) online.

Girls Action Foundation, Beyond Appearances: Brief on the main issues facing girls in Canada (2013) online.

## 5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

Girls are also vulnerable to violence everywhere: in their homes, schools, group homes, the streets, squats, and in social service and criminal justice systems. Caretakers, parents, intimate partners, people in positions of authority (police, teachers, social workers), and their peers perpetrate violence.

[‘No one will believe you’: When the RCMP abuses Indigenous girls | Crime | Al Jazeera](#)

She knew to play it cool when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) flagged her down, because she was a young runaway and they could be on the lookout for her. But she had also heard rumours about police officers hurting Indigenous girls - offering to let runaways go in exchange for sexual favours. "There was nothing I could do about it"

It happened to Gladys - twice.

"He turned around and got into the back of the car and he raped me ... we're talking about an 80-pound [36kg] girl; I wasn't even a woman yet. There was nothing I could do," she says.

"He had his way with me and just left me there. He told me 'don't bother reporting this because I'm a police officer and no one is going to believe you anyway'.

An RCMP officer pulled his cruiser over and told her it was too cold to be hitchhiking. He offered to take her back to Prince George where he would find her a warm place to stay.

"Of course, we went down one of those nasty roads - a logging road - and he raped me," she says. "Then I was expecting to be taken to a shelter or a room after, but I ended up staying in a jail cell that night. He took me to jail." There was nowhere she could turn for help and no one she could tell, she says.

"That's like me going to my abuser asking for help - it's not going to happen. They're the cops.

[Those Who Take Us Away: Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada | HRW](#)

[Submission to the Government of Canada on Police Abuse of Indigenous Women in Saskatchewan and Failures to Protect Indigenous Women from Violence | Human Rights Watch](#)

[Review of the RCMP's Policies and Procedures Regarding Strip Searches | Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP](#) In its submission, Human Rights Watch outlined its Findings and Recommendations, including some related strip searches:

- In accordance with international policing standards, Canadian constitutional requirements, and the Recommendations of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission:
  - End body ("frisk") searches of women and girls by male police officers in all but extraordinary circumstances; require that

any such searches are fully documented and reviewed by supervisors and commanders; prohibit all strip searches of women and girls by male police officers.

- Ensure that women in custody are ordered to remove their bras only in exceptional circumstances in which there is credible evidence that it is necessary to prevent them from doing harm to themselves or others or to obtain evidence related to the reason for the arrest.
- Ensure that there is a sufficient number of female officers to conduct searches, participate and supervise the interrogation of female detainees, and ensure the safety and security of female detainees.

Collect and make publicly available (as ethically appropriate) accurate and comprehensive race- and gender-disaggregated data that includes an ethnicity variable on violence against Indigenous women, as well as on use of force, police stops, and searches, with the guidance of Indigenous women leaders and in cooperation with Indigenous community organizations and the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR). This Recommendation should be acted on in accordance with Call to Action 39 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

6. Are girls criminalized for "status offenses" or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

[DISCRIMINATORY AND UNJUST NATURE OF JUSTICE FOR MINORS GIRLS LABELLED 'DELINQUENT' IN CANADA | Office of Justice Programs](#)

#### Abstract

Canadian Federal Government statistics are used to underscore a pervasive dichotomy in the handling of violent and nonviolent female juvenile offenders in Canada. The statistics indicate that while girls are arrested, prosecuted, and convicted more often than boys for nonviolent and status-type offenses (e.g., sexual activity, truancy, running away), those arrested and convicted of generally violent offenses are invariably punished

less often and less severely than boys committing similar offenses. It is argued that society's perception of the female role underlies both conditions. Society expects women to be chaste and unaggressive, and this leads to disproportionately harsh prosecutions and convictions for activities unchallenged in males and to low levels of conviction and sentencing for violent offenses believed to be more properly the domain of boys. Thus, female juvenile offenders in Canada are often pursued and punished for what are essentially non-crimes and are less often convicted and punished for committing crimes that are inherently violent or 'criminal' in nature. It is argued that 'difficult' girls are incarcerated to protect them from themselves, while 'criminal' girls are diverted to protect them from the despoiling elements of an institutional environment. --in French. (kbl)

[DISCRIMINATORY AND UNJUST NATURE OF JUSTICE FOR MINORS GIRLS LABELLED 'DELINQUENT' IN CANADA | Office of Justice Programs](#)

[Justice for Girls? Stability and Change in the Youth Justice Systems of the United States and Canada. By Jane B. Sprott and Anthony N. Doob. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pp. 232. \\$37.50 \(cloth\). | Social Service Review: Vol 85, No 1](#) Initially, they show that girls in both countries are charged with far less crime than boys, especially serious crime. But Sprott and Doob observe that girls have far higher risks of custody for minor crimes, and especially for noncriminal behavior. Thus, they focus their analysis on the handling of status offenses, because these are the behaviors for which girls are more often apprehended than are boys.

<https://brooklynworks.brooklaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1826&context=faculty>

**7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)**

Women offenders have unique needs that impact the way they respond to correctional programs. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) offers programs for women offenders within a women-centered perspective. This is meant to ensure that women's social realities and the context of their lives are recognized. These programs address problematic behavior linked to crime, such as:

violence, general crime, substance use, and sexual offending: [Federal Program Responses for Women - State of the Criminal Justice System Dashboard](#)

Institutional Programs to prepare offenders for reintegration - two focused on women found on the The Social Reintegration of Offenders and Crime Prevention page:

[The Social Reintegration of Offenders and Crime Prevention](#)

Women offenders have unique needs and considerations that impact their response to corrections. A gender-responsive lens/approach is required to address the complex challenges faced in their social, economic, and cultural situations. Consequently, there should be a distinction on how women offenders face housing barriers, particularly those with children and renewed family responsibilities upon release.

When considering women's corrections, it is particularly important to ensure that programming and interventions recognize that women place great value on the relationships in their lives. Evidence in the correctional literature has suggested that the mother-child bond may be critical for successful reintegration into the community. When strong familial ties are maintained by women offenders, research has found there to be less likelihood of recidivism. This research underscores the importance of CSC's Mother-Child Program and the need for it to be expanded to a greater number of eligible offenders. And - To ensure that offenders are receiving the vocational skills that are most likely to lead to gainful employment, a review of the training offered, in particular in women's institutions would be helpful to ensure that women offenders have access to training that better reflects the job market upon release: [Federal Framework to Reduce Recidivism](#)

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia is a non-profit organization that addresses root causes of criminalization of women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals. It assists vulnerable populations to heal and develop stronger community connections, and supports their access to justice through advocacy, guidance and legal representation: [Helping youth involved in the Criminal Justice System reintegrate into their communities - Canada.ca](#)

**8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice?**

(Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

Justice Canada has a Child Rights Assessment Tool to help government officials assess the potential impact of a proposed initiative on children and includes an assessment on whether the initiative would affect different groups of children differently (including gender groups). Justice Canada is also implementing a plan to nationalize the UN's SDG goals with the Women, Peace and Security initiative.

Amendments to the Judges Act and the Criminal Code include training in social context for judges with respect to approaches to sexual assault cases, although the amendments do not specifically address gender-sensitive approaches to child justice.

Sources:

[Child Rights Impact Assessment](#)

[Department of Justice Canada Implementation Plan for Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security – 2023 to 2029](#)

[Judicial continuing education in sexual assault law and social context](#)

9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

Justice Canada's 2020 report on the state of the criminal justice system, focus on women indicates that women and girls are more likely to self-report victimization than men and boys.

Sources:

[SOCJS\\_2020\\_en.pdf](#)

10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Justice for Girls ([Justice for Girls | Nonprofit Advocating for Girls' Rights in BC](#))

The following have subgroups/advocacy initiatives that emphasize justice for girls:

Plan International ([How We Work](#))

Canadian Women's Foundation ([Advocacy, Policy, and Partnerships - Canadian Women's Foundation](#))

The Canadian Teachers' Federation ([Advocating for gender rights, social justice and public education](#))

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# Colombia

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

Yes, the Statistical Bulletin of the Institute of Family Wellbeing (Instituto de Bienestar Familiar, known as ICBF) for May 2025, establishes that at the end of the month of May 2025, 2,314 youths entered the penal responsibility system, of which 13% were girls, or approximately 300 girls. The bulletin does not separate the offence by gender, but states that the most recurrent reason for detention is theft, followed by drug offences.

The Bulletin also reports 61,767 children and youths younger up to 18 years, that participate in legal proceedings, mostly as victims. The main reason for a youth to enter the legal system (judicial or administrative) is sexual violence, perpetrated against females represent 85% of the victims of sexual violence.

<https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/boletinestadisticomayo.pdf>

2. Does the law explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

In Colombia, children and adolescents are subject to a special legal framework that recognizes their rights and offers protection through both civil and criminal laws. The primary focus is on rehabilitation and social reintegration rather than solely punitive measures. The legal age of criminal responsibility in Colombia currently is 14 years (raised from 12 years to 14 years in July 2025), youths from 14 to under 18 years are subject to a separate juvenile justice system.

In Colombia, the *Ley de la Infancia y Adolescencia* (Childhood and Adolescence Code) called "Law 1098 of 2006", in its articles 140 and 178 establish that the measures must be different from those applied to adults, the objective is to protect, teach and restore. This Law provides that the juvenile justice system should emphasize rehabilitation and social reintegration, it also establishes specialized courts and procedures

rather than solely focusing on imprisonment. The law does not include specific rules for girls, in general, we found that the laws and processes for children in the judicial system in Colombia, do not contain provisions based on gender in their procedures or sentencing.

<https://www.icbf.gov.co/sites/default/files/codigoinfancialey1098.pdf>

The System of Penal Responsibility for Adolescents is a series of principles, norms and procedures that govern the investigation and procedures of crimes committed by youths older than 14 years and younger than 18 years of age. The principles do not provide specific procedures for girls. The System of Penal Responsibility for Adolescents, intend to involve all sectors of society, not just the judicial or administrative systems, but the families and civil organizations.

[Im15.p lineamiento tecnico modelo de atencion para adolescentes y jovenes en conflicto con la ley-srpa v4 0.pdf](https://www.ramajudicial.gov.co/web/portal-ninos-y-ninas/sistema-de-responsabilidad-penal-para-adolescentes/Im15.p_lineamiento_tecnico_modelo_de_atencion_para_adolescentes_y_jovenes_en_conflicto_con_la_ley-srpa_v4_0.pdf)

<https://www.ramajudicial.gov.co/web/portal-ninos-y-ninas/sistema-de-responsabilidad-penal-para-adolescentes>

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

In Colombia, the Technical Guidelines for Attention to Adolescents and Young People in Conflict with the Law, while establishing detention processes, rules, and mechanisms, lacks a specific focus on girls. Although it includes a gender perspective, this focuses on individuals who have been discriminated against or violated based on their sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, without addressing the specific needs and particularities of girls in conflict with the law.

[https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/procesos/Im15.p\\_lineamiento tecnico modelo de atencion para adolescentes y jovenes en conflicto con la ley-srpa v4 0.pdf](https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/procesos/Im15.p_lineamiento_tecnico_modelo_de_atencion_para_adolescentes_y_jovenes_en_conflicto_con_la_ley-srpa_v4_0.pdf)

4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have

gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

The Colombian Institute of Family Welfare institute (ICBF) plays a key role in protecting the rights of adolescents in conflict with the law through the juvenile criminal responsibility system (SRPA) (see Ley 1098 de 2006). The ICBF provides services such as preventive detention centers, emergency centers during criminal proceedings, and offers support to adolescents and young people after serving sentences. They also have a management process for protection and service guidelines for measures and sanctions of the criminal judicial process for minors, which defines protocols for the treatment of minors in criminal proceedings.

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[https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/lineamiento\\_tecnico\\_para\\_la\\_atencion\\_de\\_adolescentes\\_y\\_jovenes\\_vinculados\\_al\\_srpa.pdf](https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/lineamiento_tecnico_para_la_atencion_de_adolescentes_y_jovenes_vinculados_al_srpa.pdf)

5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

According to a report from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner, during the 2021 national strike, there were several acts of violence police actions against demonstrators, and reports of acts of violence specifically aimed against women and girls during and after the protests,

<https://www.hchr.org.co/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/07-28-2022-LECCIONES-APRENDIDAS.pdf>

Amnesty International documented 28 cases in which public force used gender based violence as a repression tool against women, girls and LGBTIQ+, the police punished women and girls for exercising their right of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. Amnesty International reports having received hundreds of violence reports based on gender during the national strike in 2021 in Colombia, denouncing psychological and physical violence, all types of sexual violence

and abuse, during the protests and afterwards, even death threats.

<https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/campaigns/2022/02/repression-in-the-spotlight/>

[07-28-2022-LECCIONES-APRENDIDAS.pdf](#)

6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

In Colombia, while the constitution prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, national origin, language, religion, and political or philosophical opinion, discriminatory practices based on morality laws are not explicitly addressed in the same way as in some other countries. However, the Colombian legal framework, particularly through the Constitutional Court, has expanded protections against discrimination, including those potentially related to morality-based biases.

