

NO ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT COMPLICIT IN FORCED CHILD LABOR

In 2018, Afghanistan is receiving an assessment of no advancement. Although Afghanistan made some efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, government officials are complicit in the use of forced commercial sexual exploitation of boys through the practice of bacha bazi. The government opened a juvenile rehabilitation center for children previously engaged in armed conflict and provided services to 34 children. It also opened child protection units in 27 provinces, which helped prevent the recruitment of 364 children into the Afghan National Police. The Child Protection Action Network provided educational and social services to at-risk internally displaced families and removed 50 children from mines where they engaged in child labor and enrolled them in schools. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, the government was also complicit in the use of forced child labor.



Afghanistan is receiving an assessment of no advancement because government officials, particularly officers of the Afghan Local Police and Afghan National Army, are complicit in the practice of bacha bazi and, unlike in previous years, did not make meaningful efforts to address this crime during the reporting period. Afghan Local Police officers and members of the military continued to recruit children for the purpose of bacha bazi and, in at least one case, police sexually assaulted a boy who sought police assistance to report his exploitation in bacha bazi. The government lacked the political will to enforce laws prohibiting bacha bazi and, despite receiving more than 63 cases of bacha bazi among Afghan military and police, did not initiate any prosecutions or achieve any convictions for bacha bazi. Children in Afghanistan also engage in other worst forms of child labor, including in armed conflict and forced labor in the production of bricks and carpets. Afghanistan's Labor Inspectorate is not authorized to impose penalties for child labor violations, and the government lacks sufficient programs to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Afghanistan engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in armed conflict and the forced production of bricks and carpets. (1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Afghanistan. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	7.5 (673,949)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	41.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	4.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (6)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4, 2010-11. (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, including harvesting poppies (3,8-12) Herding (9,11-14)

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Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (Cont.)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Carpet weaving† (3,9,13-17)
	Construction, including gravelling, paving, and painting (9,12,14,18-20)
	Coal, gold, and salt mining† (21-26)
	Brick-making (12,14,16,27)
	Working in metal workshops, including in the production of doors, windows, and water tanks (12,16,18,28,29)
	Working as tinsmiths and welders† (12,14,17)
Services	Domestic work (11,17,30,31)
	Transporting water and goods, including across international borders (9,32)
	Street work, including peddling, vending, shoe shining, carrying goods, and begging (9,12,17,33,34)
	Collecting garbage† (12,17,19,33,35)
	Washing cars (9,12,14)
	Selling goods in stores (12,14,18,28)
	Collecting and selling firewood (9,12,32,36)
	Repairing automobiles (12,19,37)
	Pushing loads on a wheelbarrow (<i>krachiwani</i>) (12,14,38)
	Working as waiters in restaurants (3,12,14)
	Voluntarily recruited children used in hostilities by state armed groups (4,5,39)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (3,4,39-41)
	Use in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs, and pickpocketing (3,5,12,29,33,42-44)
	Domestic work as a result of human trafficking (5,30)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (5,12,45-48)
	Forced labor in the production of bricks and carpets, in begging, and for use as assistant truck drivers, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3,5,16,17,29,49,50)

† 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.

Children are subject to commercial sexual exploitation throughout the country. Of significant concern is the practice of *bacha bazi*, or boy play, in which men—including national and local police commanders, military members, tribal leaders, warlords, and mafia heads—force boys to provide social and sexual entertainment. (46,51,52) In many cases, these boys are dressed in female clothing, used as dancers at parties and ceremonies, and sexually exploited. (46) According to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, the practice exists in all provinces of the country. (5,53,54) A national inquiry conducted in 2014 found that most boys engaged in *bacha bazi* were between ages 13 and 16, and that 60 percent of them had been subjected to physical violence, confinement, and threats of death. (46) Boys are sold into the practice by their families or are abducted on the streets, including by local police commanders. (47,48,54) Members of the Afghan National Police, the Afghan Local Police, Afghan National Army, and the Afghan Border Police, exploit boys for *bacha bazi*. Boys who work for these government officials as tea servers or cooks in police camps are vulnerable to being exploited for *bacha bazi*. (3-5,46-49,51,53,55-57,39) NGOs reported that Afghan security forces and pro-government militias—some of whom may have received direct financial support from the government—recruited boys specifically for use in *bacha bazi*. (5) Police and education officials acknowledged that some teachers coerce male students to perform commercial sex acts to pass exams. (5)

