

In 2016, Tunisia made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government passed the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons, which provides a legal definition for human trafficking crimes, strengthens punishments for offenders, and contains provisions for support to victims. The Government's new National Commission on Trafficking in Persons planned and conducted a national anti-trafficking awareness campaign. Further, the Government launched a USDOL-funded four-year project entitled Project Tunisien Ensemble Contre le Travail des Enfants (PROTECTE) to support the implementation of Tunisia's Child Labor National Action Plan. Regarding enforcement, border officials at the Ministry of the Interior and judges and magistrates at the Ministry of Justice received training on the new anti-trafficking law. Also, the Government took steps to increase the budget of the Labor Inspectorate over the previous year. Children in Tunisia perform dangerous tasks in street work. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in domestic work and seasonal agriculture, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The number of children dropping out of school, which may make them vulnerable to child labor, remains high. In addition, the law's minimum age protections do not apply to children who are engaged in work in the informal sector, and the Government has not made information available on labor law and criminal law enforcement.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Tunisia perform dangerous tasks in street work. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Tunisia.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	3.0 (50,364)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	94.2
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	2.8
Primary Completion Rate (%)		99.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2014, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(6)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4, 2011–2012.(7)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, activities unknown (1-3, 5, 8-11)
Industry	Construction, activities unknown (3)
Services	Domestic work (1-4, 9, 12, 13) Street work, including shining shoes, begging, vending, auto washing and repairing, and scavenging garbage† (1-3, 5, 8-10, 14)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking (4, 5, 10, 15, 16)
	Use in illicit activities, including stealing, smuggling, and drug trafficking (4, 5, 10, 14, 15)
	Forced labor in seasonal agriculture, activities unknown (13)
	Forced labor in domestic work and begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4, 10, 13, 15)

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

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Children are engaged in child labor in the informal sector, predominantly in street work, including in vending and garbage scavenging.(13, 14) Child migrants from sub-Saharan countries and those fleeing conflict in Libya and Syria, as well as young girls from Tunisia’s northwest region, are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.(15) There were no reports in 2016 of forced recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.(10, 17)

Girls in Tunisia face additional barriers to education, including limited transportation options, security concerns while commuting, and parents prioritizing boys’ education.(12, 18, 19) Students face barriers to education, especially in rural areas, in the form of lack of adequate transportation, household poverty, and religious customs.(3, 8, 10, 12, 18) As the Government has not conducted a National Child Labor Survey, research is lacking to determine the prevalence and sectoral distribution of child labor in Tunisia.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Tunisia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Tunisia’s legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 53 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Law on the Situation of Domestic Workers (20, 21)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 58 of the Labor Code (20)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 1 of the Ministry of Social Affairs Order of January 19, 2000 (22)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 105 and 250 of the Penal Code; Articles 2(1), 2(5), 2(6) and 8 of the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons (23, 24)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2, 3, 5, 8 and 23 of the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons (24)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 226 bis, 232, 233, and 234 of the Penal Code; Article 25 of the Child Protection Code; Article 2(7) of the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons (23-25)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 5 and 11 of Law No. 92–52 on Narcotics (26)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	20	Article 2 of the National Service Law (27)
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 2 of the National Service Law (27)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Non-state Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 2(5) of the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons; Articles 3 and 18 of the Child Protection Code (24, 25)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Section 1 of the Law on Education (28)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 38 of the Constitution (29)

