

In 2016, Turkey made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In cooperation with the ILO and other partners, the Government continued to implement a project that provided services to more than 1,000 children working in commercial hazelnut production. It adopted a regulation to improve provision of education and other services to children of mobile seasonal agricultural workers. In addition, security forces established and provided training for 33 new units that will focus on crimes against women and children, including child trafficking. However, children in Turkey perform dangerous tasks in mobile seasonal work in agriculture and in street work. The Government does not have laws that protect children working in agricultural enterprises employing fewer than 50 workers. The Government made important progress in expanding access to education and other services for several hundred thousand Syrian refugee children, although increased economic hardship and limited work opportunities for adult refugees in urban areas left children at increased risk of exploitation in the worst forms of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Turkey perform dangerous tasks in mobile seasonal agriculture and in street work.(1-24) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Turkey.

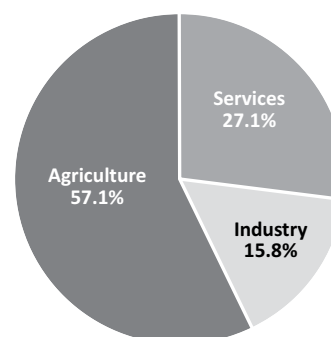
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	6 to 14	2.6 (320,254)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	92.4
Combining Work and School (%)	6 to 14	1.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		99.8

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(25)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Child Labor Survey, 2006.(26)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



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	Production of cotton, hazelnuts, citrus fruits, sugar beets, cumin, peanuts, pulses, apricots, melons, and cherries (1-19)
Industry	Production of furniture, bricks, shoes, leather goods, and textiles (9, 11, 16, 18, 20-22, 27-35) Auto repair† (9, 11, 27) Mining† (10, 36)
Services	Street work, including vending small items, carrying bundles in market areas, cleaning car windshields, collecting recyclable materials, and begging (9-11, 16, 18, 20-24, 27, 37, 38) Working in restaurants and small shops (20, 33)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (27, 39-41) Forced recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (18)

† 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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Due to the seasonal nature of agricultural work throughout the country, children engaged in agricultural work often migrate with their families for up to seven months of the year. Significant numbers of these children have limited access to health care and education as a result of migration.(4, 7, 8, 12, 19, 27, 28)

Government and media reports indicated that the recruitment and use of children under age 18 by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, continued in 2016.(18) The current number of child soldiers in the PKK and other Kurdish militant groups remains unclear.




Credible academic, media, and other reports continued to suggest growing numbers of child laborers within the increasing Syrian refugee population during the reporting period. There were over 3 million refugees living in Turkey at the end of 2016.(18) Poverty and a lack of meaningful employment opportunities for many adults leave refugee children extremely vulnerable to exploitation in the worst forms of child labor.(19, 37, 38, 42-44) Syrian refugee children engaged in street begging, as well as manufacturing work such as the production of shoes, furniture, and textiles, often working long hours and earning wages as little as half of what an employer would pay an adult.(10, 11, 22, 29, 32-35) Syrian refugee and other children were also vulnerable to exploitation in the agriculture sector, where Syrian families tended to receive lower pay and live in worse conditions than Turkish workers.(12, 18, 19) Monitoring and collecting data on child labor in refugee communities remained a challenge.(10)