7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

In Colombia, in addition to establishing procedural rules for crimes committed by young people, the Juvenile Criminal Responsibility System (SRPA), addresses social inclusion of processed youths, through protecting access to education, guaranteeing their health rights, promoting sports and culture, facilitating job and entrepreneurship opportunities, and strengthening family ties. This comprehensive approach recognizes the importance of addressing the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency and providing adolescents with the necessary tools for their social reintegration and the development of a full and productive life. Although the system does not include specific programs for the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system, it does provide that gender should be taken into consideration.

[https://www.icbf.gov.co/sites/default/files/procesos/lm14.p\\_lineamiento\\_para\\_servicios\\_medidas\\_y\\_sanciones\\_proceso\\_judicial\\_srpa\\_v1.pdf](https://www.icbf.gov.co/sites/default/files/procesos/lm14.p_lineamiento_para_servicios_medidas_y_sanciones_proceso_judicial_srpa_v1.pdf)

There is also a theoretical and methodological guide for the National Police, which includes a specific module for handling gender-based violence cases.

[https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/procesos/mo1.p\\_manual\\_operativo\\_de\\_las\\_modalidades\\_que\\_atienden\\_medidas\\_y\\_sanciones\\_del\\_proceso\\_judicial\\_srpa\\_v4\\_0.pdf](https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/procesos/mo1.p_manual_operativo_de_las_modalidades_que_atienden_medidas_y_sanciones_del_proceso_judicial_srpa_v4_0.pdf)

**8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)**

Training is provided to justice professionals and to youths in general; we could not find any specific training for gender sensitive approach.

[https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/procesos/mo1.p\\_manual\\_operativo\\_de\\_las\\_modalidades\\_que\\_atienden\\_medidas\\_y\\_sanciones\\_del\\_proceso\\_judicial\\_srpa\\_v4\\_0.pdf](https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/procesos/mo1.p_manual_operativo_de_las_modalidades_que_atienden_medidas_y_sanciones_del_proceso_judicial_srpa_v4_0.pdf)

The role of public defenders of the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF), requires them to be present in all penal procedures involving minors to ensure the human rights of the youths are respected. These public defenders work with an interdisciplinary team of psychologists and social workers to evaluate the youth and their families.

We found that the approach of the juvenile justice system, is focused more in eliminating discriminatory practices for indigenous and disadvantaged youth population rather than gender-sensitive approach.

The public defenders legally represent the youth to ensure that the sanctions are focused in learning, and reinsertion in society.

<https://www.defensoria.gov.co>

**9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on**

**victimization and pathways into justice)**

According to a 2023 report, 67.5% of violence against minors reported by healthcare institutions was against girls. This contrasts sharply with the 12% of the detained population that girls represented in 2024.

Girls are more likely to enter the justice system as victims.

According to the statistical reports of the National Institute of Legal Medicine and forensic Science (Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses) for 2025 (Jan-June), based only in forensic data, 35.41 % of sudden deaths in children and adolescents are due to homicide (26.13% transportation accidents, 22.51% other accidents); 48.97% of non-lethal injuries result from alleged sexual assault, 21.39% inter family violence, 20.78% inter-personal violence.

<https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/cifras-estadisticas/boletines-estadisticos-nna>

<https://www.childrights.ch>

**10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)**

We were unable to find society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system. There are various society groups that work in Colombia to protect children's rights in general, not gender based.

In Colombia, la Alianza por la Niñez Colombiana, ("Alliance for Children.") is a network of national and international organizations, formed since 2002 working on children's rights.

<https://alianzaporlaninez.org.co/quienes-somos>

UNICEF Colombia seeks to ensure compliance with children's rights against violence, exploitation and abuse, secure access to education and health.

<https://www.unicef.org/colombia/>

ONU Mujeres Colombia, works to promote gender equality, empowerment of girls and women and gender-based violence.

<https://colombia.unwomen.org/>

Save the Children Colombia . In Colombia since 1985, focused in protecting children from all types of violence and improve the life conditions of children.

<https://savethechildren.org.co/mas-de-200-organizaciones-de-la-sociedad-civil-demandamos-la-proteccion-de-la-ninez-y-la-adolescencia>

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# France

## 1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

As of 2022, the number of incarcerated minors has remained relatively stable for the past ten years—this being around 3,000 minors per year. There were 752 minors incarcerated as of January 1, 2021, representing 1% of the prison population. There seems to be no gender distinction between girls and boys. [International Prison Observatory - France]. This is likely due to the principle of equality in French law and the emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration of minors rather than focusing on gender differences in sentencing.

For additional information consult: [International Prison Observatory - France] [PrisonconditionsinFrance.pdf](https://www.ipos.fr/en/france)

As of January 1, 2023, 614 minors were detained in French prisons. Throughout 2022, a total of 3,142 minors were incarcerated, including 102 girls (representing 3.2%). Minors constitute only a small minority of the prison population (0.9% as of January 1, 2023) and a similarly small proportion (3% on the same date) of minors under the supervision of the French Juvenile Justice Protection Services (*Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse - PJJ*). [*Rapport Direction de la protection judiciaire de la jeunesse 2023 - Les effets de l'enfermement sur les mineurs*]

For additional information consult: [Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse – PJJ] [alice\\_simon\\_effets\\_enfermement\\_mineurs.pdf](https://www.pjj.fr/IMG/pdf/alice_simon_effets_enfermement_mineurs.pdf)

## 2. Does the law in France explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

The law in France does not explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing. The lexicon used in all the reviewed texts explicitly mentions “minors” without any distinction of gender. This is likely due to the principle of

equality in French law and the emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration of the minor rather than focusing on gender differences in sentencing, being based on the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789, also enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution of French Republic.

For additional information consult:

1. Ordonnance n°45-174 du 2 février 1945: [Ordonnance n° 45-174 du 2 février 1945 relative à l'enfance délinquante. - Légifrance](#)
2. Code de Justice Pénale des Mineurs (CJPM): [Résultats de recherche, page 1 - - Légifrance](#)
3. French Criminal Procedure Code (FCPC): [Code de procédure pénale - Légifrance](#)
4. Law n°91-647 of 10 July 1991: [Loi n° 91-647 du 10 juillet 1991 relative à l'aide juridique - Légifrance](#)
5. EU Directive 2016/800: [Directive - 2016/800 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

## 3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

There are no alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls, however statistics indicate that girls generally benefit from more alternative measures to detention and that judiciary treatment is usually less severe for women.

Justice Des Mineurs:

<https://www.justice.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2025-01/RSJ2024%20Chapitre%2017.pdf>

Observatoire des disparités dans la justice pénale:

[Differential treatment of women? – Observatory of Disparities in Criminal Justice](#)

## 4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their

## child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

Explicit details on gender-sensitive protocols within courts protocols, police trainings or detention guidelines remain limited in publicly accessible documentation, probably due to the focus on general child-friendly practices that aim to encompass the needs of all children. However, some facilities, such as juvenile rehabilitation home, offer accommodation and stays adapted to the age and situation of young girls, with all the education, training, activities, care and guidance required for their integration, for which guidance are made by the judicial authorities or by the *Aide Sociale à l'Enfance* services.

For further information consult:

Arthur Vuattoux-Institutional Production of Gender in Juvenile Courts Reflections on the Treatment of Adolescents in the French Civil and Criminal Justice System: [tp\\_12\\_vuattoux\\_gb\\_copie.pdf](#)

UN Women: The Handbook on Gender-Responsive Police Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence: [Handbook-on-gender-responsive-police-services-en.pdf](#)

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: [France - Children and young adults | Criminal Detention in the EU](#)

## 5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

In 2021, 305 incident reports concerning detained minors were submitted to the Directorate of Juvenile Justice Protection. Among the 456 incidents detailed in these reports, 147 concerned “suicide attempts” (including acts of self-harm such as self-mutilation), to which can be added 42 incidents of “suicidal risks.” Furthermore, 108 incidents involved “violent assaults against individuals,” 74 concerned “insults, rebellion, and threats,” and 34 related to “voluntary damage to property.” (An additional 51 incidents were recorded for other reasons). [*Rapport Direction de la protection judiciaire de la jeunesse 2023 - Les effets de l'enfermement sur les mineurs*]

No Data with respect to gender-based violence is available.

For additional information consult: [*Rapport Direction de la protection judiciaire de la jeunesse 2023 - Les effets de l'enfermement sur les mineurs*]

[alice\\_simon\\_effets\\_enfermement\\_mineurs.pdf](#)

## 6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

In France, there are no specific laws that criminalize girls for status offenses or morality-based laws such as running away, dress codes, or same-sex behavior.

**Running Away:** In France, running away is not a criminal offense. However, minors who run away may be placed under the protection of social services or returned to their families by the police.

**Dress Codes:** There are no national laws in France that criminalize specific dress codes (other than exhibitionism which does not specifically apply to women). However, schools, and certain institutions may have their own dress codes, and violations of these codes can result in disciplinary actions rather than criminal charges.

**Same-Sex Behavior:** Same-sex behavior is not criminalized in France. France has progressive laws regarding LGBTQ+ rights, including the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2013.

There have been no significant court cases or laws specifically targeting girls for these types of behaviors in a discriminatory manner. France generally upholds principles of equality and non-discrimination in its legal system.

## 7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

While not always specifically targeted at girls exiting the justice system, these services are available through organizations working with

young people, including Protection *Judiciaire de la Jeunesse (PJJ)*, Educational and Vocational Training Programs, Mental Health Support and Social assistance.

While gender-specific programs might not be prominent at the national level, local initiatives and organizations may offer tailored support for girls, such as Relais Association. For further information consult the following: <https://www.relais-jeunes.com/association-de-gestion-relais/anef-maison-social-jeunes-filles/>

## 8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

There are some trainings taking the gender issue into account, but they do not seem to prevail in all the branches of the field of child justice:

- As an example of trainings tackling the gender issue, [a document published in 2021](#) by the *École nationale de protection judiciaire de la jeunesse* (National School for the Judicial Protection of Youth) detailing its trainings mentions the gender issue several times:
  - On page 75, the male vs. female children approach is adopted (“*L’opérationnalité du genre dans les pratiques professionnelles de la prise en charge*” - “The operationality of gender in professional care practices”)
  - On page 77, the prostitution issue is to be seen, with a mention of the high percentage of girls concerned by it (“*Prostitution des mineurs: comprendre et accompagner*” - “The prostitution of minors: understanding the issue and accompanying the minors”).
  - On page 214, a more “gender-identifying”-oriented approach is adopted (“*Prévenir les LGBT+ phobies: un acte éducatif et citoyen*” - “Preventing LGBT+ phobias: an educational and civic act”).

(It is worth noting that, in a 200+-page document, only three trainings tackling the gender issue are to be found)

(However, [a 2025, more detailed version of the same document](#) seems to go even more in-depth regarding the gender issue)

- By a decree dated 29 August 2023, *the Office Mineurs (OFMIN)* was created within the French police forces, the aim of which is to fight against the gravest offences committed against children. [The trainings mentioned on the OFMIN’s website](#) do not seem to adopt a gender-sensitive approach (i.e., hearings of minors, investigations under a pseudonym, digital learning and use of social networks - open-source research).
- The Paris Bar Association states that, if a lawyer wants to be registered with the office for minors, they have to undergo a training. [A \(detailed\) summary of the training in question](#) provided on the Internet does not distinguish between male and female minors.
- Regarding the trainings for people wishing to work in the field of child justice:
  - [The programme of the Diplôme universitaire “Justice pénale des mineurs”](#) (University Diploma - Juvenile Criminal Justice) by the *Panthéon-Assas* University does not mention the gender issue.
  - [The programme of the Lille University](#) might include a part on gender, as it points to a “*connaissance culturelle et technique des publics accueillis*” (“cultural and technic”I knowledge of the public”), however, this encompasses is unclear.

## 9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

According to statistics, girls are not more likely to enter the justice system as victims, since it was reported that 59% of children in danger were boys in 2023.

*Justice Des Mineurs:*  
[https://www.justice.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2024-09/RSJ2023\\_16\\_1.pdf](https://www.justice.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2024-09/RSJ2023_16_1.pdf)

## 10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on

the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Government national list of NGO consider some of the following listed below:

- *Le Collectif féministe* against woman rape (CFCV)
- *La Fédération nationale GAMS*
- *Institut de Victimologie*: Support Unit against all forms of violence against women.
- *L'Îlot* - supports individuals under judicial supervision or upon their release from prison.
- *La Maison des Femmes* - Legal aids
- *CIDFF*: These centers provide information and legal support to women and families, including young girls facing legal problems.
- *Defenseur des droits*: This independent institution is responsible for defending rights and freedoms, particularly those of children. It is possible to contact the Defender of Rights in the event of a violation of a minor girl's rights during legal proceedings.