Afghan children are trafficked both domestically and internationally. Some Afghan traffickers subjected Afghan boys to *bacha bazi* in Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, and Serbia. (5) Afghan boys are used for forced labor in agriculture and construction abroad, and girls are used for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work in destination countries, primarily Iran and Pakistan. (49) Children were trafficked to settle their family’s debt,

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including for the production of bricks and illicit drugs. (2,49) Some Afghan girls are subjected to forced marriage in exchange for money for their families. (58) Girls from Iran, Pakistan, and China are trafficked to Afghanistan for commercial sexual exploitation. (58) Some Islamic State fighters kidnapped, raped, and forcibly married Afghan girls. (40) There were widespread reports of child laborers being subjected to sexual violence. (12,14,19,33)

Widespread violence and lack of economic opportunities lead some Afghan children to leave Afghanistan. (59-63) Some children go to Iran specifically to engage in child labor and do not attend school. (64,65) According to the UN, some Afghan refugee children in Iran engage in child labor and do not attend school. (30) The Iranian government and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps continued to coerce Afghan children as young as age 12 to fight in Iranian-led and -funded Shia militias deployed to Syria by threatening them with arrest and deportation to Afghanistan. (5) Boys, especially those traveling unaccompanied, are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. (49,65,66) Some Afghan boys are subjected to sex trafficking in Greece after paying high fees to be smuggled into the country. (5,49,66)

Non-state groups, such as the Islamic State in the Khorasan Province, the Taliban, the Tehrik-i-Taliban, and pro-government militias, recruited children to engage in activities such as planting improvised explosive devices, gathering intelligence, and fighting. (3-5,40,41,67) Armed groups subjected children to sexual violence, as well as *bacha bazi*. (68,69) The Taliban recruited and forced children to attend madrassas in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where they received religious and military training. Some families received cash payments in exchange for sending their children to the Taliban-run schools. (67) The UN verified 38 cases of recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups, and 5 cases of recruitment by the government in 2018, consisting of 4 cases of recruitment by the Afghan Local Police, and 1 by the Afghan National Police. (4) The Afghan National Army, National Directorate of Security, and Afghan Border Police also recruited and used children in both combat and non-combat roles, although to a lesser extent. Afghan National Army soldiers as young as age 13 were killed, wounded, and captured by Taliban insurgents. (5) Low birth registration and falsified identity documents contribute to the problem because it makes the determination of a recruit's age difficult. (65,70,71) Observers reported that some officials accepted bribes to produce false identity documents that indicated the recipient boys were more than 18 years old. (49)

In 2018, more than 805,000 refugee and undocumented Afghans returned to Afghanistan: 773,000 from Iran and 32,000 from Pakistan. (72) Many of these returnees are unaccompanied minors. (5) Some deportee children are subject to sexual and physical violence or forced labor while in deportation process camps, particularly in Iran. (67,73,74) An indeterminate number of children were also returned from Europe, including those whose asylum application had been rejected. (75,76) Such children are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and traffickers. These children have difficulties enrolling in school, for example, due to the lack of necessary identity documents. (3,5,17,76) For example, about half of returnee children from Pakistan do not attend school and are also particularly vulnerable to child labor, including debt bondage in brick factories. (30,50,77-79) Some individuals who facilitate repatriation take returnees to brick factories and keep them in debt bondage to repay their transportation costs. (51) International organizations noted that traffickers specifically targeted these returnees for forced labor upon return to Afghanistan. (5)

During the reporting period, a severe drought in the northern and western part of the country led to the displacement of approximately 266,000 people, including 182,000 in Badghis and 84,000 in Herat. (80,81) Many of these IDPs were food insecure and resorted to child labor or selling daughters for marriage as a way of settling family debt. (3,81-83) Overall, there were more than 343,000 new IDPs during the reporting period. (84) Child labor is particularly prevalent among urban IDPs, and they are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups. (3,20)

In 2018, UNICEF reported that approximately 3.7 million school-age children are out of school in the country, 60 percent of whom are girls. (85) Barriers to education for children include displacement of populations due to conflict, the use of schools as military bases, attacks on schools, long distances from schools, school-related fees, lack of security, and lack of identity documentation. (20,85-87) Girls face additional barriers to education including discrimination, lack of hygiene facilities, shortage of female teachers, and not being allowed by parents to

