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# THE PHENOMENON OF CHILD ABDUCTION IN ALGERIAN SOCIETY

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**Abstract:**

This study examines child abduction as a newly emergent criminal phenomenon that has spread rapidly in Algerian society. The problem rarely stops at the act of abduction itself; it often escalates to physical assault and, in many cases, ends with the killing of the victim to conceal the crime. Offenders' motives vary: material incentives such as ransom demands or trafficking in children or their organs, motives linked to sorcery or family disputes, and purely criminal motives such as sexual assault.

The phenomenon has become a source of public anxiety and a focus of cross-disciplinary scholarly interest, which necessitates an in-depth analysis of its causes and contributing factors in order to develop effective responses. The study employs a descriptive method to analyze the dimensions of the phenomenon, alongside an analytical-inductive approach to infer causes and consequences and to propose prevention and intervention mechanisms.

**Keywords:**children; child abduction

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Crime continues to command the attention of researchers and scholars because of its effects on the course of social life and on the material and moral safety of individuals. Child abduction, the focus of this study, is among the most dangerous forms of crime and deviance. It violates life, liberty, security, and stability, and it impedes economic, social, and even political development, particularly when the target is an innocent child. Given the specificity and severity of this crime for public safety, especially children's safety, this article addresses the nature of child-abduction offenses, their characteristics, and the motives behind them. It also considers the empirical reality of child abduction in Algerian society, together with the constitutive elements and driving factors of the phenomenon.

The research problem is articulated as follows:

- What are the real factors and motives behind the spread of child abduction in Algeria?

**Sub-question:**

- Does family neglect have a relationship with child abduction?

**Hypothesis:**

Family neglect is associated with child abduction.

**2. Literature Review**

The existing literature on child abduction in Algeria is fragmented across legal, criminological, and media studies, which limits cumulative analysis. Hamel (2013) provides a descriptive mapping of incidents, risk factors, and offender purposes, useful for baseline typology but weakly connected to legal categories or concrete prevention strategies. Merzougui's (2011) Magister thesis fills the doctrinal gap by clarifying how Algerian criminal law defines the offence of abducting minors, differentiates intra- and extra-familial perpetrators, and justifies aggravated or mitigated penalties, yet says little about how these distinctions actually operate in practice. Jazzer's 2013–2014 work situates kidnapping within broader social and criminological change, foregrounding shifting motives and

contexts but treating child cases only indirectly. Hayti's study of El Khabar's coverage of domestic violence, although not about abduction, demonstrates how press framing can shape public understandings of interpersonal harm and suggests an analogous research agenda for media representations of child abduction.

Overall, the literature agrees that abduction is multifactorial and socially embedded but lacks integration across legal doctrine, motive structures, and media narratives; child-specific victimology and systematic evidence on institutional responses remain underdeveloped. Against this background, the present study explicitly positions child abduction at the intersection of law, social drivers, and communication, using legal definitions to stabilize the concept, existing typologies to structure empirical work, and attention to public narratives to move from parallel strands of research toward a more cumulative account.

## 3. Conceptual Framework

### 3.1 Definition of Abduction (Etymology and lexical trajectory)

Abduction derives from Latin *abductio* ("leading away"), from *ab* ("away") and *ducere* ("to lead"). In English, it first appeared in a medical sense, referring to moving a limb away from the body's midline, then expanded in legal usage to mean carrying off a person from a place where they had a right to remain. Contemporary law centers on unlawful removal, restraint, or detention without consent or lawful authority. Some jurisdictions distinguish abduction from kidnapping by custody rights, victim status, or means used, with heightened protection when the victim is a minor

### 3.2 Terminological definition

Kamal Abdallah defines abduction as "the rapid taking carried out through any form of force, or by deceit and luring, of that which may be the object of this offense, removing the victim from his place and altering his route by establishing control over him, without separating the act from subsequent crimes, regardless of motive." (Kamal Abdullah, 2012)

Others describe it as a sudden, swift seizure of the target based on material or moral force, whether overt or concealed.(Abdullah Husayn, p. 14)

