

# *Jamaica Reports Surge in Child Abuse Cases*

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Kingston, March 25 (RHC) -- Jamaica witnessed a significant increase in cases of reported child abuse in 2013, according to official research released on Monday.

Suspected cases of child abuse in the country jumped 43.5 percent in the first quarter of 2013, compared with the corresponding period in 2012, according to Jamaica's Office of the Children's Registry (OCR), which received more than 8,000 reports of child abuse last year.

Among the reported cases in 2013, child neglect was the most common problem, accounting for 48 percent of the total; children in need of care and protection ranked second, followed by sexual abuse and behavioral problems.

In order to tackle the negative trend, the Jamaican government has launched a print campaign against child abuse under the theme of "There's No Excuse for Child Abuse", which is expected to run in the next six weeks.

"Our promotion, our advocacy against child abuse is not new," Hayles said. "[This one] is to reinforce in the psyche of our populace that child abuse is never OK."

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