
Crimes against minors. Terre des Hommes: “Almost 6,000 in Italy in 2019, most of the victims were girls.” “Indifesa” advertising campaign

The plight of girls is extremely dramatic in many parts of the world, often with no education and victims of discrimination, abuse, early and forced marriages. Even in Italy, being born female often exposes to violence, abuse, misogyny at an early age and, as they grow up, to absence of equal opportunities. The data processed by the Joint Force Command for the new Dossier of the "Indifesa" Campaign by Terre des Hommes, titled "The condition of girls and young women in the world 2020", presented today in Rome by **Federica Giannotta**, the organization's advocacy officer, ahead of the International Day of the Girl Child (11 October), is alarming.



Immagine non disponibile

In 2019, the total number of children victims of criminal offences declined slightly (-1%) compared to the previous year: from 5,990 to 5,930, 60.5% of whom were girls. However, data for the years 2009-2019, marked by a 41% increase in these crimes, show that *the phenomenon of violence against children is of tragic proportions, with an increase in almost all types of crimes*, marked by a dramatic 333% increase in the number of victims of child pornography (+26% compared to 2018), 74.5% of whom were girls. Of even greater concern is the 700% increase recorded over the decade (+11% compared to 2018 alone) in the number of victims of child pornography, 84% of whom were girls. Family abuse - over a third of all crimes - continues to grow: + 7% compared to 2018 and +105% compared to 2009. Out of 2,101 victims, 54% were female. Sexual crimes, which can exceed 80% of victims among girls, include aggravated sexual assault (+5% compared to 2018), corruption of minors (+24%) and sexual activity with minors (+6%). In contrast, child prostitution decreased (-19% compared to 2018). **At regional level.** As in the previous year, in 2019 Lombardy remained the region with the highest number of offences against minors (1,015 victims), followed by Sicily, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Veneto and Campania. The greatest increase was recorded in Basilicata (+83%), while the major decline in the number of offences against children was recorded in Valle d'Aosta. Campania holds the infamous record of voluntary manslaughter with 5 deaths in 2019, 2 of which were girls. **The lockdown and its impact.** For the Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family, **Elena Bonetti**, "it's now time for courageous decisions to allow girls and young women to grow up and build a future that lives up to their dreams." Whence the pressing need to

invest "in the education and empowerment of youths and women."

This is a path "that we must all pursue together." **Federica Giannotta** continues along the same lines: "Italy has yet to make considerable efforts on various levels in order to meet the 5th Sustainable Development Goal for which our country is still far behind." Stefano Delfini, Director of the Criminal Analysis Service of the Central Directorate of Criminal Police, notes that during the lockdown there was "a significant decrease of almost all crimes against minors", with the exception of "abuse by family members and cohabitants and online crimes (such as child pornography), which declined to a lesser extent, reflecting the impact of the lockdown on pre-existing situations of domestic violence." **In the world.** The coronavirus pandemic had a serious impact on the most

vulnerable segments of global society, notably girls and adolescents that saw, according to the Dossier, *"increased risk" of "female genital mutilation, child marriages and pregnancies at an early age due to school closures"*, involving some 743 million girls, and to "the diminished funds earmarked for the cessation of these practices." According to Terre des Hommes projections, the current 12 million girl brides in the world could increase in the next decade by another 13 million, while in 2020 alone "as many as 4.1 million girls risk suffering genital mutilation." This year's Dossier includes figures on the gender gap in sport at the level of economic status, under-representation of women in professional sports - in 2017 the share of female athletes was 28.2% compared to 71.8% of male athletes - and in decision-making bodies. **Advertising campaign.** After *Indifesa Network* - the first Italian web radio and young ambassadors network against bullying, cyber-bullying, sexting, discrimination and gender violence, in the framework of the "Indifesa" campaign, Terre des Hommes now launched #IoGiocoAllaPari, "a series of educational webinars for Italian high school students that will start in November", presented during the press conference. A preview is scheduled for tomorrow: a digital event with the Minister for Youth Policies **Vincenzo Spadafora**, the Director of the National Youth Agency **Lucia Abbinante** and personalities from the world of industry and sport. The campaign features the solidarity helpline 45591, active until October 18, through which two projects can be supported: **Consultami - Spazio indifesa**: offering counselling services to girls and women victims of physical, psychological or economic violence, and **Network indifesa - Empowerment ragazze**, addressed to 200 14-19 year-old girls through webinars conducted by a dream team of experts, role models and professionals. The audiovisual "For some wounds a band-aid is not enough" was created for the campaign." <https://youtu.be/WsPfBgMXVMg>

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