**1. Definition of a Child**

**Lexically:***Children* is the plural of *Child* , denoting the newborn and the child up to puberty. Abū al-Haytham states: "A boy is called *child* from the time he leaves his mother's womb until he reaches puberty." The term applies to male and female; the verbal noun is childhood.(Ibn Manzur, 1994, p. 402)

**Terminologically:** In Islamic law, childhood begins with fetal formation and ends at puberty, which may be established by physical signs or by age (Shahata& Zidan, 2008, p. 17). In international legislation, a child is generally any human being under eighteen years of age, and most countries set eighteen as the age of majority. A child is therefore a person who has not yet reached puberty or the legally recognized age of majority and remains in a stage of physical and cognitive development.

**2. Definition of Children Abduction**

Child abduction means removing a child from the place of care, whether hospital, clinic, home, or open space, either secretly or openly. The offense is established even where a foundling is taken and kept by a person who fails to deliver the child to the public authorities.(Hamel, 2013)

Most legal systems do not provide a single exhaustive definition. They treat child abduction as a punishable crime and as socially repudiated. The perpetrator may abduct a child due to sexual motives, to obtain financial gain through ransom, out of revenge or to attract attention, or in order to kill the child, remove organs, and traffic in them.(Muslih, 2004, p. 121)

Child abduction is also defined as transporting, detaining, arresting, or confining a person under eighteen, permanently or temporarily, by means of force, threats, or assault.(Misabih, 2014)

Across these definitions, child abduction is consistently treated as a criminal offense subject to sanction, and it is addressed expressly in most codified legal systems.

### 3. Definition of Family Neglect

Family neglect denotes a pattern of parental attitudes whereby children are left without encouragement or accountability when they engage in desirable or undesirable behavior.(Mawahib Ayyad, 2000, p. 21)

It includes physical, emotional, and affective neglect, evidenced by failure to provide care and comfort in food, drink, and clothing; maternal absence due to separation that generates anxiety and emotional disturbance; and failure to answer a child's questions or to offer praise for prosocial acts. (al-Kandari, 1992, p. 163)

Adnan Yusuf al-Atum characterizes it as a negative child-rearing style that deprives the child of feedback on behavior, leads the child to feel that the family shows little interest, prevents learning of positive strategies for future social situations, and undermines self-confidence and self-regard.(al-Atum, 2009, p. 175)

Family neglect is a negative parental pattern marked by insufficient attention and supervision, with deficits in health, emotional, and educational care.

### 4. Characteristics of Child Abduction Crimes

This study focuses on several salient characteristics of abduction offenses:

**a) A composite offense:**

A composite offense consists of multiple acts, each of which constitutes an offense in itself. By contrast, if a single act suffices for occurrence and completion, the offense is simple; if that single act recurs or multiplies, each instance is a separate simple offense. Most crimes fall in this latter category. Abduction, however, involves swift taking or seizing and additionally requires transporting the victim and removing the victim from the original location while exercising full control. The initial snatching is an independent act; the subsequent displacement is another independent act. The offense is not complete unless

both occur. If the offender seizes the victim quickly but does not remove the victim from the place of seizure, a completed abduction does not exist.(Najm, 1999, p. 161)

**b) An offense of harm and endangerment:**

Criminal law distinguishes between harm offenses and endangerment offenses. In endangerment offenses, completion does not require a concrete harmful result, only conduct that creates a serious risk of harm. The protected interest is thus threatened prospectively rather than already injured.

**c) Meticulous mental planning:**

Abduction typically involves deliberate cognitive preparation. Offenders study potential scenarios and routes for seizing the victim, and the planning phase may span from hours to years, depending on the target. As a result, abduction often appears sudden, without clear temporal regularity.

**d) Speed of execution:**

The act itself is executed rapidly at the abduction site, whether the target is an individual, group, or object, and within the shortest possible time. Because abduction is socially condemned, social pressure encourages offenders to act swiftly and limit exposure.