During the reporting period, Tunisia passed the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons, which provides a legal definition for trafficking crimes, strengthens punishments for trafficking offenders, and contains provisions for support to victims.(24, 30, 31) The types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover street work, an activity in which there is evidence of children working in an unhealthy environment. Further, the Government acknowledges, as evident from the high rates of recidivism, that the fines and penalties for child labor law violations are not dissuasive.(32)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5). However, gaps in criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA)	Conduct labor inspections and assess fines and penalties for infractions.(10, 20) Coordinate with the Ministry of Education to identify and provide support to children vulnerable to child labor.(10) Maintain a database of human trafficking victims and work with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to ensure that victims of human trafficking are not prosecuted for trafficking crimes.(33) Collaborate with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health to identify and provide support to children vulnerable to child labor.(10, 13, 16, 17)
Ministry of Women, Family, and Childhood	Through its Delegates for the Protection of Children, gather evidence and conduct investigations on child welfare cases, conduct needs assessments and intervention plans, and act as judicial police in cases of imminent danger to children.(17, 25)
Ministry of the Interior (MOI)	Investigate reports of child labor as a criminal violation, complaints that are outside of the labor inspectorate's mandate, including complaints in the informal sector.(14) Through its Child Protection Service in the National Police, address the commercial sexual exploitation of children and coordinate with MSA regarding violations.(10, 34) Through its Judicial Police, coordinate with MSA to refer cases of at-risk youth.(10, 17, 32, 35)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Coordinate anti-trafficking efforts and the criminal enforcement of child labor laws.(16)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Tunisia took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$4,966,000 (14)	\$5,425,994 (10)
Number of Labor Inspectors	347 (14)	357 (10)
Number of Child Labor Dedicated Inspectors	Unknown	26 (10)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (14)	Yes (10)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (14)	Yes (10)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	Yes (32)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (10)

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Number of Labor Inspections	16,133 (14)	19,913 (17)
Number Conducted at Worksite	367 (14)	Unknown (10)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown (10)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	61 (14)	140 (17)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	4 (14)	6 (17)
Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	4 (14)	6 (17)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (14)	Yes (10)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Yes (10)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (14, 20)	Yes (10)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (10)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (14)	Yes (10)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (14)	Yes (17, 32)

In 2016, the Government increased the budget of the Labor Inspectorate by 9.2 percent over the previous year.(10) However, the Government also noted that the budget for fuel and transportation was inadequate to carry out inspections, especially in remote areas of the country.(10, 14)

Mechanisms do not exist to enforce the minimum age protections for children on inhabited premises such as private homes, without permission of the property owner or a court order.(10, 14, 20)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Tunisia took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	No (17)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	Yes (10)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (35)	No (17)
Number of Investigations	41 (36)	292 (17)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	292 (17)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (35)	5 (17)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (35)	Unknown (10)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (14)	Yes (10, 32)

In 2016, border officials at the MOI and judges and magistrates at the Ministry of Justice received training on the new Law on the Prevention and the Trafficking of Persons, as well as training focused on the identification and treatment of vulnerable trafficking in persons victims.(10, 16, 30)

A referral mechanism exists between the Judicial Police at the MOI and social services at the MSA for at-risk youth, including victims of human trafficking, street work, and domestic work.(10, 17, 32, 35)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Child Labor National Action Plan (NAP-TN)	Coordinate efforts to combat child labor. Led by MSA, includes membership of five other ministries and two unions, with support from ILO.(14, 37-39) In 2016, held a national seminar on child labor, during which the Child Labor National Action Plan was presented and explained to an audience of approximately 60 civil society members, government officials, international organizations, and members of the diplomatic community.(17)
National Commission on Trafficking in Persons†	Coordinate anti-human trafficking efforts and raise awareness of human trafficking issues. Include membership of 12 ministries, two members of civil society, one media representative and one member of the National Commission of Human Rights.(16, 17, 40) In 2016, the committee planned and conducted a national anti-trafficking awareness campaign, met several times to coordinate efforts to implement the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons, and drafted a National Strategy Against Trafficking in Persons in Tunisia.(10, 16, 17, 41-43)

† Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Child Labor National Action Plan (2015–2020)	Aims to raise awareness, build the capacity of stakeholders, and encourage action from NGOs and the public.(14, 34, 37) In 2016, began implementation with the appointment of a high-level Government point of contact and consultations with ILO before activities begin.(44)
UNICEF Country Program Document (2015–2019)†	Aims to decrease dropout rates and improve education quality and access to early education, teach life skills to adolescents, and improve access to information to protect children against violence and economic exploitation. (45, 46) In 2016, the Government and UNICEF signed the second phase of the program, focusing on the support of social and health policies, reform of the education system, and child protection.(47)
National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2015–2017)	Aims to build the capacity of civil society to address human trafficking; boost public awareness of human trafficking; and train police, customs, and penitentiary officials to identify victims of human trafficking.(33, 48) In 2016, the MOJ launched a national awareness campaign called “Not for Sale,” in conjunction with IOM; campaign included several short films and dramatic reenactments depicting victims of trafficking, which were released on social media and national television and shared with stakeholders.(17, 41, 49)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, the National Commission on Trafficking in Persons, in cooperation with UNODC and Tunisian civil society representatives, drafted a national strategy against human trafficking in Tunisia, but the strategy has not been finalized.(17, 42)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor†