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go to school. (17,85,87) Schools do not provide sufficient services to children with disabilities. (30) Some nomad, or *kuchi*, children do not attend school because they travel to tend livestock. (30)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Afghanistan 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Afghanistan's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including debt bondage.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 13 of the Labor Law (88)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 13 and 120 of the Labor Law (88)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		List of Prohibited Jobs for Child Laborers; Article 613 of the Penal Code (89,90)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Article 4 of the Labor Law; Articles 510 and 511 of the Penal Code; Article 3 of the Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants; Article 36 of the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (88,90-92)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 510–512 of the Penal Code; Article 3 of the Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (90,91)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Article 18.2 of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women; Articles 650, 652–667, and 874 of the Penal Code; Article 3 of the Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (90-92)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		List of Prohibited Jobs for Child Laborers; Articles 1, 7, and 23 of the Counter Narcotics Law; Articles 3.1–3.2 of the Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (89,93)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 605–8 of the Penal Code (90)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 510–512 of the Penal Code; Articles 3 of the Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (90,91)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 17 of the Education Law; Article 609 of the Penal Code (90,94)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 17 of the Education Law (94)

* No conscription (95)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (96)

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A new Penal Code entered into force in February 2018. It explicitly prohibits and sets penalties for the use of male or transgender children for *bacha bazi*. (30,90) However, it does not include criminal penalties for the use of female children in prostitution and, therefore, does not meet the international standard on commercial sexual exploitation of children.

A Law on Protection of Child Rights was adopted and entered into force in 2019. The law reiterates some of the minimum age protections. (97)

Afghan law does not sufficiently criminalize forced labor or debt bondage.

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Child Protection Action Network (CPAN)	Operates as a coalition of government agencies, NGOs, and community and religious leaders. Receives complaints of child labor; investigates such cases, and refers them to NGO and government shelters that provide social services, coordinate, and provide case management. (3,98) Not all provinces have a CPAN. The capacity of CPANs is not uniform or based on need, and the type of intervention depends on members of a particular CPAN and resources available. (3)
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA)	Responds to complaints of child labor; child trafficking, and child sexual exploitation; refers cases to the Attorney General's Office and NGO shelters; and operates a shelter for trafficking victims in Kabul. (3)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforces laws related to child trafficking, the use of children in illicit activities, and child sexual exploitation. (3)
National Directorate of Security	Identifies human trafficking victims and refers these cases to the Ministry of the Interior. (3)
Attorney General's Office	Investigates and prosecutes human trafficking, abduction, and sexual exploitation cases. (3)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Afghanistan took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of MoLSA that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including penalty assessment authorization.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (30)	Unknown (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	8 (30)	21 (3)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (30)	No (3)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	No (30)	No (3)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	No (30)	Unknown (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (30)	Unknown (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (30)	Unknown (3)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (30)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (30)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (30)	N/A
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (30)	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (30)	Unknown (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (30)	Unknown (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown (30)	Yes (3)

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (30)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (99)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (30)	No (3)

Labor inspectors do not have legal authority to inspect worksites for compliance with child labor laws or impose penalties for non-compliance. (100,101) However, CPANs, of which MoLSA is a component, can respond to complaints of child labor; investigate cases, and issue warnings or refer criminal cases to the Attorney General's Office. A person wishing to file a complaint must specify the legal statutes for labor violations in writing. (98,99)

In 2018, MoLSA had 27 inspector positions, 21 of which were filled. (3) The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Afghanistan's workforce, which includes more than 7.9 million workers. (102) According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Afghanistan would employ about 200 labor inspectors. (100,103,104) Government officials, NGOs, and UNICEF acknowledge that the number of labor inspectors is insufficient. (100)

Business owners are not required to allow unannounced inspections. (100) Based on available information, MoLSA inspects only public organizations, such as government ministries, that are registered with MoLSA, but not private businesses. (3,30,98) Many forms of child labor occur in the informal sector. (12) Government officials and other stakeholders stated that the government lacked resources, including training, for enforcement of child labor laws. (3)

