

In 2018, Jordan made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased the number of labor inspections for the second consecutive year and enrolled over 130,000 Syrian refugee children in schools. In addition, the government continued to provide shelter, educational, and financial services to children engaged in child labor, including in the city of Irbid and in the Palestinian refugee camp in Marka. However, children in Jordan engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in street work. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Insufficient resources hampered the Ministry of Labor’s capacity to ensure compliance with child labor laws in the agricultural sector. Despite government efforts, Syrian children still face barriers to accessing education due to costs associated with transportation, school fees, and supplies, among other issues. In addition, the government did not implement sufficient social programs to fully address child labor, particularly in agriculture, construction, and street vending.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Jordan engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in street work. (1-3) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (4-6) Based on the 2016 National Child Labor Survey, approximately 70,000 children ages 5 to 17 are engaged in child labor, most commonly in agriculture and retail trade. Approximately 80 percent of child laborers are Jordanian and about 15 percent are Syrian. (5) Boys constitute nearly 90 percent of those involved in child labor. (5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Jordan. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

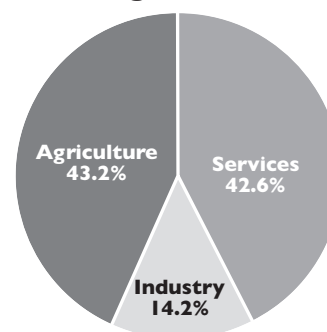
Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	1.0 (33,182)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	94.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	1.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (7)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey, 2016. (8)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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	Farming, including weeding, planting, and harvesting tomatoes and olives (4-6,9-14)
Industry	Mining† and quarrying† (5)
	Construction,† including building and painting homes (1,5,6,15,16)
	Manufacturing, activities unknown (3,5)
	Carpentry† (1,15,16)
	Blacksmithing† (1,15)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Repairing automobiles† (1,3,5,9,16)
	Attending donkeys, camels, and horses to transport tourists (17,18)
	Street work,† including selling items, washing cars, and begging (1-3,9,15-17)
	Scavenging scrap metal (19,20)
	Domestic work† (3,9)
	Food services, including working in restaurants and bakeries (3,5,9,15)
	Hotel services† (3,5)
	Hairdressing (17)
Working in retail, including cleaning shops (5,12,21)	
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (22,23,24)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (23-26)

† 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.




While Syrian children are granted access to Jordanian public schools, over 73,000, or nearly one third of all Syrian refugee children, were not enrolled in formal or informal education in academic year 2017–2018. (3,27) These children face barriers to education, including bullying and harassment, the costs of transportation, uniforms, and school materials, and they are unprepared for their appropriate grade level due to interruptions in their early years of schooling. (6,28-31)

In order to expand education access for Syrian children, in 2017 Jordan waived a requirement for documentation for school enrollment. The government also continued to address the overcrowding of classrooms by providing double-shifted schools. (32,33) Out of approximately 3,800 schools in the country, Jordan had more than 746 double-shifted schools. (19,34,35) In 2018, 207 of the latter were for refugee children, mainly Syrian. (27,36) At these double-shifted schools, Jordanian children attend in the morning and Syrian children attend in the afternoon. (22,37) However, Jordanian and Syrian children attending double-shifted schools are vulnerable to child labor because the school hours are considerably shorter, and fewer school hours leave more time for work. (34,38)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Jordan 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 Jordan’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including non-state armed groups’ recruitment of children.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 73 of the Labor Code (39)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 74 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of Ministerial Order of 2011 (39,40)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (40)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 3(a)–(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking; Articles 17 and 77 of the Labor Code (39,41)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 3(a) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (41)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 298–299, 306, 310–311, 315, and 319 of the Penal Code; Article 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (41,42)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (43)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 3(a) of the National Service Act (44)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Articles 7(a.2) and 10(b) of the Education Act (45)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 20 of the Constitution (46)

* No volunteers are accepted to join the armed forces. (36,47)

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 operations of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor (MOL), Directorate of Labor Affairs and Inspection	Enforces labor laws, including those on child labor. Maintains a hotline to receive labor-related complaints, including complaints of child labor. (19) Identifies cases of child labor through worksite inspections and refers cases to the relevant services. Registers instances of child labor in a National Child Labor Database, which allows ministries to monitor and track children as they are identified and referred to services. (48) The hotline has operators during office hours, although operators who spoke foreign languages are not always available. The hotline has an automated message recording after 3 p.m. (27,36) The phone number is difficult to locate, and based on available information, operators rarely respond to voicemails left after working hours. (27,36)
Ministry of Labor, Child Labor Unit	Coordinates government efforts to campaign against child labor, conducts training, and raises awareness about child labor issues. (22)
Public Security Directorate, Criminal Investigation Unit	Investigates and prosecutes violations of the Penal Code, including allegations of the worst forms of child labor. Operates a section to combat human trafficking. (19)
Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Ministry of Labor and Public Security Directorate	Investigates cases of human trafficking and forced labor, refers cases for prosecution, and coordinates with foreign embassies to identify victims of human trafficking and repatriate workers. (49)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the MOL that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including inspection planning.