For further information and detail in this list of NGOs, please consult the following:

<https://arretonslesviolences.gouv.fr/associations-de-lutte-contre-les-violences-sexistes-et-sexuelles>

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# Germany

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

No. According to public records, the Federal Ministry of Justice releases a global report on Criminal Justice in Germany mentioning only juvenile offenders (14-17 years inclusive) and young adults (18-20 years inclusive). It appears that there are no divisions by gender;

For further information, consult the following: [Criminal Justice in Germany. Facts and Figures.](#)

2. Does the law in explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

No, different treatment based solely on gender in juvenile justice is not foreseen in terms of applicable German law, The most important law sources are the following:

- **Jugendgerichtsgesetz (JGG - Juvenile Court Act):** This is the core legal framework for juvenile justice in Germany. [JGG - nichtamtliches Inhaltsverzeichnis](#)
- **Sozialgesetzbuch VIII (SGB VIII - Book VIII of the Social Code - Child and Youth Welfare):** This legislation focuses on child protection and welfare. It intertwines with the JGG, particularly concerning preventative measures and support for young people at risk of delinquency. [SGB VIII Kinder- und Jugendhilfe - SGB VIII Sozialgesetzbuch](#)
- **Strafgesetzbuch (StGB - Criminal Code):** While the StGB applies to all individuals, the JGG modifies its application when dealing with juveniles. Sentencing for young offenders under the JGG is generally less severe than for adults, reflecting the emphasis on rehabilitation. [StGB - nichtamtliches Inhaltsverzeichnis](#)

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for

girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

In Germany, alternatives to detention for juveniles, including girls, exist within the framework of the Juvenile Justice Act (*Jugendgerichtsgesetz, JGG*) and broader criminal justice policies.

While there are no widely documented programs exclusively tailored for girls, several diversion programs, community-based measures, and gender-sensitive approaches are available or adaptable to address the needs of female juveniles. Below is an overview based on available information, incorporating relevant insights from juvenile justice practices and gender-specific considerations.

1. Legal Framework and General Alternatives to Detention

Germany's Juvenile Justice Act emphasizes rehabilitation over punishment for young offenders (aged 14–20), prioritizing diversion and community-based measures to avoid detention wherever possible.

Alternatives to detention are applied at various stages, including pre-trial, sentencing, and post-conviction, and are guided by the principle of proportionality, as outlined in the Residence Act for detention-related cases. Key alternatives include:

- a) **Diversion (*Diversionmaßnahmen*):** Under §45–47 JGG, diversion is used for minor offenses to avoid formal judicial proceedings. Measures include:
  - **Mediation (*Täter-Opfer-Ausgleich*):** Restorative justice processes where offenders and victims reconcile, often facilitated by social workers or NGOs.
  - **Community service (*Sozialstunden*):** Unpaid work in the community, such as assisting in local organizations.
  - **Social training courses (*Sozialtrainingskurse*):** Educational programs addressing behavioral issues, often tailored to the offender's needs.

- Warnings or reprimands: Informal interventions to redirect behavior without formal charges.
- b) **Community-Based Supervision:** At the pre-trial or sentencing stage, juveniles may be released to parents, guardians, or community organizations (e.g., NGOs) with conditions like:
- Regular reporting to probation officers or police.
  - Curfews or geographical restrictions.
  - Participation in counseling or therapeutic programs.
- c) **Probation and Conditional Sentences:** Instead of detention, courts may impose probation with conditions like attending school, vocational training, or therapy programs.

These measures are not gender-specific but can be adapted to address girls' unique needs, such as trauma from abuse or family responsibilities, through individualized case management.

## 2. Gender-Specific Considerations and Adaptations

While Germany does not have nationwide, girl-specific detention alternatives as prominent as some international models, gender-sensitive approaches are integrated into juvenile justice practices, particularly for girls with histories of victimization or trauma. Key points include:

- a) **Gender-Sensitive Diversion and Counseling:**
- Programs addressing underlying issues like domestic violence, sexual abuse, or trafficking are prioritized for female juveniles. For instance, girls who are victims of sexual violence or trafficking may be referred to specialized counseling services or shelters run by NGOs (for ex [Bundesfachverband Minderjährigkeit und Flucht - BuMF](#))
  - Social training courses or mediation can be tailored to address gender-specific issues, such as relational aggression or family conflict, which are more common among girls.
- b) **Trauma-Informed Care:**
- Germany's juvenile justice system increasingly recognizes the need for trauma-informed interventions, especially for girls with histories of abuse. NGOs

and social services provide therapeutic programs focusing on mental health, substance abuse, or intimate partner violence, which disproportionately affect female offenders.

- For example, girls in diversion programs may receive referrals to women-only or gender-sensitive substance abuse treatment programs, as recommended by international standards.

## 4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

In Germany, child justice institutions incorporate gender-sensitive protocols within child-friendly frameworks. However, implementation of said protocols and frameworks varies across courts, police, and detention centers due to the federalized system. The extent and specificity vary across institutions and federal states. Germany's federalized system means that policies and practices can differ, as the 16 states (*Länder*) have significant autonomy in implementing justice-related guidelines.

Courts operate under the Youth Court Act (*Jugendgerichtsgesetz, JGG*), (*Jugendgerichtsgesetz, JGG*), ([JGG - Jugendgerichtsgesetz](#)) which prioritizes rehabilitation for juveniles aged 14–18 and includes measures like diversion and minimal detention. While not explicitly mandating gender-sensitive protocols, courts align with the Istanbul Convention (ratified by Germany in 2018) ([About the Convention - Istanbul Convention Action against violence against women and domestic violence](#)) and the Victims' Rights Directive (2012/29/EU) ([Directive - 2012/29 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)), providing accommodations for child victims of gender-based violence—74% of whom are girls, per 2022 police statistics. These include taped testimony or testifying without the defendant present to reduce trauma, particularly for sexual abuse cases.

Police training incorporates some gender-sensitive elements, guided by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), which defines gender-based violence in its statistics (covering physical, sexual, and psychological violence). Training modules address traumatized child victims, with a focus on girls' vulnerability to

sexual assault, supported by ex officio complaint filing and medical documentation, as noted by UNICEF (2023). Specialized units, such as all-female investigator teams, have been introduced following critiques of cases like the FDLR trial, but training on anti-discrimination and gender sensitivity is not mandatory across all 16 states, per the Istanbul Convention review (2022). This leads to inconsistent practices, with initial interrogations by non-specialized officers risking re-traumatization, particularly for gender-diverse youth. The absence of independent complaints mechanisms further limits accountability for discriminatory practices.

Juvenile detention centers, governed by state-specific Youth Prison Acts (Bavaria (*Bayerisches Jugendstrafvollzugsgesetz, BayJStVollzG*), North Rhine-Westphalia (*Jugendstrafvollzugsgesetz NRW, Strafvollzugsgesetz (StVollzG)*), emphasize rehabilitation and separate facilities from adult prisons, with some gender-specific infrastructure. For example, Hof's detention center in Bavaria allocates 16 of 150 places for female detainees (BKA, 2023) ([Conditions in detention facilities - Asylum Information Database | European Council on Refugees and Exiles](#)). Staff are trained in educational expertise, indirectly supporting gender-sensitive care, but explicit protocols are lacking.

## 5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

There are no official studies that comprehensively examine the situation of girls in detention or during arrest in Germany, or the associated risks of gender-based violence or discrimination. This lack of research makes it difficult to quantify the issue.

However, organizations like *terre des femmes* ([Startseite | frauenrechte.de](#)) and the *Deutscher Juristinnenbund* (*German Association of Women Lawyers*) ([Deutscher Juristinnenbund e.V.:](#) [Deutscher Juristinnenbund e.V.](#)) provide important insights and indications of existing challenges. *terre des femmes* has long been committed to the rights of women and girls globally, including in Germany, and actively works against violence against women, including within the prison system. While they don't have a specific report solely focused on girls in detention in Germany, their work on violence against

women in prison contexts globally informs their advocacy and provides valuable context. The *Deutscher Juristinnenbund*, focusing on women's rights within the German legal framework, advocates for the improvement of the situation of women in the justice system, including detention. Their expertise lies in legal analysis and advocacy for legal reforms concerning women in the justice system. They regularly publish articles and position papers related to women's rights in Germany.

Although statistical data specifically on girls in detention is lacking, the work of these organizations points to potential risks for girls in detention, including:

- **Violence by staff:** Both physical and psychological violence by prison staff poses a risk.
- **Insufficient consideration of the specific needs of girls:** The specific needs of girls, e.g., with regard to hygiene, medical care, psychosocial support, and dealing with trauma, are often not adequately addressed in detention facilities.
- **Discrimination in the justice system:** There are indications that girls may be discriminated against in the justice system based on their gender, for example, through prejudice in sentencing or lack of access to appropriate rehabilitation measures.

To gain a more accurate picture of the situation and develop effective protective mechanisms, systematic data collection on gender-based violence and discrimination in the context of detention in Germany is urgently needed. For further information and support, those affected can contact *terre des femmes*, the *Deutscher Juristinnenbund*, or other specialized counseling centers.

## 6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

In Germany, the concept of “status offenses”—acts illegal only for minors—doesn't exist in the same way as in some other countries. Behaviors like running away or truancy are generally addressed under child welfare, focusing on the

child's well-being rather than punishment. Similarly, Germany has largely decriminalized morality-based laws. Same-sex behavior is legal, and dress codes are generally not legally enforced except in specific contexts like schools, where they are subject to debate.

While specific laws criminalizing these behaviors for girls don't exist, discriminatory application of existing laws remains a possibility (no evidence for that). However, finding evidence is difficult due to data privacy and the sensitive nature of cases.

Organizations like *terre des femmes* and the *Deutscher Juristinnenbund* advocate for girls' rights but haven't published research specifically addressing this narrow question.

## 7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

National policies unfortunately do not exist. However, there are a variety of programs that offer support (helplines, psychological assistance, etc.). such as:

Help is provided by Gewalt Gegen Frauen., for additional information consult:

[Startseite: Hilfetelefon](#)

Psychosocial process support is provided through the criminal proceeding as well, for additional information consult:

<https://www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/de/psychosoziale-prozessbegleitung.html>

Counseling and meeting opportunities for women in difficult psychosocial situations, for additional information consult:

[gesundheitliche-chancengleichheit: Detailseite](#)

A good overview of help can be found on the following page: [Hilfe und Beratung bei Gewalt - BMFSFJ](#)

Further help is being provided by Office and work of the Independent Commissioner for Issues of Child Sexual Abuse (UBSKM) (in German: *Amt und zur Arbeit der Unabhängigen Beauftragten für Fragen des sexuellen Kindesmissbrauchs*), see:

[Hilfangebote für Betroffene von sexualisierter Gewalt: beauftragte-missbrauch.de](#)

[Hilfangebote für Betroffene von sexualisierter Gewalt: beauftragte-missbrauch.de](#)

A good overview of aid organizations can be found on page 16 of the following link. The Link also informs possible victims about their rights and (legal) possibilities.

[Broschuere Sexuelle Gewalt 2017.pdf.pdf](#)

Regarding a possible re-entry program:

All employers must implement workplace integration management if employees are unable to work for more than six weeks or repeatedly (see "Sozialgesetzbuch SGB IX" and § 74 Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) V). This must be drawn up and adapted on a case-by-case basis (see "Hamburger Modell").

## 8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

Yes, trainings for the police and justice professionals do exist. For example, on the topic of violence prevention. Dealing with victims of sexual and psychological violence). However no more information (on the content of the training) is provided online.

Trainings for justice professionals also exist in the European Union in general, for additional information consult: [Improving Juvenile Justice Systems in Europe: Training for Professionals \(JUST/2013/FRC/AG\) | Observatorio Internacional de Justicia Juvenil](#)

## 9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

According to the first baseline evaluation report on Germany by the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), although Germany's ratification of the Istanbul

Convention in 2018 and subsequent criminal law measures have made positive changes, there are still serious gaps that need to be addressed.

As such, the answer to the question is – “Yes, girls are more likely to enter the justice system as victims”. The main areas needing improvement include poor risk assessment, the need for better use of protection orders and emergency barring orders, and lacking support services and shelters.

An overarching issue is the lack of a national action plan or coordination at the national level, as required by the Istanbul Convention. While some state-level plans to stop violence against women are praised, GREVIO is concerned about the significant disparity in service levels between the 16 federal states and within each state. This disparity is evident in the lack of rape crisis centers, sexual violence referral centers, and dedicated women’s shelters for domestic violence.

Geographic coverage and availability of specialist services vary. In rural areas, specialist support services are less established and often focus mainly on domestic violence, leaving victims of other forms of violence without adequate support. In larger cities, services exist for most forms of violence, but the ratio between staff and clients often leads to long waiting lists. For example, Berlin, with 3.7 million inhabitants, has only one counseling center for rape victims, with fewer than nine employees and an average waiting time of two months for an initial session.

For additional information consult: [Germany: Council of Europe experts find serious gaps in protecting women and girls from gender-based violence - Portal](#)

Moreover, according to the “Monitoring Report: Human Trafficking in Germany” as of October 18, 2024, by the independent National Rapporteur Mechanism on Trafficking in Human Beings at the German Institute for Human Rights, criminal investigation statistics show that women make up more than 90% of the victims in the area of sexual exploitation

According to the U.S. Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Report, young male traffickers, known as “lover boys” often coerce girls and women into sex trafficking through fake romantic relationships. This is another reason why women and girls are more frequently affected by these crimes and are more vulnerable to becoming victims.