During the reporting period, CPANs removed 50 children from coal mines in Baghlan and Panjshir provinces and enrolled them in schools. Although CPANs could refer children to social services through MoLSA, and they did so in 2018 on an *ad hoc* basis, there was no formal process for reciprocal referral between law enforcement and social services. (3) CPANs also mapped and monitored IDP families, providing educational, nutritional, and social services to families at risk of child labor. (83)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Afghanistan took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including training for criminal investigators.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	No (30)	Unknown (3)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (58)	Unknown (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (30)	Yes (67)
Number of Investigations	10 (30)	Unknown (3)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (30)	Unknown (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (30)	0 (3)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (30)	0 (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (30)	Yes (67)

During the reporting period, the National Directorate for Security investigated 29 cases of human trafficking, the Ministry of the Interior investigated 58 separate cases, and the Attorney General's Office investigated 64 cases. It is unknown how many of these cases may have involved children. (67)

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In 2018, the government prosecuted no cases related to the worst forms of child labor in 2018. (67) Moreover, the government did not consistently or adequately prosecute officials for *bacha bazi* and acknowledged the pervasive lack of accountability. (5,54,67) However, some government officials contributed to the problem of *bacha bazi* during the reporting period. (3,49,52,57) An international organization reported receiving 63 complaints of *bacha bazi* by Afghan officials since December 2017. (54) Despite this, individuals who subjected boys to *bacha bazi* were not prosecuted. (3,49,52,57) Observers noted that perpetrators of *bacha bazi* often paid bribes to, or had relationships with, law enforcement, prosecutors, or judges who protected them from prosecution. (5) In one case in 2018, police sexually assaulted a boy who reported his own exploitation in *bacha bazi*. (54)

Moreover, victims of human trafficking were routinely prosecuted and convicted of crimes. (67,106) Male victims of child trafficking, especially those engaged in *bacha bazi* or armed conflict, were sometimes referred to juvenile detention or rehabilitation facilities on criminal charges, instead of appropriate victim support services. (5,49,107,108) The government arrested, detained, and prosecuted for terrorism-related crimes some children younger than age 12 who had been forcibly recruited by non-state armed groups. NGOs reported that authorities housed some child trafficking victims in juvenile detention centers, sometimes for several years. (5) Such children are considered criminals even after being transferred to rehabilitation centers. (54) The UN reported that some of these children were subjected to torture and ill treatment. (108,109)

In 2018, the High Commission for Combating Crimes of Abduction and Human Trafficking launched a training manual on countering human trafficking to raise awareness about the difference between human trafficking and human smuggling, techniques for identifying and interviewing victims, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and service providers. (67,105) Although information was unavailable for 2018, government officials had previously stated that they lacked equipment and transportation to carry out investigations. (55) Based on available information, security agencies and the Ministry of Justice did not have a reciprocal referral mechanism to ensure that child victims of human trafficking and other worst forms of child labor receive social services. (3)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efforts to address all forms of child labor.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
High Commission for Combating Crimes of Abduction and Human Trafficking	Addresses human trafficking in general, including child trafficking. Led by the Ministry of Justice; comprises nine ministries, such as MoLSA, and five other entities. (30,91) The High Commission met only once in 2018, but its technical committee met 11 times. (5) It published a training manual and conducted training on the manual on countering human trafficking. (67,105) The High Commission also carried out 450 awareness-raising programs, disseminated through TV, radio, and newspapers, reaching approximately 20 million individuals. (67)
Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Children and Armed Conflict	Coordinates efforts to eliminate the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and monitored by the UN and NGOs. (30) The Committee remained active during the reporting period. (98)

Although there are two sectoral mechanisms to coordinate government efforts to combat trafficking in persons and child soldiering, the government has not established an overarching coordination mechanism to address all child labor present in the country, including forced labor, debt bondage, and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that may hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

