

Russia

In 2011, the Federation of Russia made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the Offices of Children's Rights offices, which advocate for the protection of children, were established in all regions. However, the law in Russia still lacks law provisions that define child pornography and criminalize its possession. Despite the expansion of the Offices of Children's Rights Ombudsman, Russia lacks a mechanism to coordinate nationwide efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. Children in Russia continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including street work and commercial sexual exploitation, and many of these children are victims of human trafficking.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate		97.9

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2009, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Russia are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, many of them working in the street and being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. Street children, including those who are homeless and orphaned, are vulnerable to involvement in illegal activities such as prostitution, pornography, and selling drugs or stolen goods.(3-5)

There is limited evidence that children, including street children, perform potentially dangerous activities such as servicing automobiles, physical hard labor, and collecting trash (which may contain toxic or injurious materials).(6) There is also limited evidence of children working in the construction and textile industries.(5) A significant portion of child labor in Russia reportedly comprises migrant children, who are particularly vulnerable due to language and cultural barriers that may make it difficult to seek or receive social assistance.(6)



Commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially in large cities, remains a concern.(6, 7) Moscow and St. Petersburg are hubs of child trafficking and child commercial sexual exploitation. Children, both boys and girls, are trafficked internally from rural to urban centers and between regions; they are forced into begging or prostitution.(6)

Although evidence is limited, children are found working in the agricultural sector.(5, 6) This may involve risk to their safety and health, such as using potentially dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads and applying harmful pesticides.(8)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age of employment at 16, with exceptions for 15-year-olds who have completed general education and children under age 14 working in the performing arts, if such work will not harm their health or moral development.(9) Children under age 18 are prohibited from engaging in night work, dangerous work, underground work, or work that may be harmful to their health or moral development. This includes carrying heavy loads and producing, transporting, and selling toxic substances (including tobacco, alcohol, and drugs).(9)

The Constitution prohibits forced labor and the Criminal Code explicitly outlaws engaging a known minor in slave labor.(10, 11) Article 127.1 of the Criminal Code prohibits the purchase, sale, recruitment, transportation, harboring and receiving of a person for the purpose of exploitation, with higher penalties imposed when the victim is a known minor. Involving a minor in a crime is punishable under article 150 of the Criminal Code.(11) Article 228.1 of the Criminal Code prohibits using a minor to make, sell, or send illegal narcotic drugs or other psychotropic substances.(11)

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

Involving a minor in prostitution and creating or circulating pornography depicting a known minor are also punishable under the Criminal Code.(11) However, Russian law does not criminalize the possession of child pornography, nor does it provide a definition of the term “child pornography. Although there was a proposal for amending the Criminal Code for defining and criminalizing possession of child pornography in the first half of 2011, the authorities officially declined the original draft on February 7, 2012 by proposing a new legislation.(12) The new legislation that went into effect on February 29, 2012 includes a broader range of penalties for child exploitation and tougher penalties for crimes committed against children under age 14 and crimes that are committed against minors by their parents or other official guardians.(12) However, the law excludes the initial bill’s main objectives of defining child pornography and criminalizing its possession.(6, 12) This lack of clear guidance regarding what can be prosecuted as child pornography may hamper enforcement efforts.

The minimum age for both voluntary and compulsory military recruitment in Russia is 18.(13) Education is free and compulsory for children up to age 15.(14)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Government of Russia has not established mechanisms to coordinate efforts specific to the worst forms of child labor, but has a federal office to protect children’s rights in the Office of the Children’s Rights Ombudsman. In 2011, all existing

83 regions in Russia had respective Offices of the Children’s Rights Ombudsman, which is a significant increase from 2009 when it had only 18 Offices.(6) Regional Ombudsmen have the authority to investigate potential violations of children’s rights, inspect institutions and offices dealing with minors, and conduct evaluations of legislation affecting children.(5)

The Federal Labor and Employment Service (FLES) is responsible for enforcing child labor laws. Reportedly, FLES employs approximately 1,700 labor inspectors whose responsibilities include enforcement of child labor laws.(6)