Program	Description
USDOL-Funded Projects to Address Child Labor	USDOL projects in Tunisia aim to conduct research on child labor and strengthen Tunisia’s ability to implement its Child Labor National Action Plan, a multi-stakeholder effort involving government, business, and civil society. These projects include PROTECTE,* \$3 million project implemented by the ILO; and the Global Research on Child Labor Measurement and Policy Development (MAP), implemented in at least 10 countries by the ILO.(10, 14, 44, 50, 51) For additional information about USDOL’s work, please visit our website .

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor[‡] (cont)

Program	Description
Support Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking (2014–2017)	USDOS-funded project implemented by IOM to carry out anti-human trafficking activities in collaboration with the Ministries of Justice; Interior; Social Affairs; and Women, Family, and Childhood. Includes three objectives: (a) build the capacity of relevant institutions and agencies to identify and assist victims of trafficking based on their individual needs; (b) strengthen cross-sector cooperation and the sharing of information through the implementation of a national referral mechanism; and (c) conduct an awareness-raising campaign to keep children in school and discourage illegal migration that could lead to human trafficking.(34) In 2016, continued the implementation of the SHARE II project. The steering committee held three meetings and a discussion on human trafficking issues with representatives of 11 sub-Saharan NGOs based in Tunisia. Also provided training for 37 migration focal points at the Tunisian Red Crescent on human trafficking issues and further participated in several seminars and workshops.(49)
Shelters and Services for Victims of Human Trafficking [†]	MSA operates shelters to serve victims of human trafficking, particularly children. Provides services that include lodging, food, clothing, psychological services, legal aid through a network of pro bono lawyers, and free medical care in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. Places unaccompanied children and adults in dedicated centers to receive schooling. In 2016, the Government trained shelter staff in Sfax and Sousse to provide service and care for human trafficking victims through a series of programs organized by IOM with a budget of \$200,000 spanning September 2016–September 2017.(30, 33, 35, 52, 53)
Centers to Provide Aid to Victims of Child Labor [†]	The Government maintains 22 youth centers, with two additional youth centers under construction during the reporting period, and 67 child protection institutions that can serve up to 6,000 children engaged in child labor or vulnerable to child labor.(34, 54) In 2016, 19 Centers for Social Defense and Integration provided assistance to children who are homeless, have had trouble with the law, or experienced domestic trauma.(14) Centers for Social Protection provided material and moral support to vulnerable children.(14) Social and Educative Centers developed educational programs and activities for at-risk children.(14)
Programs to Reduce School Dropout Rates [†]	MOE-funded School Dropout Prevent Program maintains over 2,500 social protection units in schools and mobile units in rural areas to monitor students and prevent school dropout, covering 43% of all educational institutions. In 2016, the units supported 10,700 children at risk of dropout out of 14,800 total cases.(54) A separate UN WFP-funded program provides technical support to the MOE for a national school feeding program to reduce dropout rates in public primary schools, reaching 240,000 children in 2,500 schools.(55)

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Tunisia.

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

[‡] The Government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms.(17, 30, 56, 57)

Although Tunisia has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.(14)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Tunisia (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive.	2016
Enforcement	Publish information on labor law enforcement, including the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites and by desk reviews.	2015 – 2016
	Provide adequate resources for the labor inspectorate to conduct additional inspections, particularly in remote areas.	2015 – 2016
	Ensure mechanisms exist to enforce the minimum age protections for children on inhabited premises, such as private homes, without permission of the property owner or a court order.	2014 – 2016
	Collect and publish information on the number of convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2016
	Provide sufficient initial training for new employees and refresher training to agents in charge of criminal law enforcement of child labor laws.	2014 – 2016
	Conduct a National Child Labor Survey to identify the prevalence and sectoral distribution of child labor.	2016

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Increase penalties for those who employ children in child labor.	2016
Social Programs	Address barriers to education, such as lack of reliable transportation, household poverty, and religious custom.	2015 – 2016
	Provide sufficient resources to expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2015 – 2016

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