The Government continued to expand education for refugee children, reducing the number of Syrian refugee children not enrolled in school from an estimated 650,000 in 2015 to fewer than 345,000 in 2016.(11, 33, 45, 46) However, the barriers to education access for hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugee children who live in urban areas remain significant. Some schools for Syrian children charge informal tuition or other fees that many families are unable to afford.(11, 20, 33) Many Syrian children struggle to integrate into Turkish schools due to the language barrier and do not have access to accelerated Turkish language programs.(11) Many families have not received sufficient information on how to enroll their children in Turkish schools, and some schools refuse entry to Syrian children, despite national directives requiring that Syrian children be provided with education.(11)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Turkey 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 Turkey's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Article 100 of the Labor Code (36)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 101 of the Labor Code; Articles 10 of Decree 2007-563 (36, 37)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 101 of the Labor Code; Articles 10, 12 and 16-22 of Decree 2007-563 (36, 37)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 4 of the Labor Code; Article 8 of Law 2014-040; Article 15 of Decree 2007-563; Articles 333 and 335 of Law 2007-038; Article 1 of Law 2014-040 (36-39)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 15 of Decree 2007-563; Articles 333 and 335 of Law 2007-038; Articles 1 and 8 of Law 2014-040 (37-39)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 13 of Decree 2007-563; Article 335 of Law 2007-038; Article 1 of Law 2014-040 (37-39)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 11 and 14 of Decree 2007-563(37)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	NA*		
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 11 of Ordinance No. 78-002 (40)
Non-state Compulsory	Yes	18	Articles 15 of Decree 2007-563(37)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16 [‡]	Article 24 of the Constitution; Article 39 of Law 2008-011 (34, 41)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 24 of the Constitution (34)

* No voluntary military service (54)

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In March 2016, the Ministry of National Education issued a regulation developed in consultation with the ILO that sets forth a process for closer monitoring of the children of mobile seasonal agricultural workers. Among other things, the regulation established monitoring boards in areas that are both sources of and destinations for seasonal workers.(18) Boards are tasked with providing direct services to children, monitoring school enrollment and attendance, and raising awareness among families. The government reported starting construction on 64 schools in 13 provinces to improve education access for the children of seasonal workers.(18)

Turkey's Labor Law excludes from coverage agricultural enterprises employing fewer than 50 workers, which are workplaces likely to employ children.(47) This gap in the law leaves children and other workers vulnerable to exploitative conditions without legal protection.(17, 27)

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 labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Labor Inspection Board Presidency within the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MOLSS)	Implement laws on child labor and hazardous child labor, including regulating work environments and conditions for children. Monitor the implementation of the Labor Law provisions in workplaces under its jurisdiction.(10) Conduct joint inspections with the Mentoring and Inspection Presidency to find children under legal working age who have dropped out of school, and direct them back into education.(10) Receive complaints about labor law violations, including child labor, via a hotline.(10)
Mentoring and Inspection Presidency Within MOLSS	Monitor compliance with laws related to social security of all workers, including child workers. Conduct joint inspections with the Labor Inspection Board Presidency to find children under legal working age who have dropped out of school and refer them to education services.(10)
Turkish National Police and Gendarmerie General Command (<i>Jandarma</i>)	Enforce the Penal Code, including criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(10, 55) The Gendarmerie General Command (<i>Jandarma</i>) enforces laws in rural areas that are outside of the jurisdiction of National Police.(18, 55)
Department for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking within the Directorate General for Migration Management	Coordinate the identification of human trafficking victims, including victims of child trafficking.(41) Manage a hotline providing 24-hour, toll-free support in multiple languages for human trafficking victims.(43)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute cases of child labor and child exploitation.(10)

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP)	Coordinate and provide services to children living or working on the street through the Directorate General of Child Services. Operate a hotline to receive complaints about child rights violations, including child labor.(10)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Turkey 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	Unknown* (10)	Unknown*(18)
Number of Labor Inspectors	977 (10)	1002 (18)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (10)	Yes (18)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (10)	Yes (18)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	Yes (18)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (10)	Yes (18)
Number of Labor Inspections	19,255 (10)	21,329+ (18)
Number Conducted at Worksite	19,255 (10)	21,329+ (18)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	0 (10)	0 (18)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown* (18)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	27 (10)	71 (18)
Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (18)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (10)	Yes (18)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (10)	Yes (18)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (10)	Yes (18)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (10)	Yes (18)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (10)	Yes (18)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (10)	Yes (18)

* The Government does not publish this information.

† Data are from January 1, 2016, to November 30, 2016.