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$422,715 (19)	\$422,715 (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	200 (19)	135 (35)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (50)	Yes (50)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	N/A	N/A
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (19)	Yes (35)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	6,337 (19)	8,603 (35)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	553 (19)	671 (35)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (19)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (19)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (19)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (19)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (19)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (4)	Yes (4)

In 2018, the MOL identified 671 violations of child labor laws, involving 737 children. (3) When a labor inspector identifies a child laborer, the inspector issues a warning and a fine and asks the employer to send the child home while the inspector is still present. (34) A warning requires the employer to sign a pledge declaring that they will cease employing children. Without the pledge, the MOL can close the business. (22) The information about the child is then shared with the Ministry of Social Development, which contacts the family to identify the appropriate social services needed. If a child labor violation has been identified, the labor inspector conducts unannounced follow-up inspections at the worksite to ensure compliance. (34) As of November 2018, the MOL had issued 591 warnings, and 413 businesses signed pledges declaring that they will cease employing children. (51)

In 2018, although the MOL conducted more labor inspections than the previous year, it employed 65 fewer labor inspectors. (3,19,35) The current number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Jordan's workforce, which includes more than 2.295 million workers. (3,52) According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Jordan would employ about 153 inspectors. (53,54)

Insufficient regulations and resources, and the migratory nature of the agricultural sector hampered the MOL's capacity to ensure compliance with child labor laws in the agriculture sector. (3,19,55) Based on the 2016 National Child Labor Survey, 43 percent of child laborers ages 5 to 14 work in agriculture. (5) In addition to ongoing national budget constraints, the MOL has not issued regulations on labor inspections in agriculture, which further limits its oversight in this sector. (34,55)

Jordanian children identified during labor inspections are referred to the Child Labor Unit of the Ministry of Social Development. (34,56) In contrast, Syrian refugee children who are identified during labor inspections were separated from their families and taken to the Azraq refugee camp. (34,57,58) The International Rescue Committee (IRC), with funding from UNICEF and UNHCR, operated a 24-hour reception center in Azraq that received Syrian refugee children picked up for both labor and other law infractions. If the child has extended family in the camp, the IRC placed the child in the family members' home. (27,59) Otherwise, the child stayed in housing at the reception center, where they are provided with a full range of services while the IRC negotiated with Jordanian officials to return the child to their family outside the camp, which may take days to months. (27,59) Consequently, families that live in the Zaatari refugee camp traveled a long distance to Azraq to reunite with their children. (27,34,57,58) Those families that live in host communities (i.e., about 80 percent of all Syrian refugees) feared that by presenting themselves at Azraq, they may also be forced to stay at the Azraq camp

and lose some benefits. (27,57,58) As of early 2019, the IRC closed the reception center, thereby reducing the number of children detained in the Azraq camp; however, according to UNICEF, the practice of detaining minors engaged in illegal labor continues, although at a reduced level. (27)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan 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.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	N/A (59)	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (60)	Yes (36)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	0 (59)	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (55)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	0 (55)	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (22)	Yes (22)

In 2018, the Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit conducted 23 workshops, with approximately 30 participants per session. Police officers and Ministry of Social Development staff participated in other trainings to counter human trafficking. (36) During the reporting period, the Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit investigated 301 cases, 20 of which were found to be human trafficking cases and an additional 13 were cases of forced labor. The Ministry of Justice prosecuted 18 cases of human trafficking that began in 2018, and 12 cases initiated previously but which led to convictions in 2018. (27,36) Research was unable to determine whether investigations were conducted on cases of forced begging or commercial sexual exploitation of children, even though there is evidence of these worst forms of child labor. (22-25)

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
National Committee on Child Labor	Formulates new policies, amends legislation as necessary, and oversees the implementation of child labor policies, including the National Framework to Combat Child Labor. Led by MOL, members include three other ministries, plus international and civil society organizations. (61) Although the Committee did not meet in 2018, the ILO worked with committee members to finalize the unified inspection checklist to be used during labor inspections. (62)
National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking	Coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking; chaired by the Ministry of Justice. Other members include representatives from 10 state agencies, including the Counter Trafficking Unit, which is in charge of human trafficking investigations. (63) The Counter Trafficking Unit is jointly operated by the Public Security Directorate and MOL. (36) The Committee met on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis in 2018, and in October, it established a technical committee to meet monthly and coordinate government efforts to counter human trafficking. The Committee carried out an awareness-raising campaign, consisting of 211 lectures, including in the Zaatari refugee camp; TV interviews on the rights of domestic workers and resources available to them; and the affixing of stickers, which included the hotline number for reporting human trafficking cases, on passports of workers who entered Jordan as laborers. (36)