For additional information consult: [Germany - United States Department of State](#)

## 10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Yes, there are several local NGOs and civil society groups in Germany working specifically on the rights of girls and women in the justice system.

### Advocacy Organizations

**Medica Mondiale:** This NGO focuses on supporting women and girls in crisis and war zones, including advocating for their rights in the justice system.

For additional information consult: <https://medicamondiale.org/en/>

**Women Against Violence:** This organization incorporates over 210 women’s counseling centers and rape crisis centers, providing support and advocacy for women and girls affected by violence

For additional information consult: <https://www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/en/>

### Legal Aid Groups

**Pro Bono Deutschland e.V.:** Offers pro bono legal advice to individuals and organizations that do not qualify for state-funded legal aid, including those working on girls’ rights.

For additional information consult: <https://www.pro-bono-deutschland.org/en/pro-bono-legal-advice/>

**Open Society Justice Initiative:** Provides legal representation to detainees and defendants who cannot afford their own lawyer, ensuring access to justice for vulnerable groups.

For additional information consult: <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/publications/legal-aid-germany>

### Community Initiatives

**Girls’ House, Frankfurt:** This initiative provides protection, support, and advice to girls affected by violence, helping them lead self-determined lives.

For additional information consult: <https://www.helpalliance.org/en/unsere-arbeit/projekte/projekt/creating-perspectives-for-young-women/>

*filia.die frauenstiftung*: Supports projects that empower girls and young women to manage responsibilities, defend themselves against violence, and develop new skills.

For additional information consult:

<https://www.filia-frauenstiftung.de/en/filias-grantmaking/girls-empowerment-program/>

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# Netherlands

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

Yes.

In 2023, 4.2 thousand girls between the ages of 12 and 18 were suspected of a crime by the police. A total of 17 thousand young people were suspected. Girls, like boys, were mainly suspected of shoplifting. Few girls were suspected of violent, traffic and drug crimes.

[Hoeveel meisjes worden verdacht van misdrijven? - Nederland in cijfers 2024 | CBS](#)

(How many young women are suspects of crimes)

2020 statistics on Children being detained in the Netherlands.

[DFC-21-08-jaarbericht-kinderrechten-in-cijfers- Jeugdstrafrecht LR](#)

1999-2022 Age, Gender statistics.

[Verdachten van misdrijven; leeftijd, geslacht en recidive 1999-2022 | CBS](#)

2. Does the law explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

There's no explicit mention of gender as a deciding factor for different treatment in Dutch juvenile law. The focus on individualized assessment allows for the consideration of gender as one factor among many when determining appropriate interventions and sentences. For example, judges and prosecutors may consider psychosocial factors, which could include gender indirectly.

[Criminal Justice Reform: Netherlands Using New Approach to Sentencing Adolescents and Young Adults](#). IACFP

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs,

community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

The Dutch juvenile justice system doesn't have detention alternatives exclusively for girls. The focus on individualized care and the range of available alternatives often results in girls being placed in settings that better address their specific needs. It's not a system of "separate but equal" but rather "appropriate and tailored."

**Secure youth care institutions (*JeugdzorgPlus*):**

While these are secure facilities, they focus on care, therapy, and education rather than punishment. Girls placed in *JeugdzorgPlus* settings will likely be housed separately from boys and have programs tailored to address potential gender-specific needs related to trauma, mental health, or social background. The goal is rehabilitation and reintegration, not simply incarceration.

[Kijk op JeugdzorgPlus: 10 jaar onderzoek Longitudinale Effectmonitor JeugdzorgPlus](#).

Nederlands *Jeugdinstituut*

4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

There does not appear to be any gender-sensitive protocols for child justice institutions.

The Council for the Administration of Criminal Justice and Protection of Juveniles is an independent body established by law.

According to its website: "The Council for the Administration of Criminal Justice and Protection of Juveniles ensures that the government enforces sanctions and juvenile protection measures in a humane and legally correct manner and in accordance with principles of proper treatment of individuals. In doing so, the Council considers the interests of detainees, the interests of victims of crime and relatives and the interests of public safety." (See here: [About the RSJ | Raad voor Strafrechtstoepassing en Jeugdbescherming](#))

The “proper treatment” principles do not contain gender-specific protocols: Proper treatment | [Publication | Raad voor Strafrechtstoepassing en Jeugdbescherming](#)

5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

There is limited publicly available data showing specific gender based violence against young women in detention or arrest. However, official 2024 statistics have been established that demonstrate that gender based violence does happen in the Netherlands, with many governmental and NGOs working to combat it.

[Discriminatiecijfers in 2024](#), Overheid.nl, see page 19/69

[Combating intimidation and violence against women and girls in the Netherlands | Gender equality and LGBTIQ+ equality | Government.nl](#)

The article below examines that young women are under-represented in being suspects of crime and criminality. There is an argument made that because there is a possible bias in favour of young women it might mean that they do not get the intervention and support needed at an early enough stage.

[Meisjes in de jeugdstrafrechtspleging: een status aparte](#)

6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

No. Dutch law does not criminalize girls for “status-offenses” or morality-based laws. If a minor, irrespective of gender, runs away, the police will help look for them and *Jeugdzorg* will be asked to propose appropriate measures when the minor is found.

[Welke jongeren verblijven in JeugdzorgPlus?](#)  
Nederlands *Jeugdinstituut*

7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

There are no specific policies for girls.

Young people in detention in the Netherlands get support from day one to help them prepare for life after release. They work with staff, family, and probation officers to set personal goals, like improving behavior and continuing education. As they progress, they earn more freedom and get help from outside organizations to make sure they have the support they need when they leave. The outside organization involved will address situations on a case-by-case basis. The organizations potentially involved are *Jeugdzorg*, *HALT*. They will look into the reintegration plan and aftercare. Mental health and education are a big part of the plan.

[Resocialization and aftercare](#), *Dienst Justiciële Inrichtingen*, Dutch Ministry of Justice

[Nazorg in de toekomst](#). Nederlands *Jeugdinstituut*

8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

There are some general EU resources but nothing specific to the Netherlands: [Resources | CFJ-EN](#)

These training materials are not detailed on gender sensitive approaches. Rather, they simply suggest that the professionals should “Behave appropriately by considering the “person’s culture, age and gender”. There is not much further information on how the professional can do this / consider the rights of girls.

For example, see the Quality Standards for Legal Assistance for Children Suspected and/or Accused: A Step-by-Step Guide [Quality Standards for Legal Assistance for Children Suspected and/or Accused: A Step-by-Step Guide](#)

There are other online training tools here: [Online Training & Courses | CFJ-EN](#)

9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

- There is a significant underrepresentation of girls in juvenile justice statistics in the Netherlands. Studies are clear about the fact that girls less often enter the justice system as offenders than boys.
- Profiles are also different profile than boys: significantly less prior experience with detention, more likely to report running away from home, depressive symptoms, and experiences of physical abuse. This makes them more vulnerable and more exposed to potential abuse such as human trafficking for instance. Some studies also insist on the importance of the relationship with the family (lack of support for instance).
- Apparently, girls enter the system as offenders less likely for violence than boys, but there has been a huge increase in the last years of offenses like shoplifting, weapon possession for defense or cybercrimes.
- Conclusion of the studies: there is a need to adapt detention and also the justice system to help girls specifically (more mental health support for instance). Suggestions are being made by the studies.

Sources:

- [Self-reported juvenile delinquency in the Netherlands in 2022/2023](#). *Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-en Datacentrum*
- [Meisjes in de jeugdstrafrechtspleging: een status aparte?](#) van den Brink, Yannick; Slotboom, M. *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*
- Delinquent girls - Background characteristics, risk factors and interventions ([Delinquent girls](#))

10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy

organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Research didn't reveal organizations exclusively dedicated to girls within the justice system, several prominent Dutch NGOs focus on children's rights, youth justice, and women's rights, which often intersect with and address the needs of girls in contact with the law. These organizations may provide legal assistance, advocacy, and support services relevant to this population.

Here are some key organizations and areas to consider:

**Defence for Children International** - Netherlands (DCI-NL): This branch of the international organization focuses on promoting and protecting the rights of all children in the Netherlands, including those in the justice system. Their work likely touches upon the experiences of girls, though not exclusively.

**Bureau Jeugdzorg**: This government agency is responsible for youth care and protection. They play a key role in coordinating services for young people in contact with the law and likely have insights into gender-specific considerations within their programs. While not an NGO, they are a key player in the field.

**Slachtofferhulp Nederland**: This organization provides support and advocacy for victims of crime, including children and youth. While not exclusively focused on girls within the justice system, they are a resource for girls who may have been victims of crime and are subsequently navigating the legal system.

Organizations focused on women's rights: Groups advocating for women's rights in the Netherlands, such as the Dutch Women's Council (*Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad*), often address issues relating to the intersection of gender and the justice system. Their work may have relevance to the experiences of girls in the juvenile justice system.

University research centers: Several universities in the Netherlands conduct research on youth justice and related topics. These centers could be valuable resources for information about relevant initiatives or projects focusing on girls in the justice system.

It is important to note that while some organizations may not have dedicated programs specifically for girls in the justice system, they often work on broader issues that affect this

population. Reaching out to these organizations directly could provide further insight into specific resources or initiatives for girls.

### Other relevant information

Useful links:

**Children and Young Adults in Criminal Detention** - Information on detention issues for children and young adults in the Netherlands:  
<https://fra.europa.eu/en/databases/criminal-detention/node/8049>

**Defence for Children** - ECPAT Netherlands is a Dutch non-governmental organization promoting children's rights in the Netherlands and internationally: [English | Defence for Children](#)

**National Research Report:** of Juveniles Suspected or Accused in the European Union (The Netherlands): [Procedural Rights of Juveniles Suspected or Accused in the European Union](#)

**Year report on children in youth prosecution**  
[Pagina niet gevonden - Kinderrechten](#)

**2024 report on girls suspected of crimes, there is a nice info graphic**  
[Hoeveel meisjes worden verdacht van misdrijven? - Nederland in cijfers 2024](#)

**Study on young women in the and the criminal justice system.**  
[Meisjes in de jeugdstrafrechtspleging: een status aparte](#)

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# New Zealand

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

Yes. The Ministry of Justice publishes justice data tables every six months, broken down by gender. Source: [Data tables | New Zealand Ministry of Justice](#). The Ministry releases the calendar year tables (year ending December 31) in March and financial year tables (year ending June 30) in September.

2. Does the law explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

No. New Zealand laws do not explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures and sentencing, although the primary legislation governing youth justice in the District Court (which presides over all criminal offences except for the most serious) recognizes the need to adopt a holistic approach to child justice that takes into account the child's or young person's gender identity. Source: [CYPF Act \(April 8, 2025 version\)](#) and [Youth Justice in New Zealand: A Restorative Justice Approach to Reduce Youth Offending](#). Additionally, the system set up by this legislation includes principles that may indirectly lead to consideration of gender such as (i) families are to be central to all the decision-making processes involving their children and young people, (ii) young people are themselves to have a say in how their offending is to be responded to, and (iii) the model of decision-making advocated is to be group consensus. Source: [Youth Justice in New Zealand: A Restorative Justice Approach to Reduce Youth Offending](#).

More broadly, the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, which governs the New Zealand youth justice system, is effectively "gender neutral." While the Act provides that consideration of the young person's needs is necessary (Section 4), gender is not explicitly stated as a consideration. Source: [Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

There are alternatives that offer minimum security for the young prison population and that align with the United Nations' minimum standards, though they do not seem to be focused on girls in particular. Multisystemic therapies and family therapy have made great strides in corrective and behavioral procedures with juvenile offenders, but are not necessarily specifically available or adapted for girls. Source: [Rethinking Youth Justice: Alternatives to Juvenile Detention](#)

4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

The New Zealand youth justice system, which is governed by the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, is effectively "gender neutral." While the Act provides that consideration of the young person's needs is necessary (Section 4), and where practicable, causes of offending should be addressed (Section 208), at no point is gender explicitly stated as a consideration. Source: [Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

Other institutions, while not exclusively for children, do have gender-sensitive protocols. For example, New Zealand's Ombudsman and Independent Police Conduct Authority have adopted "OPCAT Expectations for Court Facilities," which set out the expectations for the conditions and treatment of people detained in court facilities and mention that detainees should be separated according to their gender identity. It further acknowledges that certain groups and people commonly face a particular risk of ill-treatment and have specific needs related to factors such as their sex and/or gender, age, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, migration status, nationality, economic

status, disability or addiction. Source: [OPCAT Expectations for Court Facilities](#).

Further, the NZ Prison Operations Manual contains specified gender and age movements, specifically for “Under 18 years old female prisoners” (M.03.07). Source: [M.03.07.01 Young women aged between 14 and 17 years of age | Department of Corrections](#)

5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

Yes, violence against girls, including sexual violence and general violence, is a concern during detention in New Zealand. Child sexual abuse is a specific concern, with female children and young people being more likely to report as victims. Reports indicate that over half of prisoners have experienced some form of general violence, and nearly one-fifth have experienced sexual violence, including rape. Prisoner-on-prisoner violence and other related abuses are also identified as systemic problems in prisons and detention facilities. Sources: [New Zealand - United States Department of State](#) and [b30 report new zealand en.pdf](#)

6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

No, the law does not criminalize status offenses for girls or boys, including running away, vagrancy, or truancy.