In 2016, the number of labor inspectors authorized to conduct inspections remained insufficient for the size of Turkey's workforce, which includes over 30 million workers. According to the ILO recommendation of 1 labor inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Turkey should employ approximately 1,960 labor inspectors.(56-58) Labor inspectors spend the first 3 years of their careers as assistant inspectors. They receive on-the-job training that includes modules to raise their awareness of child labor and of the legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms to address it.(54)

In 2016, employers who violated prohibitions were subject to administrative fines of approximately \$430. Fine amounts are adjusted annually, but generally they are insufficient to deter violations.(18)

Although there is no formal referral mechanism, research found that children discovered to be working illegally during the course of inspections were referred for social services.(10, 54)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Turkey 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	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (41)	Unknown
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (41)	Yes (18)

Enforcement of laws against child trafficking, particularly pertaining to identification of victims, was insufficient, although the Government continued to improve its victim-identification efforts.(38, 59) The Government reported a 68 percent increase in victims identified during the reporting period, compared to the previous year.(60)

In 2016, the Gendarmerie General Command (*Jandarma*) established, staffed, and provided two weeks of training for 33 specialized units on crimes against women and children, including child trafficking. By 2019, the Government plans to establish and staff one specialized *Jandarma* unit in every province.(18) During the reporting period, the Turkish National Police also created a new unit responsible for trafficking in persons.(60)

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
Child Labor Branch of the Employment Policies Directorate Within MOLSS	Coordinate all child labor programs and efforts of the Ministry of Education, the Child Services Directorate General in MFSP, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and NGOs.(10)
The Child Services Directorate General Within MFSP	Coordinate services for children living and working on the streets.(10)
Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM)	Coordinate the implementation of migration law, including laws related to irregular migration, refugees, and human trafficking.(61, 62)
National Task Force on Combating Human Trafficking	Coordinate policy on human trafficking. Chaired by the DGMM, which plans to transition the task force to a national commission under the Ministry of Interior.(38, 41)

The National Steering Committee and Advisory Board on Child Labor were disbanded following the expiration of the Time-Bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor in 2015. Research found that the Government intends to establish a new coordination mechanism in 2017 in concert with the finalization of the new National Program to Combat Child Labor.(18)

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
National Child Rights Strategic Document and Action Plan (2013–2017)	Sets out the framework and actions for promoting services for children in fields such as health care and education.(63) Includes a section addressing child labor issues.(44, 54)
Second National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking	Outlines Turkey's strategy for the prevention of human trafficking. Identifies children as an exceptionally vulnerable group and calls for special security precautions for children at shelters for victims, as well as increased international cooperation on preventing child trafficking.(43, 64)

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
National Employment Strategy (2014–2023)	Aims to identify and solve labor market issues, with the goal of job creation and sustained economic growth. Includes the prevention of child labor, especially hazardous work in agriculture, as a focus of the plan, and advocates for increased access to education and strengthened social services as a means of preventing child labor.(65)
Tenth Development Plan (2014–2018)	Identifies Turkey’s strategy and goals for economic development. Includes the priorities of alleviating child poverty and increasing equal opportunity in education.(66) Includes provisions for the prevention of the worst forms of child labor.(54)