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Although Jordan has a National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking to coordinate efforts to address trafficking in persons, it does not have coordinating mechanisms to address other forms of child labor, including street and farm work. (64)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Framework to Combat Child Labor	Outlines the roles and responsibilities of key government agencies, including the ministries of Education, Labor, and Social Development; NGOs; and other stakeholders involved in identifying and responding to cases of child labor. Based on the Framework, MOL inspectors monitor child labor and refer cases to the ministries of Social Development and Education for the provision of services. (65) In 2018, the government began working to update the National Framework, with emphasis on training and mentoring as new focal points for the Ministry of Social Development and Juvenile Police. (66) Also during the reporting period, at least 27 officials from MOL, Ministry of Social Development, and the Ministry of Education participated in training on the electronic National Child Labor Database, Jordan's child labor monitoring system for reporting and coordinating government services to child laborers. (66)
Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2016–2018)	Integrates a refugee-oriented humanitarian response with a strategic plan for increasing resilience of local communities. The plan has a particular focus on economic strengthening, education, and social protection. (29) In academic year 2017–2018, nearly 130,000 Syrian refugee children were enrolled in formal education, and approximately 29,000 additional children attended informal education. (3)
Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra	Employs counselors to respond to children at risk of truancy, raise children's awareness of the hazards of child labor and the significance of education, incorporate child labor prevention strategies into mainstream programs for legally employed children ages 16 and older, and inform students about high-quality employment in the tourism sector. (67) The policy was not implemented in 2018. MOL and the Ministry of Social Development expressed concern that there were no official employers in Petra with whom the ministries could engage. (62)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of services to address child labor in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor (MAPI6)*	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO to conduct research and develop new survey methodologies, improve awareness, strengthen policies and government capacity, and promote partnerships to combat child labor and forced labor. (68) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Ministry of Social Development, Child Labor Unit†	Supports children engaged in child labor; returns them to school, and provides services to their families; provides vocational training for youth; organizes training on child labor for families; and maintains the website of the National Child Labor Database. (69) In 2018, the Ministry continued to work on bylaws to establish standard operating procedures on how to handle cases of child labor to replace the current <i>ad hoc</i> process. (64) Three surveys were finalized in 2018 that covered East Amman, Zatar camp, and Zarqa. The Unit implemented the case management methodology with Terre Des Hommes in Zarqa and Save the Children in Irbid. (62)
Child Begging Assistance†	Ministry of Social Development's centers in Madaba and Delail (Zarqa) provide social services to children engaged in begging. (27) In 2018, the Ministry continued to provide services to children engaged in begging. (3) Likewise, the center in Madaba was active in 2018 and provided services to children. (62)
Social Support Center in Marka†	ILO and MOL-funded center operated in cooperation with the ILO at Marka, the Palestinian refugee camp. Activities include identifying child laborers, providing services such as non-formal education, and assisting families in finding alternate forms of supplemental income. (19) In 2018, MOL continued to provide services to children, engaged in child labor. Services include non-formal education, rehabilitation and training programs for children who have dropped out of school, and helping families identify alternative sources of income. (3)

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (Cont.)

Program	Description
National Aid Fund†	Under the Ministry of Social Development, the Fund pays families approximately \$63 a month through a conditional cash transfer program to withdraw their child from the labor market and re-enroll them in school. (19) In 2018, the Ministry continued this program. (3)
Non-Formal Education Centers‡	Funded by USAID and UNICEF and operated by the Ministry of Education and local NGO Questscope, these centers throughout the country seek to bring school dropouts, including those engaged in or at risk of child labor, back into the educational system. Children attend classes 3 hours a day in a flexible learning environment, with class sizes of around 20 students and specially trained teachers. (34,38) Targets children ages 13 and older. Upon completion of the curriculum, students receive a certificate indicating equivalency of a 10th-grade education. (38) A center in Petra provides services to children at risk of child labor in the tourism industry in Petra. (70) In academic year 2017–2018, over 29,000 children received non-formal education. (3)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Jordan.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (71)

Although Jordan has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs does not fully address the extent of the problem, including in agriculture, construction, and street vending.

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 Jordan (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2018
Enforcement	Improve the quality of the Ministry of Labor's hotline by ensuring operators, including those who speak foreign languages, are available outside business hours and ensuring the translated recorded message is of high quality.	2018
	Publish information about the number of inspections at worksites and the number of penalties imposed and collected for child labor violations.	2015 – 2018
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO technical advice.	2018
	Ensure that Ministry of Labor inspectors have the resources needed to carry out inspections in the agricultural sector, and ensure that regulations are issued to mandate labor inspections in agriculture.	2014 – 2018
	Ensure that refugee children identified during labor inspections are referred to social services and are not separated from their families by being taken to the Azraq refugee camp.	2016 – 2018
	Ensure that investigations are conducted on forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and publish information about the number of violations, prosecutions, and convictions involving child victims.	2015 – 2018
	Coordination	Ensure that the National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking is able to carry out its intended mandate.
Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all worst forms of child labor.		2018
Government Policies	Implement the Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra.	2018
Social Programs	Continue to expand access to education for all children, including providing after-school programs or extending school hours.	2013 – 2018
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, construction, and street vending.	2013 – 2018

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