However, it is possible that children found to be vagrant, loitering, truant or on the run may be subject to protective measures. For example, under Section 48 of the Children’s and Young People’s Well-being Act, a child between the age of 14 and 18 found unaccompanied by a parent or guardian in a situation in which the child’s physical or mental health is being, or is likely to be, impaired, the police may use reasonable force to take the child home or to custody if the child refuses to consent to being returned or does not

have a home to which they can be returned. Courts may then make care orders with respect to a child so detained, which may include an order for custody if they are deemed to be in need of care and protection. Source: [New Zealand - The Legal Atlas for Street Children](#) and [New Zealand - Are children criminalised for vagrancy, loitering, truancy or similar activities?](#)

7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

There are national policies and programs that support reintegration of youth, but they are gender-neutral. As codified in the *Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989, as amended*, Family Group Conferences (FGCs), described by New Zealand government as a “world-leading model for helping vulnerable children, young people, and their families”, do not specifically focus on the reintegration of girls. Source: [Revisiting New Zealand’s “gift to the world”](#) In fact, the relatively small number of girls that offend has made it difficult for researchers to answer questions about whether or not there are important gender issues in relation to FGC, and whether or not girls respond differently from boys when involved in a restorative process. Source: [Differences in How Girls and Boys Respond to Family Group Conference: Preliminary Research Results - Ministry of Social Development](#).

8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

While New Zealand provides training for justice professionals on approaches to child justice, it is not clear that these approaches are specifically gender-sensitive. Trainings, such as those offered by organizations like Child Matters, can focus on broader topics such as child abuse. Source: [No75\\_10VE\\_O’Driscoll.pdf, Report of External Evaluation and Review - Child Matters](#) and [Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

In general, studies show that female youth offenders experience a higher rate of childhood trauma, family dysfunction, and abuse, including sexual abuse. This type of abuse is also a strong predictor of recidivism among female youth offenders. Source: [Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Yes, several New Zealand NGOs work on the rights of girls within the justice system, focusing on issues like child protection, legal aid, and advocacy for marginalized groups. Some examples include organizations like the Ministry for Women, the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, and UN Women. Source: [b30 report new zealand en.pdf](#) and [NZ-National-Action-Plan-on-Women-Peace-and-Security.pdf](#)

New Zealand's youth justice system strives for gender neutrality, treating young offenders similarly regardless of sex. However, recognizing that girls often face unique challenges such as poverty, abuse, and past trauma, the system is increasingly incorporating gender-responsive approaches. While not explicitly gender-based, the focus is on addressing the specific needs and circumstances of young female offenders to ensure their rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society. This involves ongoing efforts to better integrate gender considerations into all practices, especially for vulnerable girls. Source: [Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

**Other relevant information**

Attendance check! Add your attendance below:

1. Maxim Tsotsorin

2. Nadia Makki
3. Julia Mehlman
4. Mariana Carrillo Meza
5. Audeena Ford

[Child and youth offending patterns - research reports - Ministry of Social Development](#)

"Young female offenders comprise approximately one fifth of the New Zealand youth offender population."

"In 2018, 16% of young people aged 12 to 17 years old who were remanded in custody were female, and 83% of these young females were Māori"

[Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PubMed](#)

Ministry of Justice data tables

[Data tables | New Zealand Ministry of Justice](#)

Laws: [Youth Justice in New Zealand: Principles and Procedures - New Zealand Parliament](#) ; [Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 No 24 \(as at 04 September 2013\), Public Act Contents – New Zealand Legislation](#) ; [Youth justice | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#)

[Children, Young Persons, and Their Families \(Oranga Tamariki\) Legislation Act 2017 No 31 \(as at 01 July 2019\), Public Act – New Zealand Legislation](#)

Alternatives: [Building Support for Alternatives to Detention for Children in NZ - International Detention Coalition](#)

[Rethinking youth justice: there are alternatives to juvenile detention](#)

[Military-Style Academies | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#)

YOUTH JUSTICE IN NEW ZEALAND: A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACH TO REDUCE YOUTH OFFENDING Stephen j. O'driscoll [No75\\_10VE\\_O'Driscoll.pdf](#)

Prison operations Manual contains specified gender and age movements, one specifically for "Under 18 years old female prisoners" (M.03.07) [M.03.07.01 Young women aged between 14 and 17 years of age | Department of Corrections](#)

NZ Police Manual [Police Manual Chapters | New Zealand Police](#)

Youth Court Protocols [Youth Court protocols | The District Court of New Zealand](#)

Ministry for Children, [Youth Justice Youth justice | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#)

“...in a retrospective study on 1,000 youth justice FGCs, Maxwell et al. (2012) found that, in general, young females reported more negative experiences in the FGC than did young males. Young females were less likely to report being consulted about who should attend the conference, and while 73% of young males reported that they were able to say what they wanted at the FGC, 52% of young females were, with over half reporting that they felt too intimidated to say what they wanted to.” [Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

Family Group Conferences (FGCs) serve an important role in the process in both pre-charge and post-charge stages of detention – *codified by Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 as amended*

Youth justice Residences – [Youth justice residences | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#)

Youth Justice Community Homes [Youth Justice Community Homes | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#)

[Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

“Young female offenders experience alarmingly high rates of all forms of childhood and adolescent maltreatment, in particular sexual abuse.”

“A history of sexual abuse has been found to be the strongest predictor of later recidivism for young females who have offended, even after controlling for additional risk factors of recidivism, including prior legal involvement and conduct problems” [Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

“Recidivism rates after an FGC are typically lower for young females than for young males, but this

may have less to do with the success of FGCs and more to do with lower overall recidivism rates seen in young female offenders” [Young female offenders and the New Zealand Youth Justice System: the need for a gender-specific response - PMC](#)

Donna Swift, principal researcher for a New Zealand-based project within Stopping Violence Services, The Girls’ Project.

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# South Africa

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

There do not appear to be any girl children in detention, as of a Unicef report updated October 2024.

URL:

<https://data.unicef.org/resources/dataset/children-in-detention/>

An article in South Africa documents 96 children being detained in November 2024. However, it has not been recorded how many of those are girls.

<https://www.centreforchildlaw.co.za/2024/11/centre-for-child-law-calls-on-authorities-to-respect-childrens-rights-in-address-the-stilfontein-mine-crisis/>

2. Does the law explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

Yes. The [Child Justice Act 75 of 2008](#) notably requires that “a child who is in detention in police custody must be [...] detained separately from adults, and boys must be held separately from girls (section 28). In addition, it requires that girls must be under the care of an adult female (section 33).

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

Yes, South Africa offers several alternatives to detention and the Child Justice Act requires that gender-specific needs are taken into account. These alternatives are part of broader diversion and rehabilitation strategies, some of which are tailored to address the unique vulnerabilities and needs of girls.

See:

- Page 83 in [JUVENILE SENTENCE AND INTERVENTION OPTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA](#), Antoinette Vermooten, University of Kwazulu-Natal, 2005
  - [Diversion programmes for children in conflict with the law](#), Western Cape Government
4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)
    - There does not seem to exist any specific training manual to address detention of girls. However training developed for the police forces includes information on gender, although that concept is not defined under South African law. See:
      - [SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE BASIC AND SPECIALISED TRAINING OVERVIEW](#)
      - [White Paper on Remand Detention Management in South Africa](#)
      - [POLICE SENSITISATION TRAINING MANUAL](#)
  5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

The Constitution and the Children’s Act and Child Justice Act provide the base for children’s rights in South Africa - there does not seem to be gender specific protection.

<https://www.centreforchildlaw.co.za/children/>

<https://www.centreforchildlaw.co.za/rights-of-the-child/>

We could not find any reliable detention data. The prevalence of abuse against vulnerable groups in

police custody is unknown owing to low levels of reporting by victims and the lack of available complaints mechanisms. The absence of regular and independent monitoring of police cells is exacerbated by the impunity enjoyed by members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and contributes to the continued violation of human rights of persons in police custody. Gender-based violence and discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest is a documented issue in South Africa.

**See: INDEPENDENT MONITORING OF POLICE DETENTION FACILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Specific cases are unable to be linked due to privacy concerns, reports from organizations like the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on children's rights, women's rights, and criminal justice reform often highlight these problems. These reports often point to issues like:

- **Sexual assault and harassment:** Girls in detention, especially those in police custody or other temporary holding facilities, are vulnerable to sexual abuse by both staff and other detainees.
- **Lack of access to sanitary products:** This is a form of discrimination that impacts the health and dignity of detained girls.
- **Discriminatory treatment:** Girls might be treated differently than boys during arrest and detention, including harsher treatment or lack of consideration for their specific needs as girls.
- **Lack of gender-sensitive procedures and facilities:** Detention centers might lack separate facilities for girls, putting them at increased risk. They might also lack female staff to address the particular needs of detained girls.
- **Lack of access to legal and psychosocial support:** This impacts girls' ability to understand their rights and navigate the justice system.

**Information about specific legal protections for girls in the South African justice system:**

South Africa has several legal protections for girls in the justice system, stemming from its Constitution and international agreements it has ratified. The Children's Act 38 of 2005 is particularly important. It emphasizes the best interests of the child, diversion from formal court processes, and special protections for children in

conflict with the law. Other relevant legal frameworks include the Criminal Procedure Act and various pieces of legislation addressing gender-based violence.

**Initiatives undertaken by organizations to address these issues:**

Numerous organizations in South Africa work to address gender-based violence and discrimination against girls in the justice system. NGOs like the Centre for Child Law and Justice for Children advocate for legal reform, provide legal representation for children, and conduct research to highlight these issues. Other organizations offer psychosocial support, safe houses, and educational programs for girls. Governmental bodies like the SAHRC also play a role through investigations and advocacy. Searching for these organizations online will provide more detail on their initiatives.

**6. Are girls criminalized for "status offenses" or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)**

Generally, there are no morality laws codified that we are able to find.

**7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)**

South Africa has several national strategies and frameworks aimed at reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration. These include:

- The Correctional Services Act and the Child Justice Act, which focus on the humane custody, rehabilitation, and social reintegration of offenders.
- The Restorative Justice National Policy Framework, which emphasizes the value of restorative justice in building safer communities and includes offender treatment, rehabilitation, reintegration, and support.

These policies and programs aim to provide a comprehensive approach to reintegration, including vocational training, psychological support, and community-based initiatives.

See: [RESTORATIVE JUSTICE - NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK](#)

8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

There are several training programs and resources available for justice professionals in South Africa:

- The International Center for Transitional Justice offers a training module series on gender and transitional justice, which includes practical examples and discussions on important topics such as truth seeking, reparative justice, criminal justice, memorialization, and women's voices and participation in justice processes.

URL: [7 Gender & TJ - Appendix - Additional Resources.pdf](#)

- The Gender and Transitional Justice Training Module Series aims to broaden the knowledge of civil society groups and other practitioners on how to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach into the design and implementation of transitional justice programs. These programs and resources aim to equip justice professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to address gender-sensitive issues in child justice effectively.

URL: [Gender and Transitional Justice: A Training Module Series | International Center for Transitional Justice](#)

9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

According to a multi-country analytical study conducted by UN Women, there is a steep rise in poor access to justice for women and girls in East and Southern Africa, including South Africa. The study highlights that girls often enter the justice system as victims of violence, abuse, and trafficking. The study also emphasizes the need for gender-responsive justice institutions to address these issues effectively. URL: [https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/esa\\_eknowledge\\_series\\_the\\_situation\\_of\\_access\\_to\\_justice\\_for\\_women\\_and\\_girls\\_in\\_east\\_and\\_southern\\_africa-rev.pdf](https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/esa_eknowledge_series_the_situation_of_access_to_justice_for_women_and_girls_in_east_and_southern_africa-rev.pdf)

10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Yes:

- [Sonke Gender Justice](#) runs youth-led initiatives and community education programmes that include girls affected by violence and justice system failures.
- [Soul City Institute](#) runs programmes like *Soul Buddyz Clubs* and *RISE Young Women Clubs* which provide safe spaces for girls to learn, lead, and advocate for their rights.
- [Social Justice Women](#) runs campaigns to prevent teenage pregnancy, promote school reintegration, and educate girls on healthy relationships and justice access.

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# Switzerland

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

[Juveniles placed on reference day | Federal Statistical Office - FSO](#)

Switzerland

Number of juvenile / minor inmates:

Total: 458

Male: 90,6%

Female: 9,4%

\*Switzerland, number of imprisoned male and female minors: retrieved from the Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland ([www.bfs.admin.ch](http://www.bfs.admin.ch)) under the label "Juvenile detention: Juveniles in secured accommodation under juvenile law on reference day" (reference date: 2025).

