

2024 REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Reports of sexual abuse of minors multiply in one year

They go from 8 to 19 cases during 2024, with children between 0 and 10 years old as the most affected

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The Department of Childhood and Adolescence of the Ministry of Social Affairs presented this Monday the activity report corresponding to 2024. The data show an overall increase in risk situations detected, with special incidence in cases of alleged sexual abuse of minors, which have gone from 8 to 19 in just one year.

In total, the Specialized Service for Attention to Children and Adolescence (SEAIA) has attended to 342 children and adolescents, 0.88% more than in 2023, and has opened 85 new files, which represents an increase of 25%. The director of the department, Laura Mas, has pointed out that early detection «allows for better redirecting risk situations» and has underlined that «one in five minors has been a victim of sexual abuse or will be», according to data from the Council of Europe.

The Department has activated 41 protection measures, highlighting 18 referrals to the CRAE (Residential Center for Educational Action), nine changes of custody and five referrals to the CREI (Residential Center for Intensive Education). The CRAE welcomed 48 minors in 2024, with 22 new admissions - four of them referred by police actions - and 34 professionals on the staff. In this center, nine children were able to return to their biological



Ester Cervós, Trini Marín and Laura Mas, in the presentation of the balance sheet of the 2024 activity.

cal family, four were referred to supervised apartments and three to the CREI, which also cared for 25 young people during the year, between the residence and the day center.

In the area of foster care, 79 children and adolescents were cared for, with only three new

foster care cases registered in 2024, all in extended families, and none in non-extended families. In total, 33 minors are currently in extended families and six in non-extended families, with a decrease of 11.36% with respect to the previous year. The regulation for specialized foster

care is in the legal review phase and is expected to be completed during 2025.

Finally, regarding adoptions, two were formalized in 2024, all of them national. Mas recalled that this figure is low because these are situations that require the withdrawal of the parent's state, which is an unusual occurrence. Regarding the situation of children in irregular family reunification processes, the Minister of Social Affairs, Trini Marín, has emphasized that «what comes first is the best interest of the minor», and that «they are given medical attention when necessary, regardless of the administrative situation». ●

SOME WORRYING FIGURES

19

The cases of alleged sexual abuse of minors rise to 19, more than double the previous year.

342

The Child and Adolescent Care Service has attended to 342 cases, with 85 new files.

22

The Residential Center for Educational Action welcomed 22 new admissions during 2024.

2

Only two adoptions were formalized last year, both of a national nature.

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POLICE INVESTIGATION OPEN

The allegedly kidnapped minor is being taken into custody at La Gavernera

The police believe that the girl voluntarily got into the man's vehicle to get drugs

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

The investigation into the alleged kidnapping of a 16-year-old girl, which occurred on Saturday afternoon, remains open. The director of the Department of Children, Adolescents and Youth of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Laura Mas, spoke about this today, confirming that the alleged victim is currently being taken into custody at the juvenile center in La Gavernera, as the minister of the aforementioned portfolio, Trini Marín, later confirmed. In this sense, it is expected to know which French juvenile center she was to be transferred to, as well as «to receive more information from the Ministry of the Interior and Justice».

That is why the latest information provided by the Police through an official statement indicated that the minor had fled on Saturday morning from a juvenile center in France, and later, had voluntarily gotten into the vehicle of a 37-year-old man to



La Gavernera shelter.

The man was arrested by the Police in Sant Julià, after the girl reported that she had been kidnapped

get drugs in a nearby town.

He was arrested on Saturday afternoon in Sant Julià de Lòria, after the girl alerted a worker at a gas station in Aixovall who was protesting that she was being kidnapped. The Police intervened immediately and arrested the driver, a non-resi-

dent individual, as the alleged perpetrator of a crime against freedom.

The police investigation indicates that, at some point during the journey, the man would have deviated from the agreed route, which caused the minor to become alarmed. Through her mobile phone, she would have secretly started sending messages to friends and family warning them of the man's behavior. This situation led the relatives to file a complaint in France, which triggered an internal notification for a disturbing disappearance with possible kid-

napping to the French security forces. According to the police statement, the couple would have entered the Principality through Pas de la Casa. Later, when they tried to leave the country through the Runer River border crossing, the Spanish National Police denied them entry into Spanish territory because the minor did not have documentation. Given this situation, they had to return through the same crossing and, once in Andorran territory, they were subjected to a police check, during which it was detected that they were transporting contraband tobacco valued at approximately 5,000 euros.

In none of the previous checks did the young woman show any signs of alert to the officers. It was not until the stop at the gas station that, taking advantage of the driver's distraction, she got out of the vehicle and asked for help. Following the initial checks with the French authorities, the Police proceeded to arrest the man for allegedly holding the minor against her will.●

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