**e) Brutalization (animalistic conduct):**

Despite prior planning, perpetrators frequently resort to brutal conduct. They may use physical or sexual violence or administer narcotics during and after the abduction, leaving the victim unable to resist.

**f) Intentionality:**

Abduction is inherently intentional and linked to specific purposes directed at the victim and society. Motives may be material (for example, extorting ransom), political (seeking attention or leverage at national or international levels), or social or sexual.

**g) Qualitative and quantitative targeting:**

Targets are often selected on qualitative or quantitative grounds. Abducting foreigners differs from abducting minors, and hijacking an aircraft differs from seizing livestock.

**5. Motives and Causes of Abduction**

It is necessary to identify the principal motives and causes that contribute to the rise of abduction incidents in Algeria. They are numerous and varied, including the following:

Abduction is driven by intertwined personal, economic, cultural, political, psychological, social, and technological motives. On the personal level, offenders pursue private objectives, most notably material gain through ransom, but also terrorist acts, evasion of judicial sentences, or the liberation of convicted persons (Jazar, 2013, p. 29). Economic hardship reinforces these dynamics. Empirical studies indicate that many perpetrators are young people living in difficult socio-economic conditions, particularly in urban areas with low living standards, where structural deprivation creates a fertile environment for criminal violence and, in some cases, terrorism. Cultural factors further facilitate criminal involvement: ignorance and lack of cultural capital render individuals more vulnerable to misinformation, psychological distress, and deviant behaviour.

Political and psychological motives intersect in contexts of institutional weakness and personal instability. Fragile and ineffective political parties, absorbed in power struggles, may leave some young people receptive to organizations that promise strength and visibility by spreading fear and panic, using abduction as a means to attract national and international attention. At the psychological level, abduction may stem from pathological behaviour, emotional disturbance, mental disorder, or a desire for revenge between entrenched adversaries, with children particularly exposed in such scenarios. Social motives reflect the cumulative impact of early-life conditions and relationship quality within the family, at school, and in peer groups, which can either shield individuals from or push them toward deviant trajectories.

Technological development amplifies these motives by providing new tools for execution. Contemporary inventions, while improving daily life, are frequently misused. Theft is no longer confined to physically removing property, as embezzlement and "copy theft" enable appropriation without moving the object. Chemical substances are employed in forgery and counterfeiting, as well as in attacks that cause disfigurement, injury, or sedation, thereby facilitating abduction and assault while hindering offender identification. Motor vehicles likewise play a crucial role by offering speed, mobility, and rapid escape (Abd al-Sattar, 1977, pp. 204–205).

**4. The Reality Of Child Abduction In Algeria**

In recent years, Algeria has seen a marked rise in child abduction, often accompanied by sexual assault and murder, which has generated widespread fear in a society that views this offense as alien to its conservative norms. Public demands now centre on stronger child protection, improved security measures, and harsh penalties for perpetrators. Reports suggest that around half of child abduction cases are driven by sexual motives, and the phenomenon has moved to the forefront of criminal concerns, particularly in public spaces.

Childhood in Algeria remains exposed to risks linked to harsh living conditions and social hardship, including the rape of minors, the exploitation of children in begging, and various forms of violence.(Adghal, 2025)

According to a report by the NADA Network for the Defense of Children's Rights, Algeria records no fewer than 1,000 cases of abduction and attempted abduction annually, making child abduction a serious social scourge. Motives include revenge between disputing parties, and most recovered victims show signs of sexual assault or disfigurement, often to impede identification of offenders, who are frequently relatives or neighbours. Although the law prescribes ten to twenty years' imprisonment for indecent assault with violence against a minor, the literature argues that punitive measures are insufficient and calls for rehabilitation of delinquent youth, strengthened social and judicial systems, specialized juvenile courts,

and a dedicated body working with civil society, alongside systematic application of maximum penalties for child abductors (Salami, 2025).