Figures about women in prison in Switzerland: [switzerland\\_country\\_report\\_0.pdf](#)

2. Does the law in explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

[Schweizerisches Strafgesetzbuch/Swiss Penal Code | Gender Justice | US Law | LII / Legal Information Institute](#)

Swiss law does not explicitly incorporate gender considerations. But the Swiss Penal Code includes provisions that address offenses affecting girls (e.g., Art 124)

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs,

community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

In the canton of Fribourg, Switzerland, a mediation scheme has been worked out for children in conflict with the law.

[16804b2cf3](#)

There is a lack of prison dedicated to women/girls:

Prisons for women

Total prison population: 6,881

Number of facilities for women: 26

Women in prison: 385 (5.7%)

Number of facilities exclusively for women : 3

Women in pre-trial detention : 131

Number of mixed facilities with special units for women: 23

[switzerland\\_country\\_report\\_0.pdf](#)

4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

In Switzerland, minors who commit offences between the ages of 10 and 18 are subject to the special regime of juvenile criminal law and procedure. The purpose of juvenile criminal law is to promote the protection of minors and is primarily aimed at achieving educational or restorative objectives.

[Juvenile criminal law | Penalex.](#)

5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for

## NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

Some NGOs reported some accommodations were not gender sensitive.

Only 3 prisons in Switzerland are exclusively dedicated to women

[switzerland\\_country\\_report\\_0.pdf](#)

6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

No evidence that girls in Switzerland are criminalized for status offenses or morality-based laws.

However, it happened years ago and the victims have not been indemnified for the abuse suffered

[The trauma of Switzerland’s morality detentions - BBC News.](#)

7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

Switzerland has several national and collaborative programs aimed at supporting the reintegration of young people, including girls, after involvement in the justice system. These initiatives focus on vocational training, psychological support, and social reintegration.

[The Vocational Training Support Programme - Projects - Site](#)

[The official Swiss portal for vocational education and training | vocationaleducation.ch](#)

[Young People with Mental Disorders and Vocational Training | ZHAW Applied Psychology](#)

8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-

## sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

Justice Rapid Response and other organizations are involved in providing training to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches, including those related to child justice, in Switzerland. This includes the development of online training courses, as well as specialized courses like the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Juvenile Justice at the University of Geneva. These courses focus on restorative and reparative approaches to juvenile justice, addressing gender issues, and child-friendly justice frameworks.

[Child-friendly justice in practice: An online training for professionals working with convicted children - IPS Innovative Prison Systems.](#)

[Justice Rapid Response | Making Justice Possible.](#)

9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

[Switzerland should improve identification of human trafficking victims and their access to justice and assistance - Portal](#)

Girls in Switzerland are more likely to enter the justice system as victims, particularly in cases related to trafficking and abuse.

[Switzerland should improve identification of human trafficking victims and their access to justice and assistance - Portal](#)

Report by the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA).

Not specifically focused on girls, but they are the main victims of trafficking

10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy

organizations, legal aid groups,  
community initiatives)

We were not able to find girls/justice focused organizations in Switzerland. There is a coordination group for women's rights that has a list of member organizations at:

[postbeijing.ch – Frauen\\*Rechte – Mitgliederorganisationen](#)

Of those members, Brava ([Home – Brava](#)), which combats violence against women and sexism in Switzerland has certain initiatives that cover girls. While they are focused on women generally and not just girls in the justice system, they do cover key issues applicable to girls ([Violence against women – Brava](#))

### **Other relevant information**

[Gender Equality Strategy 2030 - Home](#)

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# Turkey

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

There are no official statistics on the numbers of girl children in detention or in conflict with the law in Türkiye. While the *'Estimating the number of children deprived of liberty in the administration of justice, 2021'* includes details of the number of children in detention per 100,000 population, this report does not breakdown the statistics for girl children in Türkiye.

According to statistics from the Civil Society in the Penal System Association (CISST), an association founded to protect the rights and freedoms of prisoners in Turkish prisons, Turkish prisons house 3,690 children aged 12 to 18, including 165 girls. In addition, 759 children under the age of 6 live with their mothers in prison, among a total of 16,039 incarcerated women across the country.

#### Sources:

1. UNICEF Türkiye Annual Report 2023: [RAM3 COAR.rdl](#)
2. Türkiye Child Survey, 2022: [Türkiye Child Survey 2022.pdf](#)
3. Estimating the number of children deprived of liberty in the administration of justice, 2021: [Estimating the number of children deprived of liberty in the administration of justice - UNICEF DATA](#)
4. TURKEY: Joint Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2022: [TURKEY: Joint Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - Global Detention Project | Mapping immigration detention around the world](#)
5. TURKEY CHILD RIGHTS REPORT (The "KHK" Children- The Little Victims of Turkey's State of Emergency Laws) SEPTEMBER – 2022, [CBJ-TURKEY-CHILD-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf](#)
6. Stockholm Center for Freedom, *759 children under 6 live in Turkish prisons as incarceration rates soar*, November 19, 2024,

[759 children under 6 live in Turkish prisons as incarceration rates soar – Stockholm Center for Freedom](#)

2. Does the law in explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

Turkish Law doesn't explicitly differentiate sentencing based on gender in the juvenile justice system itself, gender does play a role in broader child protection laws and how cases involving children might intersect with other areas of law. This is particularly relevant in cases involving violence or abuse.

**Child Protection Law No. 5395:** This law focuses on the protection of children from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, regardless of gender.

**Turkish Penal Code (TCK):** The Penal Code addresses crimes against children but doesn't have specific gender-differentiated sentencing guidelines within the juvenile justice context. However, gender can be a factor in how certain crimes are defined and prosecuted, especially regarding sexual offenses.

**Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women:** While not a child-specific law, it offers significant protections for children within the context of domestic violence. This law recognizes that girls and boys can experience domestic violence differently and provides measures for protection and support that can be gender-specific when necessary. For example, it facilitates access to shelters and support services for women and their children escaping abusive situations. This law also influences child custody decisions in cases involving domestic violence.

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs,

## community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

In the Turkish Penal Code, a child is defined as a person who has not yet reached the age of eighteen. In Turkish Penal Code, children who commit crimes are defined as “*children dragged into crime*”, but this definition does not distinguish between boys and girls. In Turkish Child Protection Law Child dragged into crime is person who is under investigation or prosecution for allegedly committing an act defined as a crime in the law, or the child for whom a security measure has been decided due to the act committed.

There are no special measures or procedures for girls, but there are some soft measures in the following regulations:

1. Turkish Child Protection Code
  - a) Article 11 - Child-specific security measures (The measures applied to children who commit crimes regardless of gender are counseling, education, care, health and housing measures.)
  - b) Article 13 - Issuing decisions on cautionary measures without a hearing for children who are dragged into crime, children who are not criminally responsible and children in need of protection
  - c) Article 21- Prohibition of arrest of children under 15 years of age

[1.5.5395.pdf](#) (in Turkish)

2. Turkish Criminal Procedure Code
  - a) Article 109- judicial control measure ([00-feridun yenisey](#))
3. Law on the protection of the family and prevention of violence against women (law no 6284)
  - a) Article 14 - Employment of female employees in violence prevention and monitoring centers ([Başbakanlık Mevzuatı Geliştirme ve Yayın Genel Müdürlüğü](#))

There are no gender-specific centers for girls in Türkiye, but there are measures to be taken against children who commit crimes and there are certain centers for their protection. These centers are established under the Ministry of Family and the Ministry of Justice.

1. Çocuk Adalet Merkezi (child justice center) - [Çocuk Adalet Merkezi \(ÇAM\)](#)

2. Sosyal hizmetler ve çocuk esirgeme kurumu (Social Services and Child Protection Agency) - [General Directorate of Child Services | General Directorate of Child Services](#) (English)
3. Children’s Protection Research and Implementation Centre in Marmara University [Tarihçe | Children’s Protection Research and Implementation Centre | Marmara University](#)

In addition, the law provides for specific prisons for women who commit crimes and women guards; but they may not be available in every province in Turkey. There are no special prisons for children; children from 12 to 18 are detained in separate wards of adult prisons. Girls can be accommodated in sections dedicated for women, if available.

See Articles 10 and 11 of the Enforcement of Penal and Securities Measures Law, [Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi](#).

4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

EU and Turkish authorities have been working to improve protection of vulnerable groups within the Turkish justice system (but this is not specifically focused on girls).

This has been tackled by setting up “Judicial Interview Rooms” or “AGOs” (Adli Görüşme Odası) in courthouses to attempt to make interviews less intimidating for the interviewee.

(Source: [EU and Turkish authorities improve protection of vulnerable groups in the justice system | EEAS](#))

5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

While there are evidence of, and documentation addressing, gender-based violence and discrimination against women in detention or during arrest in Türkiye, specific instances relating

to girl children are harder to find and not readily available in the public domain.

Additionally, while there are several reports that highlight gender-based violence against women, specific instances in detention or during arrest are limited.

#### Sources:

1. [Turkey: End sexual violence against women in custody!](#) - This report highlights instances of sexual violence and other forms of physical abuse against women and girls in custody. It documents cases of strip-searching, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the use of “virginity testing” as a form of control and humiliation
2. Violence against Women in Turkey A Report to the Committee against Torture: [eng\\_2003\\_09\\_turkey.pdf](#)
3. Situation report on Violence against Women: [Factsheet-2017-VAW-Turkey-EN.pdf](#)
4. [WAVE Report Turkey FINAL EN 6March2016-3-3.pdf](#)
6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

The legal framework does not explicitly criminalize girls for “status offenses” in Türkiye. However, in practice, girls and young women often face punitive measures rooted in societal norms and legal interpretations that disproportionately affect them.

Türkiye’s Child Protection Law aligns with international standards to safeguard children’s rights. Despite this, there are instances where minors, especially girls, are subjected to legal actions that may not fully consider their age and vulnerability.

Below is an example from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law reports.

The “Karakaya v. Turkey” case involved a girl who was abducted and forced into marriage with one of her kidnappers. Despite her claims of coercion, the courts accepted the marriage and subsequently hindered her attempts at divorce.

The husband and accomplices were charged with abduction, but the proceedings were suspended or terminated due to the marriage. This left the victim trapped in forced marriage and demonstrated the inadequacy of legal protections for girls in such situations.

While this case doesn’t directly address the criminalization of girls for status offenses, it strongly suggests a lack of protection for girls’ rights in Türkiye. The court’s actions, or rather inaction, effectively condoned the forced marriage and denied the applicant effective remedies. This reinforces the vulnerability of girls within a system that prioritizes tradition and male testimony over their fundamental rights and well-being. Even though the girl wasn’t charged with a crime herself, the state’s failure to protect her and provide redress effectively punished her for being a victim, further marginalizing her and highlighting the systemic inequalities girls face.

7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

There is no specific information on girls.

On March 2nd, 2021, a “Human Rights Action Plan” was announced. One of the goals of such action plan was the “Protection of Vulnerable Groups and Strengthening Social Welfare” that addresses children’s rights, including children in conflict with the law.

#### Supporting Children’s Physical and Psychological Development:

- Medical examinations for children in legal proceedings will be conducted with a chaperone present and only with the child’s consent or a specialist’s recommendation, following Council of Europe guidelines.
- Family courts will be situated on independent campuses to better protect family privacy and the best interests of the child. Courtrooms will be child-friendly, and legal professionals will not wear robes during proceedings.
- For first-time offenses (excluding serious crimes), children under 15 may not be subject to investigation, and dedicated protection mechanisms will be developed. Cases involving children will be prioritized, and

psychosocial support will be provided for those under judicial control orders.

#### Development of Child-Justice-System-Sensitive Enforcement Practices:

- Children in correctional facilities will have increased access to physical activities, youth camps, and family visits.
- Released children without families will be reported to social services for support and protective measures.
- Dedicated child offices within probation departments will be established to monitor children involved in the judicial system.

Existing legislation is generally adequate, but the main issue lies with its inconsistent application and enforcement. Therefore, while the action plan is a positive step, more comprehensive and participatory policies are needed to address these shortcomings effectively.

The report also assesses the developments under the National Programme; the improvement areas, shortcomings and suggestions substantiated with facts and figures.

URL: [SUCA SURUKLENEN COCUKLAR.pdf](#)

The below academic report also mentions The Ministry of Justice's Psychosocial Units have developed numerous preventative and therapeutic intervention programs for children, including earlier versions of Aggression Regulation Training.

URL: [PHD 7 3 148 151.pdf](#)

#### 8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

There are examples of training being provided to law enforcement and legal professionals in respect gender-sensitive approaches to justice, but these examples are **not** specifically focused on girls:

- In September 2022, members of the police force in Turkey attended "Training of Trainers on Combating Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women for Law Enforcement" which was organized by

UNFPA Türkiye and the Ministry of Interior. The training was organised to "protect the safety and well-being of women and children and to strengthen the information and response capacity of law enforcement officers working in this field". Source: [UNFPA Türkiye | Police and Gendarmerie Gathered at the Violence Against Women Training](#).