In 2010, the most recent period for which statistics are available, 5,100 child labor violations were reported by FLES.(5) FLES noted that the most child labor violations included a lack of an obligatory medical exam, absence of written labor agreements, children working in hazardous conditions and children working excessive hours.(5) Research did not reveal information on the number of child labor inspections or penalties assessed during this reporting period.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), the Federal Security Service, Investigative Committee and other law enforcement entities are responsible for enforcing criminal laws against forced child labor, trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.(6) FLES and the Public Prosecutor are charged with enforcing laws related to hazardous child labor. Since June 3, 2011, all criminal charges of sexual nature against minors are handled by the Investigative Committee of the Procurator General.(6)

In 2011, the Federation Council released a report indicating a substantial increase of the number of child pornography sites on the Internet since 2000.(6) In the first 3 months of 2011, MVD registered 128 preliminary investigations into the distribution of child pornography, compared with 569 in all of 2010.(5)

In recent years, the Government of Russia stepped up efforts to monitor and combat child pornography, initiating several criminal cases against individuals suspected of producing and disseminating child pornography.(6) In 2011, it successfully convicted several of these individuals after establishing Cybercrime Departments in almost all regional police departments.(6) In addition, the Government closely cooperates with the Friendly Runet Foundation, which operates a hotline for reports of illegal content. The Foundation identified and removed 9,739 Web addresses with illegal content, enabling authorities to initiate 24 criminal cases based on article 242.1 of the Criminal Code in 2010.(6)

However, official data are unavailable on the number of investigations, prosecutions, or convictions for child trafficking or other crimes relating to the worst forms of labor.(6) The ILO Committee of Experts has noted that the Government repeatedly failed to provide information on the impact of its efforts to prevent child trafficking, as required of signatories to the ILO Convention 182.(15)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Russia does not have a national plan or policy that specifically addresses the worst forms of child labor. In addition, the Government does not collect national statistics on child labor that would systematically inform policy and program designed to combat the worst forms of child labor.(6)

Russia has engaged in multilateral discussions on cross-border trafficking policy; in December 2010, the authorities signed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Program to Combat Human Trafficking for 2011-2013.(7) The Program commits the Government to establishing a national trafficking structure and fund NGOs to provide victim protections. To comply with this Program, the Government of Russia created an inter-agency coordinating committee including anti-trafficking NGOs that specifically address human trafficking.

During the reporting period, the Government provided regular training designed to guide officers in handling trafficking cases.(7) However, there was no formal framework to direct

officials on how to proactively identify the victims or to refer them to available services.(7) In addition, the authorities do not have a legal framework for either repatriating the victims or supporting them as witnesses in prosecutions.(7)

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Russia does not have specific programs to combat the worst forms of child labor. However, the Government continued the Child Support Fund, a child welfare program it initiated in 2008. Among other goals, the Fund helps rehabilitate orphans and disadvantaged and homeless children, through social programs and activities. The Child Support Fund's budget increased from \$4 million in 2010 to \$7 million in 2011.(6)

The Fund implemented 109 regional programs in 2010 and, upon implementation of these programs, 486 new centers were launched, adding to the 405 existing centers to provide services to families with children in difficult life circumstances.(6, 16)

No assessment of these programs' impact on the worst forms of child labor has been identified.

In 2010, the Government of Russia provided scant finance to victim shelters and little funding for anti-trafficking efforts by NGOs and other governmental organizations. There is no available information about any government financial assistance provided to Trafficking in Person(TIP)-related programs and efforts in 2011.(6, 7)

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Russia:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Criminalize possession of child pornography.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Codify a legal definition of child pornography.	2009, 2010, 2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to specifically combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Gather, report and make publicly available complete and timely statistics on the investigation and prosecution of violations of the child labor and worst forms of child labor, in particular.	2009, 2010, 2011

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Policies	Assess the impact of the Child Support Fund on addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Collect data on the nature and prevalence of child labor to guide the design of policy and programming.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Develop formal procedures at the national level to educate and guide law enforcement officials, labor inspectors and other professionals on trafficking cases, victim identification and assistance and referrals.	2011
	Implement a formal policy to prevent trafficking victims from being punished or deported for crimes that result from their being trafficked.	2011
Programs	Implement programs to combat all relevant worst forms of child labor, including programs for children, especially children working in the street and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.	2010, 2011
	Increase funding for anti-trafficking efforts by NGOs and relevant government agencies that include continuous and increased financing to shelters for victims of human trafficking.	2011

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