In many provinces, child abduction has shifted from rumor to lived reality, although prevalence varies between regions. National Gendarmerie units report a rising number of cases involving minors, confirming on-the-ground realities despite the belief that such crimes are foreign to local society. Recent statistics note seven attempted abductions in Oran, El Tarf, Aïn Témouchent, Saïda, Algiers, and Boumerdès, along with fifteen alleged abductions that investigations reclassified as custodial disputes or minors running away from home, often due to poor school performance or family conflict.(Ben Amraoui, 2025)

**5. Elements of the Crime of Abduction**

In legal terms, a crime is conduct that the law punishes, in other words, an act or an omission that legislation prohibits and for which it prescribes a penalty. The dominant doctrinal view defines crime as conduct, positive or negative, to which the law attaches a sanction. Under Algerian criminal law, liability requires constituent elements that both criminalize the conduct and justify punishment. Generally, these elements are the basic components necessary for the legal existence of the offense. For an offense to be established, several elements must converge:

- **The legality or statutory element** (*nullum crimen sine lege*): the presence of an applicable criminal provision that prohibits the act.
- **The material element** (*actus reus*): the perpetrator's outward conduct and its resulting effects.
- **The mental element** (*mens rea*): the perpetrator's internal state, namely knowledge and will, which motivate the commission of the act.

For the offense of abduction, whatever its form, two elements are required: first, the criminal activity or conduct performed by the offender, namely the act of abduction; second, the mental element, which takes the form of criminal intent. (Sorour, 2003, p. 301)

## 6. Psychological and Social Factors behind the Phenomenon of Child Abduction

### 1. Psychological Factors Explaining Child Abduction

### A. Perpetrator-specific psychological factors

Some abductors present emotional or mental disturbances, including psychological strain, depression, despair, or shock. Offenders often construct internal mental representations that propel them toward abduction, and psychologically driven incidents are frequently committed by a single perpetrator. Revenge can function as a key psychological driver, as the child victim is perceived as less resistant and more vulnerable. Sexual gratification is another recurrent motive. Statistics suggest that many abducted children whose bodies are recovered show signs of sexual assault, and some reports raise concern about cases involving religious figures, such as imams or memorizers of the Qur'an.

Various mental states and personality factors can underpin violent and criminal conduct, including: a desire for revenge reinforced by local traditions that valorize violence as courage; inflicting harm for its own sake, especially among adolescents who derive relief and pleasure from hurting others; jealousy; feelings of physical or psychological inferiority that fuel violent responses to perceived insults; and vanity, where arrogance and a fascination with exercising power encourage recourse to violence to assert status.

### 2. Psychological and Social Factors Explaining the Phenomenon of Child Abduction

### A) Victim-specific psychological factors (the child)

Children who become victims of abduction often display characteristics that render them easy targets. Central among these is the developmental stage in which children possess limited awareness and understanding, a major factor that makes them vulnerable. Their susceptibility to deception, suggestion, and inducement has been a prominent mechanism through which offenders and child traffickers ensnare victims. This conclusion aligns with

studies on crime victims, including VON HINTIQ (1967) and FATTAH, and falls within the concept of the "innocent victim."

### 6.2. Social factors explaining child abduction

By social factors, we mean the environment or conditions that surround the individual from the beginning of life onward, and that structure relations with others across all stages, beginning with the family, then the school, followed by the play group or peer group.

#### A) Offender-specific social factors

Social factors are among the principal drivers of criminal behavior. Individuals are not born with fixed behavioral patterns; these are acquired through socialization and direct interaction with the surrounding community and its norms. Families marked by fracture and disintegration, deficient care and supervision, and violent or authoritarian child-rearing tend to produce individuals who struggle to adapt and who display a higher propensity toward crime and deviance. When the family is dysfunctional, its structure loosens. As Ramsis Bahnam notes, "the first factor driving crime is family disintegration and fracture," with statistics across countries indicating that 60–80 % of offenders come from non-cohesive families, whether due to parental conflict, divorce, or separation (Nabīh Ṣāliḥ, 2003).