- In February - April 2024, university students in Turkey were provided training with respect to supporting women's access to justice. This was part of the action by the European Union/Council of Europe named "Fostering women's access to justice in Türkiye". Note that this training did not relate specifically to children or girls. (Source: [University students in Türkiye trained on gender-sensitive legal practices - Council of Europe Programme Office in Ankara](#))

#### 9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

Although our searches did not enable to confirm with official sources / data that girls are more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns, the Stockholm Center for Freedom states that the justice system in Türkiye fails to protect women and girls from violence and abuse. Reports indicate that women and girls often face victimization within the legal system, with issues such as inadequate protection orders, ineffective investigations, and a lack of support from authorities. The Turkish government's approach to addressing violence against women is often framed in conservative terms, contributing to a culture of impunity. The situation is exacerbated by the ruling party's policies, which have been criticized for fostering a sense of inaction and resistance from the authorities ([Women's Rights in Turkey: 2024 in Review - Stockholm Center for Freedom](#))

Article 29 of the Turkish Penal Code has often been used to reduce sentences for men accused of gender-based crimes on the grounds that the victim provoked the murder with her actions. ([default.aspx](#))

#### 10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice

system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

Although there are no NGOs working particularly on the rights of girls in the justice system, there are NGOs addressing children's rights in the justice system. See below.

UNICEF works in Türkiye to protect children in the justice system, whether as victims, witnesses, or those in conflict with the law.

[Çocuklar için adalet | UNICEF Türkiye.](#)

**Youth Re-Autonomy Foundation of Turkey:** To achieve a society where no child is deprived of their liberty, by protecting the best interests of children in the juvenile justice system and those at risk.

[Türkiye Çocuklara Yeniden Özgürlük Vakfı – Çocuk suçluluğu alanındaki ilk sivil toplum kuruluşu.](#)

**IMDAT:** A key first step in preventing violence, according to IMDAT is recognizing and acknowledging it as a genuine problem. Their initial efforts have focused on raising awareness of this issue. Because children and women are disproportionately affected by violence, the organization has prioritized educational initiatives aimed at these vulnerable groups.

URL: [Hakkımızda | İmdat](#)

**CISST:** The Civil Society in the Penal System Association (Ceza İnfaz Sisteminde Sivil Toplum Derneği, CISST) was founded in 2006 in Istanbul. CISST works to protect the rights and liberties of prisoners and to provide that the rights, conditions, and practices in prisons in Türkiye comply with human dignity and universal standards of human rights.

[Endişeliyiz! LGBTİ Hapishanesine İlişkin Adalet Bakanlığı'na Çağrı ve Önerilerimiz - CISST](#)

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# United Arab Emirates

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

There seems to be no official or detailed data related to justice for children and more specifically on girl children in detention or in conflict with the law. As highlighted by the special report following a visit in December 2024, the FCSC (Federal Competitiveness Competence Center) seems to start collecting limited data on violence against women and girls in the UAE, including cases of rape, gender-based violence, and physical abuse. However, the data is incomplete, lacking details such as age, nationality, crime type, location, and perpetrator profiles. There is also no information on referral systems or outcomes of judicial proceedings. The UN emphasizes that data collection should go beyond reporting and be accessible to stakeholders to inform policies, improve protection systems, ensure accountability, and prevent future crimes.

See:

- [ACCUEIL - IDE Sion – Institut international des droits de l'enfant](#) (no data on UAE)
- United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, [SUMMARY PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS](#) following Official visit to the United Arab Emirates From 9 to 19 December 2024

2. Does the law explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

United Arab Emirates (UAE) laws generally refer to children without specific gender differentiation in the context of child justice procedures and sentencing.

Below are some examples of laws related to child justice and protection in the UAE:

- Federal Law No. (6) of 2022 concerning Juvenile Delinquent and Juvenile at Risk of Delinquency - [United Arab Emirates Legislations | Federal Law Concerning Juvenile Delinquent and Juvenile at Risk of Delinquency](#)
- Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema's Law) - [download](#)
- Federal Law No. (10) of (2019) on Protection Against Family Violence - [United Arab Emirates Legislations | Federal Decree-Law on the Protection Against Domestic Violence](#)

3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

There is no differentiation in the UAE laws between female and male children.

In accordance with the following article 8 of Federal Law No. (6) of 2022 concerning Juvenile Delinquent and Juvenile at Risk of Delinquency, minors cannot be sentenced to imprisonment in ordinary prisons and may only be detained at educational centers for minors ("juvenile associations"):

1. "The Juvenile Delinquent shall not be sentenced to death or imprisonment.
2. The death penalty or imprisonment for the offence committed by the Delinquent Juvenile shall be replaced by imprisonment for a period not exceeding (10) ten years.
3. The period of imprisonment imposed on a Juvenile Delinquent may not exceed half of the maximum limit prescribed for the original penalty. In all cases, the imprisonment that may be imposed on the Delinquent Juvenile in accordance with this Article shall be executed in the Juvenile Association. If the Delinquent Juvenile has reached the age of (18) eighteen years and he still has a remaining period, the Delinquent Juvenile shall be transferred to the Penal Institution or Association to complete the rest of the punishment."

In addition to the above, UAE laws promote:

- informal resolutions for less serious offenses, involving families, social workers and community leaders (such as mediation, restorative justice practices or agreements on behavioral changes)
- community based programs (such as counseling, rehabilitation and reintegration programs)
- Probation and supervision which may be an alternative to detention if instructed by the court (article 12 of Federal Law No. (6) of 2022)
- Electronic surveillance.

Sources:

- Federal Law No. (6) of 2022 concerning Juvenile Delinquent and Juvenile at Risk of Delinquency - [United Arab Emirates Legislations | Federal Law Concerning Juvenile Delinquent and Juvenile at Risk of Delinquency](#)
  - Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema's Law)
  - Legal overview on juvenile laws in the UAE [download](#)  
[Legal Overview on Juvenile Laws in the UAE - STA Law Firm, Social%20Care](#)
4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

I could not find publicly available data on gender sensitive protocols in child friendly rules.

In general, Juvenile courts are not open to public as per the federal laws.

Sources:

- [United Arab Emirates Legislations | Federal Law Concerning Juvenile Delinquent and Juvenile at Risk of Delinquency](#) (Federal Law Concerning Juvenile Delinquent and Juvenile at Risk of Delinquency)
- [Legal Overview on Juvenile Laws in the UAE - STA Law Firm](#)
- [unicef.org/eca/media/5171/file](#) (UNICEF's guidelines on child friendly legal aid / no data

on UAE's implementation of similar guidelines)

5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)

There seems to be a general lack of data on the population's attitudes towards gender roles and responsibilities and the prevalence of violence against women seems to complicate a full assessment of gender-based discrimination. The SIGI (OECD) country profile 2023 for UAE indicates that there is no data comparable to other countries on access to justice for example.

See: [country profile ARE United Arab Emirates.pdf](#)

6. Are girls criminalized for "status offenses" or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)

The situation is complex, and information can be limited due to cultural sensitivities. Explicit offences are not clearly defined or codified, but some actions are considered breaches of morality or social norms. Article 358 of the Federal Penal Code reads: "Whoever openly commits an indecent and disgraceful act shall be punished by detention for a period of at least six months."

For example, tolerance with respect to deviations to dress codes differs between different Emirates in the UAE, with Sharjah being the strictest and Dubai being the most lenient.

As to same-sex behavior, it is criminalized under Article 354 of the Federal Penal Code of the UAE. It's important to note that interpretations and applications of this law can vary and are often subject to debate.

Moral crimes are penalized under the Federal Penal Code, which provides for articles related to indecency, adultery, and extramarital affairs. These laws apply to all genders, however societal expectations and traditional gender roles might lead to different interpretations and applications

for girls and women. Accusations of “indecent behavior” could be more readily directed at girls based on culturally specific interpretations of appropriate female conduct. However, I couldn’t find case of law due to cultural sensitivities.

**7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)**

There is no specific national policy or program specifically addressing the reintegration of girls.

**8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)**

Abu Dhabi’s Child Protection Policy stipulates the implementation of child protection unit in public bodies, including schools, hospitals and justice system. It is built on three guiding principles: the best interests of the child, equality and non-discrimination, and respecting the child’s right to privacy and confidentiality of information. It notably aims to ensure continued professional development and training to upskill and develop capabilities. We could not find clear information on trainings / protocols for justice professionals on gender sensitive policies for juvenile.

Sources:

- [UAE: New child protection policy targets rapid intervention in cases](#)
- [Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority – Child Protection](#)

**9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on**

**victimization and pathways into justice)**

It has proven difficult to find data on whether the girls enter the system because of victimisation or protection concerns. There is some limited data available on why girls are more likely to enter the justice system in general. For example, a “Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in the MENA and Arab States Region” (NB: not specific to, but including, UAE) estimates that one in five girls are married before the age of 18, and one in 25 before the age of 15, and that some of the countries in the region have the highest female genital mutilation prevalence rates in the world. One in three females are likely to be exposed to intimate partner violence which is higher than the global level. These are harmful practices that are pathways into the justice system. Moreover, the report notes that girls in the region continue to face very challenging barriers to accessing justice in both formal and informal institutions.

Source: [Pillar-3\\_V2](#)

**10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)**

No. However, while not specifically targeting the rights of girls in the justice system, the following provide assistance to women & children who are victims of domestic violence, abuse and human trafficking -

[TAMM – Ewa’a Shelter for Women and Children](#)

مكتب أبوظبي الإعلامي الإعلاني on X: “Abu Dhabi Executive Council has issued a resolution establishing Abu Dhabi Shelter and Humanitarian Care Centre (Ewa’a) as an affiliate of @DCDAbuDhabi, under the honorary chairmanship of HH Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, Supreme Chairperson of the Family Development Foundation.

[Government of Sharjah Social Services Department](#)

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# United Kingdom

1. Are there any official statistics on the number of girls children in detention or in conflict with the law? (Search for national justice ministry data, UNICEF or NGO reports)

As of the latest data available, there are approximately 430 children in custody at any one time in England and Wales.

[\[Youth Justice Statistics: 2022 to 2023 \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK\]](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024> Girls make up a small portion of this number. Specifically, girls account for less than 2% of the children in custody.

[\[Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System 2023 \(HTML\) - GOV.UK\]](#)

The UK has an independent inspector of probation and youth justice services in England and Wales ("HM Inspectorate of Probation"). "Girls" is one of the specific sub-groups.

## Key findings:

- Girls in the youth justice system account for 15% of the total caseload
- In 2023, 14% of the children sentenced or cautioned were girls
- Girls offending is usually less serious than boys, with only 6% of girls committing offences in the most serious category (compared with 18% for boys)
- Reoffending rates for girls are consistently lower than for boys (24% v 34%)  
[\[Girls – HM Inspectorate of Probation\]](#)

As of March 2025, the government has stopped placing girls in Young Offenders Institutions due to their complex mental and physical health needs. Girls are now placed in settings more suited to their needs, such as Secure Schools or Secure Children's Homes.

[\[Government no longer places girls in Young Offender Institutions - GOV.UK\]](#)

2. Does the law explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing? List the different laws. (Look for juvenile justice laws, child protection codes, or criminal codes)

English law does not explicitly consider gender in child justice procedures or sentencing in the same way it might consider factors like age or vulnerability. The focus is primarily on the welfare of the child and the seriousness of the offence. However, gender can indirectly influence the process in several ways:

**Vulnerability Considerations:** While gender isn't a direct factor in sentencing, assessments of vulnerability might take gender into account. For instance, a girl who is a victim of sexual exploitation might be treated differently within the justice system than a boy involved in a similar offence due to recognizing the specific vulnerabilities girls face in such situations. The same applies to other considerations, such as recognizing how societal pressures impact a child's offending behavior.

**Sentencing Guidelines:** Sentencing guidelines focus on the offense's seriousness and the offender's culpability. While gender isn't explicitly mentioned, judges consider mitigating and aggravating factors which could be indirectly linked to gender, such as a difficult upbringing, or societal pressures that differently affect girls and boys.

**Youth Rehabilitation Orders:** These orders aim to address the underlying causes of offending. The specific programmes and interventions offered might be tailored to address gender-specific needs, although the order itself isn't gender-based. For example, a programme for girls involved in crime might focus on building self-esteem and addressing trauma, recognising potential differences in their needs.

**Child Protection Laws:** Safeguarding legislation aims to protect children from harm. Gender might be considered indirectly when assessing the risks a child faces. For instance, specific risks associated with girls being targeted for sexual exploitation may prompt different responses than risks impacting boys.

Key Legislation and Guidance:

The [Children Act 1989](#): This Act provides the overarching framework for child protection and welfare. It does not specifically address gender in youth justice but sets the principles for how agencies must act in the best interests of the child.

The [Criminal Justice Act 2003](#): This Act lays out the sentencing framework for all offenders, including children. It emphasises factors like the seriousness of the offence and culpability, rather than gender.

[Sentencing – Sentencing Council](#): These guidelines provide detailed instructions to courts on sentencing for various offences. They don't specify gender as a factor but do consider the offender's individual circumstances.

### 3. Are there any alternatives to detention specifically available or adapted for girls? (Check for diversion programs, community-based measures, or gender-specific services)

Center founded the Girls' Detention Advocacy Project GDAP which offers a range of support services to young women involved in all stages of the criminal justice system. For example, the GDAP provides case management and court advocacy for young women. With a commitment to finding suitable alternatives to imprisonment for each young woman, project workers engage with the young woman, her parents or guardian, the prosecutors and Judge, as well as her local community.