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Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Labor Policy	Includes objectives to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, such as those involving hazardous activities; pass legislation prohibiting child labor; and effectively enforce child labor laws. (110) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.
Action Plan for the Prevention of Underage Recruitment	Aims to prevent the recruitment of minors into the Afghan National Security Forces, including the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police, the National Directory of Security, and pro-government militia groups. Seeks to ensure the release of children under age 18 from the armed forces and facilitate their reintegration into families and communities. (111) In 2018, the government prevented recruitment of children into the Afghan National Police. (4)
National Strategy for Children at Risk	Creates a framework to provide social services to at-risk children and their families, and guides donors in contributing toward a comprehensive child protection system. Focuses specifically on working children, trafficked children, child soldiers, and other children affected by conflict. (113) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.
Policy for Protection of Children in Armed Conflict	Reiterates the commitment to protect children from recruitment and sexual exploitation in the armed forces, and provides services to children rescued from engagement in armed conflict. Assigns the Ministry of Defense and the Afghan National Police with monitoring that children's rights are safeguarded and coordinating with CPANs and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. (114) In 2018, the Ministry of Justice opened a juvenile rehabilitation center in Kabul for children previously engaged in armed conflict. (98,115)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including inadequate coverage of all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
USDOL-Funded Projects to address child labor	USDOL-funded projects that aim to build capacity of government law enforcement officials and address child labor in the carpet industry. Includes Project to Prevent Child Labor in Home-Based Carpet Production in Afghanistan, a \$2 million project implemented by GoodWeave; and Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor, a capacity-building project implemented by ILO in at least 11 countries to build local and national capacity of the government to address child labor. (116,117) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Age Verification of New Afghan National Security Forces Recruits†	Joint government and UNICEF program that operates child protection units in the Afghan National Security Forces recruitment centers. Aims to ensure that new recruits meet the minimum age requirement of age 18 by carefully screening applicants. (118) The process includes an ID check and a requirement that at least two community elders vouch that a recruit is age 18 or older and is eligible to serve. (119) In 2018, the Ministry of the Interior established 5 new child protection units, totaling 27 units for the country. (5) During the reporting period, the child protection units prevented the recruitment of 364 children into the Afghan National Police. (4)
Juvenile Rehabilitation Center*†	Center in Kabul that provides educational, social, psychological support, and vocational training to children who were previously engaged in armed conflict. (41,115) In 2018, the Center was opened as the first of its kind in the country, providing services to 34 children ages 12–17. (115)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Afghanistan.

There is no evidence of programs designed specifically to prevent and eliminate child labor in all relevant sectors, such as agriculture or forced child labor in the production of bricks. Moreover, the government acknowledged the dearth of shelters and government resources for victims of human trafficking. At times, the government placed child trafficking victims in orphanages, and some orphanages subjected children to human trafficking. (5) Some boys who are victims of human trafficking were arrested, and some were sent to juvenile rehabilitation centers due to the lack of shelters. (51,56)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Afghanistan (Table 11).

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Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that forced labor and debt bondage are criminally prohibited.	2015 – 2018
	Create criminal penalties for the use of any child in prostitution.	2017 – 2018
Enforcement	Establish Child Protection Action Networks in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces and ensure that they can provide all services needed by victimized children.	2016 – 2018
	Track and publish information on labor inspections, including the labor inspectorate funding, number and type of child labor inspections, and number of violations found.	2015 – 2018
	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties for violations of Afghan law.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive training on child labor.	2011 – 2018
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2011 – 2018
	Simplify the child labor complaint mechanism to allow oral complaints, and eliminate or waive the requirement that the individual filing a complaint must specify the legal grounds for the violation.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate has legal authority to enforce child labor laws, including by legally requiring businesses to comply with unannounced inspections.	2014 – 2018
	Publish data on criminal investigation, including the number of violations for all crimes involving the worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2018
	Prosecute and convict individuals who use children for engagement in the worst forms of child labor, including <i>bacha bazi</i> and child soldiering.	2018
	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators are available and receive resources, including equipment and transportation, to enforce criminal child labor laws.	2012 – 2018
	Ensure that child victims of human trafficking and other worst forms of child labor are correctly identified as victims, and referred to appropriate social services, and not detained or subject to mistreatment or torture.	2014 – 2018
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including its worst forms.	2013 – 2018
Government Policies	Implement the National Labor Policy and the National Strategy for Children at Risk.	2016 – 2018
Social Programs	Institute a birth registration campaign.	2015 – 2018
	Institute programs to increase access to education and to improve security in schools, especially for girls.	2014 – 2018
	Institute programs to address child labor in all relevant sectors, such as agriculture and bonded child labor in brick kilns.	2009 – 2018
	Provide financial support to open shelters for victims of human trafficking and to ensure that sufficient shelter services are available for male child trafficking victims.	2010 – 2018

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