Research also underscores the influence of the peer group. An individual's behavior is shaped by the conduct of peers, and when the peer group is deviant, the likelihood increases that the individual will follow the same trajectory.

#### B) Victim-specific social factors (the child)

Sociologists link the rise of child abduction to difficult social conditionsand the absence of security and stability. Several family-related factors increase vulnerability, including large household size, low living standards, and family disintegration. Studies such as Shrest (2004) and Risiolo (2007) report that child abandonment or the prolonged absence of a family member facilitates victimization. Frequent quarrels and conflict within the household generate insecurity, prompting children to seek refuge outside the home and

spend more time away, which heightens exposure to abduction. Tense relations among family members, relatives, and neighbors may also foster resentment and desires for revenge, leading some actors to attempt to settle disputes through abduction, with the child as the easiest target.

Family educational attainment has a protective effect: higher education levels are associated with lower victimization risks, whereas lower levels correlate with increased vulnerability. School-related factors also play a role. Long distances between home and school require children to travel considerable stretches, where many reported abductions and violent incidents occur. Weak supervision and poor discipline within schools similarly increase risk, for example during a teacher's absence or when a pupil is punished by being expelled from the classroom.

## 7. Research Methodology

The population considered for this study comprises daily newspapers that addressed the phenomenon of abduction in Algerian society and discussed the real causes and motives behind the spread and aggravation of this phenomenon in a conservative social context.

### 7.1. Research sample

A sample is a subset of the population that contains the characteristics of the original population of interest. It must represent that population accurately. In empirical terms, the study sample refers to the group of individuals or collectives to which the study is applied. Because it is difficult for a researcher to apply a study to all units of the original population, sampling is conducted within the available time and resources, following a defined method, on the condition that the sample faithfully represents the population under study. The sample is then analyzed and the findings generalized to the population.(al-Jawhari & al-Khuriji, 1990, p. 168)

Accordingly, it is necessary to delimit the temporal scope of the research, that is, the period during which information and data are collected from the field. In content analysis

studies, the researcher must specify the time frame covered by the material under examination. In this study, the sample is temporal in nature (échantillontemporel), comprising articles and brief reports in the *faits divers* section published between December 2024 and March 2025. In light of available resources, and once we judged that a sufficient number of abduction-related items had been collected, we closed the temporal window (le cercle temporel) and proceeded to exploit the data as follows:

• **Content analysis:** We conducted a content analysis of articles published in Echorouk El Yawmi (*الشروق اليومي*), El Khabar (*الخبر*), and Ennahar (*النهار*) during the same period. We extracted key lexical items indicating abduction and difficult living conditions that may drive some individuals to commit abduction. We relied on semantic analysis, which focuses on explaining and interpreting word meanings, that is, identifying the range of senses associated with a given term.

• **Case extraction from les faits divers:** We extracted abduction cases from short news items in les faits divers. A total of 52 newspapers were included, selected purposively, on the grounds that they are among the most widely read Arabic-language newspapers in Algeria and because of the particular attention they devote to the phenomenon of abduction in Algerian society.

**7.2. Research Method**

Studying a phenomenon scientifically requires adherence to a recognized method, at both theoretical and field levels. A method is the set of procedures used to establish disciplinary rules, guide reasoning, and structure inquiry until determinate results are reached. It is therefore necessary for the researcher to specify the method adopted.

In this study, we primarily relied on the inductive–analytical method to present and define the offense of abduction, identify its elements, motives, purposes, and contributing factors, and infer general conclusions from observable facts. We also used the descriptive method to clarify certain concepts and to interpret the current state of the phenomenon by

specifying its conditions, dimensions, and internal relations, with the aim of providing a precise, fact-based scientific description.

### 1. Data-Collection Instruments

Every field study requires instruments for gathering information on the research topic. The choice of instruments depends on multiple factors, notably the nature of the topic and the hypotheses, which guide selection.

