



# BOLIVIA

## THE PROBLEM SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

**Bolivia is a country of breathtaking landscapes, full of rich traditions from many indigenous people groups, but in the midst of its beauty and diversity, a horrific plague threatens the safety of many children: sexual violence.**

Young survivors of sexual violence 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 2016 alone, IJM trained more than 1400 police and government officials, social workers, and community members to recognize and respond to this horrendous crime of child sexual violence.

## IJM BOLIVIA PROGRESS SINCE 2006



**140+**

children rescued from sexual violence



**78+**

survivors currently receiving aftercare services from IJM



**94+**

criminals convicted for sexual violence and related crimes



### THE FACTS



An estimated **1 in 5 women** will be a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

For many poor girls, **school is the most common place where sexual violence occurs**—and the fear of violence is a common reason girls leave school.<sup>2</sup>

**Less than 15%** of Bolivian girls will seek help after a sexual assault.<sup>3</sup>



“I was closed off, isolated, afraid to speak...  
When I came to this place I felt a peace inside  
me, from my feet to the last hair on my head.”

–Jessica\*, a survivor of sexual violence.

## How IJM Bolivia Combats Sexual Violence

**We rescue children** out of dangerous situations of sexual violence by working with local authorities. We receive case referrals from the department of social services, public prosecutor’s office, churches and families. We ensure that every child is brought to a place of safety.

**We bring criminals to justice.** IJM investigators help police develop and track down leads to find and arrest the suspect. This can take months or even years, but it likely wouldn’t happen at all if IJM was not involved. IJM lawyers help prosecutors collect evidence to build a strong case, and we help survivors who choose to share the truth in court prepare for their testimony.

**We restore survivors** by providing consistent support to the child and the family so she or he can heal in a safe and stable environment. IJM social workers or psychologists develop treatment plans for each survivor focusing on physical health, trauma-focused counselling, 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, not just those IJM can help through individual cases.

### 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**



**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. International Justice Mission Canada shares in this mission.

\*A pseudonym. All text and images © 2018 International Justice Mission