



BOLIVIA

THE PROBLEM SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Bolivia is a country of breathtaking landscapes, full of rich traditions, home of many indigenous people groups and the largest salt flats in the world. But in the midst of its beauty and diversity, a horrific plague threatens the safety of many children: sexual violence.

Young survivors who live in poverty have little hope of finding justice. Courts are backlogged and often lack effective case management processes. The few cases that move through the system can take years before reaching a sentence.

Since 2006, IJM works alongside Bolivian partners to strengthen the justice system. In 2018 alone, IJM trained more than 2,570 police, government officials, social workers, churches and other community members to recognize and respond to the horrendous crime of sexual violence against children.

IJM BOLIVIA PROGRESS SINCE 2006



170+

children rescued
from sexual
violence



210+

survivors currently
receiving aftercare
services from IJM



140+

criminals convicted for
sexual violence and
related crimes



THE FACTS



Nearly **1 in 5 girls** is sexually abused at least once in her life.¹

Many Bolivian girls and boys survivors of sexual violence are still waiting for justice. In La Paz, between 2007 and 2016, only 7% of cases of sexual violence against children entering the system reached a verdict.²

Less than 15% of Bolivian girls will seek help after a sexual assault.³



“When those things happened I would have chosen the easiest solution and committed suicide, but I didn’t. I pressed on. [Now] I have dreams to fulfill.”

–Veronica*, a survivor of sexual violence

How IJM Bolivia Combats Sexual Violence of Children

We rescue children by stopping the violence. We receive case referrals from the department of social services, police, families, churches and other community members. We equip and collaborate with local partners to ensure that every child is protected and in a place of safety.

We bring criminals to justice. IJM works with law enforcement officials and other partners to track down and ensure suspects are arrested. This can take months or even years, but we are relentless. IJM works to ensure adequate evidence is collected to build a strong case, and we support survivors who choose to share the truth in court.

We restore survivors by providing consistent support. Through IJM-trained partners and volunteers we provide support to the child and the family so he or she can heal in a safe and stable environment. IJM networks with various partners to ensure each survivor has access to necessary services that include physical health, trauma-focused counseling, personal security, and education or economic self-sufficiency.

We strengthen justice systems by providing training and hands-on mentoring to law enforcement, judges and other professionals. We seek to improve the overall justice system so that it protects all child victims of violence.

IJM BOLIVIA MILESTONES

2006

IJM BOLIVIA OPENS

2008

FIRST CRIMINAL CONVICTED FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT IN IJM CASE

2008

SURVIVORS COMPLETE TRAUMA THERAPY

The first group of survivors completed IJM’s 10-step trauma therapy model and celebrated with a special graduation.

2015

100TH CHILD RESCUED

100th child rescued from sexual violence by IJM and our government partners.

2017

120TH CONVICTION

2018

JUSTICE SYSTEM STRENGTHENING PROGRAM BEGINS

63 Community volunteer trained to accompany survivors and their families.



**FIELD OFFICE DIRECTOR
MARI CHRISTY**

Mari leads IJM’s team in Bolivia to combat sexual violence against children in partnership with local authorities. Mari first served with IJM as an intern in India from 2005 to 2006. After her internship, she spent three years in Northern Uganda working as a Program Manager serving internally displaced persons, and then six years in various roles, including Deputy Director, at the Resettlement Support Center in Kenya, serving refugees across Sub-Saharan Africa. She and her family moved to Bolivia in 2017.



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

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