• **Content analysis technique:** An indirect technique of scientific inquiry applied to written, audio, and visual materials produced by individuals or groups. The content is made quantifiable and permits qualitative and quantitative extraction for purposes of interpretation and comparison. Analysis proceeds from what is manifest and explicitly formulated in the document, as well as what is present or implicit in it. (Angers, 2004, p. 218)

### 8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1. Distribution of indicator lexemes for child abduction across Echorouk El Yawmi, El Khabar, and Ennahar articles, December 2024 to March 2025**

| Issue numbers | Indicator lexeme | Frequency | Share (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3861–3951; 3860–3952; 3927–3859; 3954–3953; 3954–3954; 3956–3956; 3958–3959; 4083–3962; 4426–4084; 4426–4984; 4597–4550; 4632–4630;4650–4644; 4547–4662; 1675–4601; 1685–2240; 2075–2056; 2270–2202; 2080–2240; 2240–2270; 2257–7681; 7695–7718; 7681–7626; 7626 | Abduction | 253 | 75.52 |
| 3952–3951; 3954–3954; 4084–3956; 4457–4426; 4637–4450; 4644–4639; 4547–4650; 4601–4601; 1658–1675; 2075–1686; 2270–2240; 7626–7657; 3859 | Disappearance | 55 | 16.41 |
| 4632–4426; 4650–4637; 2075–1675; 2080 | Detention | 18 | 5.37 |
| 4637–3861; 2240–7626 | Exclusion | 6 | 1.79 |
| 1675 | Luring | 2 | 0.59 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7626 | Enticement | 1 | 0.29 |
| — | **Total** | **335** | **100.00** |

Abduction is the dominant lexeme, accounting for 75.52 percent of references, which signals strong media emphasis on the phenomenon. Disappearance ranks second at 16.41 percent, indicating substantial attention, often in proximity to abduction reporting. Detention appears at 5.37 percent, reflecting coverage of instances where children were held in various contexts. Exclusion accounts for 1.79 percent and is relatively infrequent. Luring is rare at 0.59 percent. Enticement is the least frequent at 0.29 percent. The distribution is consistent with a news agenda centered on abduction events, with smaller but non-negligible attention to adjacent categories.

**9. Discussion of Results**

The results indicate that the lexeme "abduction" is the most frequent at 75.52 percent. This reflects strong media emphasis on the term when reporting cases of missing children. The frequency can be explained by newsroom preference for direct, affectively charged wording that captures attention, which tends to overshadow precursor notions such as "luring" or "enticement." Consequently, coverage centers on the end state of the offense, abduction, with limited attention to antecedent stages.

"Disappearance" ranks second at 16.41 percent. Media sometimes use this label as an initial designation before confirming that a case constitutes abduction. In some instances this can be read as cautious attribution. In others it may signal conflation between voluntary and involuntary absence, which weakens accurate understanding of events.

"Detention," at 5.37 percent, appears in more specific contexts, particularly when the child's status is known and the child is being held by a perpetrator. Its relatively low share suggests that most cases remain framed under the general heading of abduction without reporting on incident particulars or investigative developments.

"Exclusion," at 1.79 percent, is occasionally used in headlines to support unconfirmed

hypotheses, for example “excluding the hypothesis of abduction.” This points to ambiguity in some reporting or to an attempt to deflect social or security responsibility.

“Luring” and “enticement” register very low frequencies, 0.59 percent and 0.29 percent respectively. This is an indicator that press coverage underrepresents the psychological and social dimensions of offending. Abductions are often effected through soft means, including offers of money, play, or food, yet these methods receive insufficient attention in news discourse.

Taken together, the findings suggest that local media focus heavily on the surface manifestation of the phenomenon, namely abduction, while devoting limited space to the underlying causes and operative methods. The sparse use of terms such as “luring” and “enticement” implies a gap in public-facing education about offender tactics, which diminishes the preventive and awareness-raising role of coverage.