Source: [Young Women's Freedom Center](#)

The Bail Accommodation Support Service (BASS) is one such Government contract that provides accommodation to those on bail, released on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) and, in a very few cases, when released at the end of a custodial sentence. BASS allows more of those who are eligible to be bailed or released on HDC, reducing loss of liberty and its negative impacts on family life, employment and housing. A new BASS contract commenced on 18 June 2018. The service specification has been expanded to provide access to prisoners released on licence without accommodation, including women, when demand from Bail and HDC is lower than current volumes. The service has around 17% of its property designated for female offenders and can respond to additional demand.

We want to provide a closer integration of BASS with established women's centres. A model for

this is currently being piloted in Greater Manchester where women placed in BASS properties will benefit from high-quality holistic support provided by the Women's Support Alliance. The pilot, which started in March 2018, is due to last for 12 months with consideration for potential expansion across further sites within Greater Manchester and other national locations.

Other initiatives include:

- Improving safety
  - Becoming Trauma-Informed
  - Focusing on better links with children and families
  - Improving Health & Wellbeing
  - Offering comprehensive rehabilitative support
  - Empowering the Prison Workforce
- ### 4. Do child justice institutions (e.g., courts, police, detention centers) have gender-sensitive protocols in their child-friendly rules? (Search for court protocols, police training manuals, or detention guidelines)

Yes, there are gender sensitive protocols for child justice, police and detention centres in the UK.

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Case Management guidance includes specific guidance on girls and how to adopt ways of working to account for gender. [See here Case management guidance - How to work with children - Guidance - GOV.UK.](#)

In relation to the police, The College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice on Children and Young Persons includes certain gender specific protocols, including the requirement to ensure that girls under the age of 18 are under the care of a woman while being detained, conveyed to and from court, or waiting to be so conveyed. This comes from a requirement under The Children and Young Person's Act 1933.

[Children and young persons | College of Policing](#)

[Children and Young Persons Act 1933](#)

In relation to detention, the UK Government has confirmed that it will no longer place girls in Young Offender Institutions due to the complex mental and physical health issues girls often face, instead ensuring that girls are always placed in settings

more suited to their needs such as Secure Schools or Secure Children's Homes.

[Government no longer places girls in Young Offender Institutions - GOV.UK.](#)

In the Crown Prosecution Service guidance on Children as suspects and defendants includes provision on taking account of the circumstances of the child, including adverse childhood experiences, but does not include specific gender sensitive provisions. [Children as suspects and defendants | The Crown Prosecution Service](#)

**5. Is there evidence or documentation of gender-based violence or discrimination against girls in detention or during arrest? (Search for NGO reports, UN documents, national watchdog or human rights institutions)**

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and [Facts and figures: Women, peace, and security | UN Women – Headquarters](#) have documented numerous incidents of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and reprisals against women and girls for cooperating with the UN, in conflict-affected areas.

Assessing the differential impact of security measures in detention on men and women, boys and girls, including individuals of diverse gender identity and sexual orientation, will help create humane, safe and orderly facilities that maximize the chances of successful rehabilitation.

Source: [PDF \(Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe | OSCE\)](#)

Over the past decades, the number of women in prison has grown at a disproportionately higher rate than that of men. In the period between 2000 and 2022, while the number of women and girls in prison has grown by almost 60%, the male prison population increased by around 22%. The increase has reached more than 50% in Asia, 19% in Central and South America, and 24% in Africa. This situation is concerning, as detained women are often the target of human rights abuses.

Source: [The UN acts to protect women and girls in detention | OMCT](#)

Nearly all women held in immigration detention have experienced gender-based violence, including rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, and sexual exploitation. Detention retraumatizes

vulnerable women and further damages their self-esteem.

WRW's survey of detained women paints a bleak picture of the psychological toll of detention. According to the findings, 85% of women reported feeling anxious or depressed, 85% felt dehumanized, 80% believed they were not valued by UK society, 75% felt hopeless, and 65% experienced suicidal thoughts.

Source: [Women for Refugee Women documents ongoing harm of immigration detention on asylum-seeking women | Electronic Immigration Network, further%20damages%20their%20self%20Desteem.](#)

**6. Are girls criminalized for “status offenses” or morality-based laws (e.g., running away, dress codes, same-sex behavior)? (Look for laws or court cases involving status offenses or discriminatory application of morality laws)**

Technically and legally speaking, no. The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals, including young girls, from discrimination based on sex, age, race, disability or other characteristics. In the UK, it is illegal to treat someone less favourably because of their sex, including in areas like education, work, and access to services. The Equality Act also protects girls and boys from dress codes which discriminate – directly or indirectly – on their legal sex.

[Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK]

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 there are no specific provisions for girls v boys. The law is the same regardless of a person's gender identity and whether the sexual activity is between people of the same or different gender.

[Sexual Offences Act 2003]

[Children and the law | NSPCC Learning]

Although not “criminalised” for certain behaviours, there have been concerns about the discriminatory application of certain laws. For example, girls in the juvenile justice system are often found to have higher rates of mental health issues and histories of abuse, which can lead to different treatment compared to boys.

[Girls – HM Inspectorate of Probation]

[Law, Morality and Religion in the Family Courts]

While abortion is not directly criminalized, the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 makes it a criminal offence for a woman to procure her own abortion unless it meets the criteria. There have been cases where women have been prosecuted under this act, sometimes including cases involving young girls. This offence is specific to people who are biologically female. So it is not so much a case of whether the UK treats girls differently to boys in this area but whether the application of a morality law that only impacts females means girls are criminalised more than boys. There is a significant body of discussion on de-criminalising abortion in the UK.

[\[Sexual Offences Act 2003\]](#)

[\[Abortion in the 21st Century: Is Decriminalisation on the Horizon? - BSACP\]](#)

## 7. Are there specific national policies or programs that support the reintegration of girls after involvement in the justice system? (Search for reentry programs, vocational training, psychological support initiatives)

While there aren't specific national policies or programmes exclusively for girls reintegrating after involvement in the UK justice system, existing frameworks address their needs within broader youth justice strategies. The focus is generally on providing individualised support based on each young person's circumstances, which might indirectly address gender-specific needs. Some key aspects are:

**Youth Rehabilitation Orders (YROs):** These are highly personalised interventions tailored to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour. While not girl-specific, YROs can include elements like mental health support, substance abuse treatment, educational programs, and vocational training. The content and delivery of these interventions can be adjusted to meet a girl's unique needs, considering factors like past trauma or specific social challenges.

**Secure Children's Homes and Youth Offending Institutions:** These settings provide support and interventions for young people in custody. They are required to address the distinct needs of girls in custody, which might include specific programs focused on self-esteem, relationship building, or addressing experiences of abuse.

**Multi-Agency Working:** The youth justice system emphasizes collaboration between various agencies, such as social services, education, and health services, to provide holistic support. This collaborative approach ensures that girls receive the necessary support to address their individual needs, which might include specific interventions related to their gender.

**Leaving Care Support:** Girls leaving custody often require ongoing support as they transition back into the community. Leaving care services may provide assistance with housing, education, employment, and emotional support, with interventions often tailored to meet the specific needs of girls in this situation.

**Charitable Organisations:** Charities play a crucial role in supporting girls reintegrating into society after leaving the UK justice system, often filling gaps in statutory provision and offering specialised services tailored to girls' specific needs. Their involvement includes:

- **Targeted Support:** Charities often develop programmes specifically designed to address the challenges faced by girls, recognising that their experiences and needs can differ from boys. These programs might focus on issues such as self-esteem, healthy relationships, trauma recovery, sexual exploitation, or parenting skills, depending on the girls' specific circumstances.
- **Mentoring and Role Models:** Many charities provide mentoring programs connecting girls with positive female role models who can offer guidance, support, and encouragement. Having a mentor can be particularly valuable for girls lacking positive influences in their lives. Mentors provide emotional support, practical advice, and a sense of connection that aids in navigating the challenges of reintegration.
- **Practical Support:** Charities offer practical assistance with essential needs such as housing, education, employment, and financial management. Securing stable housing is crucial for successful reintegration, as is access to education and vocational training. Charities can help navigate the complexities of these systems, provide support with applications, or offer direct support such as accommodation or training opportunities.
- **Emotional and Therapeutic Support:** Many girls in the justice system have experienced trauma or difficult life circumstances. Charities often offer counseling, therapy, and other

mental health support services to help girls process their experiences and develop coping strategies. Addressing underlying trauma is essential for breaking cycles of offending behaviour.

- **Advocacy and Raising Awareness:** Charities play a vital role in advocating for the rights of girls in the justice system and raising public awareness about their needs. They may conduct research, campaign for policy changes, and provide training to professionals working with girls in the system. This advocacy work helps ensure that policies and practices are responsive to girls' specific needs.
- **Bridging the Gap:** Charities often act as a bridge between the justice system and other support services. They can help girls access services like healthcare, substance abuse treatment, and domestic violence support, which may be essential for successful reintegration. This "joining-up" of services is crucial for ensuring girls receive holistic support.

Examples of charities working in this area include:

**The King's Trust** ([The King's Trust | Confidence, courses, careers](#)), which offers support for education, training and employment;

**Barnardo's** ([Barnardo's | Children's charity | Barnardo's](#)) which delivers a range of support services for vulnerable children and young people; and

**Catch22** ([Home | Catch22](#)) which works with young people to build resilience and unlock their potential.

## 8. Is there any training provided to justice professionals on gender-sensitive approaches to child justice? (Look for judicial training programs, police academy curricula, bar association activities)

The Bar Standards Board (BSB) requires barristers representing children to self-identify that they have the specialist skills, knowledge and attributes necessary to work effectively with vulnerable children and young people.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) requires solicitors representing children in the criminal courts to undertake regular learning and development so their skills and knowledge remain

up to date. All solicitors need to make an annual declaration to the SRA that they have done this.

Ongoing training requirements: There are minimum training requirements that vary across courts and tribunals jurisdictions to attend continuation courses. These continuation courses focus on developing judicial office holders' knowledge and skills in their specific areas, ensuring they are up to date with recent developments in law and practice, and maintain an understanding of current legislation and case law.

The National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection, run by the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing, will be based in Ryton and bring together around 100 officers and staff to prioritise tackling violence against women and children across England and Wales.

For too long, crimes disproportionately impacting women and girls, such as domestic abuse and grooming gangs, have not been met with the specialist response they require.

Source: [New £13m police centre to tackle violence against women and girls - GOV.UK](#)

## 9. Are girls more likely to enter the justice system as victims or due to protection concerns (e.g., trafficking, abuse)? (Search for data or reports on victimization and pathways into justice)

Research and data suggest that girls are significantly more likely to enter the UK justice system due to protection concerns, including experiences of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking, compared to boys. While both boys and girls can be victims of crime, the nature of their victimisation and how it intersects with the justice system often differs.

Key aspects include:

**Pathways into Justice:** Girls are more likely to be brought into the justice system through child protection routes rather than directly for offending. This reflects a higher likelihood of being identified as "at risk" or "in need of protection" due to experiencing abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

**Types of Offences:** When girls do offend, their offences are often less serious and frequently linked to their own victimisation. This could include things like running away from home (potentially to escape an abusive situation),

substance mis-use (as a coping mechanism for trauma), or self-harm.

**The Role of Trauma:** A high proportion of girls in the justice system have experienced trauma, such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. This trauma can significantly impact their mental health and behaviour, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation and involvement in criminal activity.

**Sexual Exploitation:** Girls are disproportionately affected by sexual exploitation, which can lead to their criminalisation. They may be coerced into criminal activity or arrested for offences related to their exploitation, further compounding their trauma.

**Contextual Safeguarding:** Increasingly, professionals recognise the importance of understanding the broader context in which girls offend. This includes examining factors like family dynamics, peer relationships, and community influences, as well as experiences of exploitation and abuse.

## Conclusion

The issue is complex, and research is ongoing, but the available evidence strongly suggests that girls' pathways into the justice system are often linked to their own victimisation and that addressing their underlying needs is crucial for preventing further harm and supporting their successful reintegration into society.

## Reports and Data:

Resources available from organisations like the Ministry of Justice, HM Inspectorate of Probation, and the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.

## 10. Are there any local NGOs or civil society groups working specifically on the rights of girls in the justice system? (Look for advocacy organizations, legal aid groups, community initiatives)

The National Women's Justice Coalition is a coalition of 26 NGOs working on women in justice, many covering girls in the justice system.

## [Partners of the NWJC » National Women's Justice Coalition](#)

Also, Agenda Alliance is a coalition of over 100 member organisations, and its Young Women's Justice Project, in partnership with The Alliance for Youth Justice (AYJ), was created in 2020 aiming to engage with young women (17-25), front-line practitioners and other experts to build a credible evidence base about the needs of girls and young women in contact with the criminal justice system and influence government policy to take these needs into account. [Young Women's Justice Project - Agenda Alliance](#)

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