The Government’s primary child labor policy, the Time-Bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor, expired in 2015. The MOLSS continued developing a replacement policy—the National Program to Combat Child Labor—during the reporting period, in consultation with the ILO and other stakeholders.(18) Although this new policy had not been finalized at the end of the reporting period, the Government indicated that it would prioritize addressing street work, work in small- and medium-sized enterprises, and seasonal migratory agriculture.(18)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Turkey 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
Improving Social Integration and Employability of Disadvantaged Personst	\$34 million project jointly funded by the EU and the Government of Turkey. Aims to promote an inclusive labor market with opportunities for disadvantaged persons, with a view to their sustainable integration into the labor force.(67, 68) Also aims to combat all forms of discrimination in the labor market through service and grant components, including allocation of specific grant funds for projects targeting the Roma population.(18, 54, 67, 68) Includes the goal of combating child labor by supporting the entry of working children’s parents into the labor market.(67, 68)
Piloting the USDA Guidelines in the Hazelnut Supply Chain in Turkey	\$4.87 million USDOL-funded, 31-month project implemented by the Fair Labor Association, in partnership with Nestle and two of its main hazelnut suppliers, Olam-Progida and Balsu, in Turkey. Aims to pilot a sustainable program to implement the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Guidelines for Eliminating Child and Forced Labor in Agricultural Supply Chains in 1,000 hazelnut gardens in Duzce, Ordu, and Sakarya, with additional interventions implemented in the environs of Sanliurfa, the source of most seasonal migrant labor in Turkey.(69) In 2016, the project reached 107 families of seasonal agricultural workers and 284 children, 115 of whom were determined to be at risk and received social services.(18) The project engaged with 60 labor contractors, 97 local government representatives and community members, and 101 field owners to raise awareness about child labor.(69) The project also undertook company institutional surveys and worker demographic profiling to inform internal monitoring tools and procedures, as well as harvest remediation activities.(70)
Integrated Model for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Agriculture in Hazelnut Harvesting (2012–2017)	ILO- and MOLSS-implemented project funded by the Association of Chocolate, Biscuit, and Confectionery Industries of Europe (CAOBIISCO). Takes an integrated approach to preventing children from working by increasing access to education and improving living conditions of children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor in hazelnut harvesting, building capacity of local and national institutions to prevent child labor, and raising awareness among industry stakeholders and the public.(10) In 2016, the project reached 1,200 children, 1,015 of whom were removed from work or placed in school.(18)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries. Aims to improve the evidence base on child labor through data collection and research in Turkey.(71) Additional information is available on the USDOL Web site.
Conditional Education and Health Care Assistance Program†	Government program that aims to reduce poverty through cash transfers.(72) Also provides milk to all primary school children and distributes books free of charge.(73)
Programs for Syrian Refugee Children	The Government has partnered with various international organizations and foreign governments to fund schools for Syrian refugee children and to provide Syrian refugee child laborers with additional educational and social services.(18)
Programs focused on Human Trafficking†	The EU funded two separate projects, both co-managed by the DGMM, to improve trafficking victim identification and protection through training and capacity-building.(41) The Government also funds shelters for human trafficking victims that provide social services and legal help to victims.(43, 54)

† Program is funded by the Government of Turkey.

Although programs exist to address child labor in the hazelnut sector, the Government generally lacks programs to address child labor in the other areas in which it was most prevalent, including other forms of mobile seasonal agriculture outside of the hazelnut sector, as well as in street work, and small and medium manufacturing enterprises.

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 Turkey (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 law provides protections for children working in small agricultural enterprises.	2009 – 2016
	Ensure that the law explicitly criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under 18 by non-state armed groups.	2015 – 2016
Enforcement	Publish information on the Labor Inspectorate's funding and on the number of violations found and penalties collected.	2015 – 2016
	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor in order to provide adequate coverage of the workforce.	2014 – 2016
	Increase the penalties for violation of child labor laws to an amount sufficient to deter violations.	2014 – 2016
	Publish disaggregated data on the number of investigations, violations, prosecutions, and convictions related to child trafficking.	2014 – 2016
	Ensure that laws prohibiting the trafficking of children are effectively enforced, including by taking sufficient steps to identify victims of child trafficking.	2015 – 2016
Policies	Adopt and implement the successor to the Time-Bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor to address all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as street work, hazardous work in small- and medium-sized enterprises, and seasonal migratory agriculture.	2016
Social Programs	Continue to institute programs to increase access to education and health care for children working in mobile seasonal agriculture, particularly outside the hazelnut sector.	2014 – 2016
	Continue to expand the provision of affordable education to Syrian refugee children, including by enforcing national directives affording Syrian children access to the Turkish school system at the local level.	2014 – 2016
	Continue to expand programs to address child labor in the sectors in which it is most prevalent, including mobile seasonal agriculture, street work, and small and medium manufacturing enterprises.	2015 – 2016

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