**Table 2. Indicator lexemes for family neglect as a motive for child abduction**

| Issue numbers | Indicator lexeme | Frequency | Share (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3859–3861; 3956 | Absence of supervision and guidance | 10 | 33.33 |
| 3861–3956 | Divorce and family breakdown | 6 | 20.00 |
| 3861–7626 | Conflicts and disputes | 6 | 20.00 |
| 3861–3956 | Negligence | 3 | 10.00 |
| 3859–3861 | Laxity and indifference | 3 | 10.00 |
| 3861 | Instability | 2 | 6.66 |
| — | **Total** | **30** | **100.00** |

Absence of supervision and guidance is the most frequent lexeme at 33.33 percent, indicating that press coverage often frames family oversight deficits as a key enabling factor for child abduction. Two categories tie for second place at 20.00 percent each, divorce and family breakdown on the one hand and conflicts and disputes on the other. Negligence and

laxity and indifference each register 10.00 percent. Instability appears least frequently at 6.66 percent.

**10. Discussion of Results**

"Absence of supervision and guidance" is the most frequent category at 33.33 percent. It is framed as a facilitating motive that enables some offenders to abduct children. In second place, at 20.00 percent each, are "divorce and family breakdown" and "conflicts and disputes." Third are "negligence" and "laxity and indifference," each at 10.00 percent. "Instability" ranks last at 6.66 percent.

Inadequate parental monitoring leaves children exposed and easily targeted. Weak oversight increases vulnerability to homicide, sexual assault, and physical violence, as shown in the newspaper sample. Prior studies in the dataset likewise indicate that deficient supervision is a principal factor pushing children into street settings, where they spend long periods away from home and the street becomes a substitute caretaker, which heightens exposure to harms including abduction. Parental laxity, limited guidance, and weak discipline within the household therefore intensify risk, as children with limited awareness and comprehension are easily deceived and enticed by trivial inducements.

Divorce and family breakdown further aggravate abduction risk. The departure or absence of a family member, through divorce or death, deprives children of care, security, and effective role models, prompting many to seek substitute affection and support in the street, where exposure to potential abductors rises.

Household quarrels and conflicts also generate insecurity and anxiety at home. Children often respond by spending more time outside to escape disputes, which increases exposure to abduction and other crimes. Persistent parental conflict, particularly between spouses, undermines a child's sense of safety and adaptability and can lead to instability, withdrawal, and psychological disorders that push the child into public spaces.

Parental neglect reinforces these dynamics. Large household size can diffuse attention

and leave some children with little care and weakly enforced obligations. When parents or caregivers fail to meet basic needs, ensure supervision, or provide emotional support, children are exposed to harms linked to adult oversight failures. Physical neglect (inadequate care and supervision, leaving children unattended, assigning childcare to a child, or expelling a child from the home), emotional neglect (lack of psychological care, affection, and encouragement), and educational neglect (tolerated truancy and disregard for learning needs) all make children easy targets. Feeling unseen and undervalued, they spend more time outside the home seeking attention and care, which increases exposure to various offenses, including abduction.

## 11. Conclusion

Child abduction is a critical problem given its harmful effects on public security and social stability. Both state and non-state institutions should prioritize awareness and guidance regarding its risks. The Algerian legislator ought to adapt and amend the Penal Code by introducing stricter provisions against anyone who assaults or abducts children, and by making such offenders ineligible for mitigating circumstances, in order to curb the phenomenon. Media professionals should likewise undertake sustained public education on the harms of this crime for individuals and for society.

### Recommendations

- Develop coordinated preventive and protective measures involving security services, the judiciary, and the media, ensuring firm treatment of offenders, application of maximum penalties, and public awareness of the individual and collective consequences of child abduction.
- Provide comprehensive protection and assistance for child victims (medical, psychological, social, and legal), alongside rehabilitation and reintegration programmes aimed at repairing relationships within the family, community, and wider society.
- Encourage further academically grounded research on child abduction.

- Promote media-focused studies on how private television channels address social phenomena, in the context of audiovisual sector liberalization.
- Maintain sustained, substantive attention to child abduction from political, social, and religious actors, moving beyond general statements to concrete engagement.

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