

In 2019, Kosovo made a moderate advancement to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed the Law on Child Protection (LCP), which will enter into force in July 2020 and prohibits the recruitment of children into non-state armed groups and provides additional penalties for using or involving children in the production of child pornography. In addition, the government identified significantly more criminal child labor violations in 2019 compared to 2018 and initiated prosecutions in nearly all cases. Furthermore, the Kosovo Police and Kosovo Prosecutorial Council established specialized interview rooms to make child victims of abuse feel more comfortable. However, children in Kosovo engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work. The labor inspectorate and Centers for Social Work face financial and human resource constraints that may impede their ability to adequately address child labor. In addition, human trafficking shelters lack sufficient funding to properly accommodate and care for child trafficking victims.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Kosovo engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work. (1-4) No recent data were available, but a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted from 2013 to 2014 determined that 5,398 children in Kosovo were engaged in child labor. (5) A parallel MICS of the Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian communities in Kosovo found that 2,168 children from these communities were engaged in child labor. (6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Kosovo. 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	11.7 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	95.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	13.1
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 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5, 2013-2014. (8)

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 onions and grapes (4,9,10)
	Fishing, activities unknown
	Forestry, activities unknown (11,12)
Industry	Mining (4)
	Construction and manufacturing (4,10,12)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Street work,† including vending small items,† transporting goods,† and begging† (1,9) Scavenging at dumpsites† (4,9,13)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2-4) Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-4,12) Use in illicit activities (14)

† 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.







Kosovo is a source and destination country for child trafficking, especially of girls. (2,3,12,15) Children are sometimes forced into labor, such as in massage parlors, by organized criminal groups. (2,3,16-18) Kosovo children and children from neighboring countries, especially Albania, are also forced into begging, primarily in Prizren and Pristina. Most of these children come from the Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian minority ethnic groups. (1,2,12,16,19-23) Economically vulnerable Kosovo children are also forced to work in construction and agriculture to support their families. (12)

Ashkali, Balkan Egyptian, and Roma children, especially girls, sometimes experience difficulty accessing education, because a birth certificate is required to attend school in Kosovo. (1,11,24-28) Children who do not attend school are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. (29)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Kosovo holds a unique status vis-à-vis UN recognition that complicates its ratification of international agreements (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

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

Article 22 of Kosovo’s Constitution incorporates the UN CRC into its national legal framework. (30) Despite Kosovo’s unique status, the country works with the UN through the Common Development Plan (2016–2020), which is implemented by the UN Kosovo Team and focuses on promoting international standards and human rights. (31)

The government’s laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 7 of the Law on Labour (32)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 20, 23, 26–27, and 45 of the Law on Labour (32)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Administrative Instruction No. 05/2013; Article 45 of the Law on Labour; Administrative Instruction No. 2008 (32-34)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 6 of the Law on Labour; Articles 163 and 165 of the Criminal Code; Law on the Prevention and Elimination of Human Trafficking and Protection of the Victims of Trafficking (32,35,36)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 165–166 of the Criminal Code; Law on the Prevention and Elimination of Human Trafficking and Protection of the Victims of Trafficking; Articles 21–22 of Administrative Instruction No. 10/2017 (35-37)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 232 and 234 of the Criminal Code; Articles 47 and 62 of the Law on Child Protection (36)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 267–273 of the Criminal Code; Article 43 of the Law on Child Protection (36,38)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 6 of the Law on the Kosovo Security Force (39)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 149 of the Criminal Code; Articles 51(2), Art. 59 of the Law on Child Protection (36,38)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 9 of the Law on Pre-University Education (40)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 9 of the Law on Pre-University Education (40)

* No conscription (41)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (40)

The government approved the draft Law on Child Protection at its first reading in October 2018 and passed it in June 2019. (1,20,38,42,43) The law prohibits violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect of children, including using a child as a beggar, and prohibits the use of children in additional illicit activities. (17,38) The law will enter into force in July 2020. (4)

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 government entities that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Labor Inspectorate	Conducts inspections to enforce child labor laws, removes children engaged in hazardous work, and refers all cases to regional Centers for Social Work (CSWs). (4) Through regional CSWs, provides social services to impacted children who are found begging or are victims of human trafficking, and compiles data on cases into a nationwide database. (14)
Kosovo Police (KP)	Enforces criminal laws on forced child labor and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Through the Anti-Trafficking Unit, enforces laws on child trafficking. (14,44) Operates under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. (42)
Ministry of Justice	Enforces criminal laws on forced child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation of children through special anti-human trafficking coordinators and mechanisms. (44,45)
Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology	Conducts education inspections on balance of students' school and work hours. (46)

Duties of the former Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare are now shared by four separate government entities: (1) Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, (2) Ministry of Economy, (3) Ministry of Health, and (4) Ministry of Finance. The division of specific responsibilities is still unclear. (47) There is limited inter-ministerial communication between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the aforementioned government entities, which were tasked with the duties of the former Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare near the end of the reporting period. (15,48) Multiple entities expressed the limited capacity of Centers for Social Work (CSWs) to

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address cases of child labor due to limited human resources, lack of knowledge of child labor issues, and insufficient coordination. (1,10,12,21,23)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Kosovo took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the government that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including a lack of child labor-specific initial trainings and refresher courses for labor inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$710,841 (1)	\$830,333 (4)
Number of Labor Inspectors	40 (1)	40 (4)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	No (1)	N/A (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (1)	No (4)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	8,512 (1)	Unknown (47)
Number Conducted at Worksite	8,512 (1)	Unknown (47)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	1 (1)	116 (47)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	1 (1)	Unknown (47)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (1)	Unknown (4)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (4)

In 2019, inspections were conducted in the public and private sectors, with a special focus on the construction sector, an industry in which child labor is known to occur. Labor inspectors have the authority to conduct inspections in all formal sectors, but they do not have jurisdiction to investigate informal sectors. (1,4,11) The labor inspectorate does not employ Serbian-speaking staff and did not conduct inspections in areas with ethnic Serb majorities. (1,10,15) Labor inspectors have the authority to inspect private farms; however, due to a lack of human resource capacity to adequately cover all sectors and regions, the CSWs, which also face human resource and budgetary constraints, typically conduct these inspections. (1,10,11,29,48-50)

The labor inspectorate had an overall strategy for conducting child labor inspections and incorporated identification of child victims of human trafficking in its strategy for 2017–2021. (1,4,11,45,51,52) Labor inspectors receive initial training when hired; however, these trainings do not cover child labor as a separate category. (11,15) The labor inspectorate does not have refresher trainings on child labor, including on laws prohibiting hazardous work for children. (4,11,53) Approximately 9,000 labor inspections were conducted at worksites during the reporting period; however, the government did not provide information on the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed for inclusion in this report. (54)

The labor inspectorate’s mandate allows it to investigate for working children between ages 15 and 18 who have entered into an employment contract for a limited period of time. When child labor is discovered, the labor inspectorate issues the penalty and works with the Kosovo Police (KP) to remove the child from child labor. (1) According to NGO and media reports, the number of cases reported does not fully reflect the actual number of child labor cases. (1,12,15)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Kosovo 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 prosecutors and judges.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (1)	No (4)
Number of Investigations	12 (2)	15 (54)
Number of Violations Found	12 (2)	15 (54)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (1)	15 (54)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (1)	Unknown (4)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (15)	2 (54)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (4)

In 2019, the KP and the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council established 10 specialized interview rooms for victims of abuse in police stations and prosecutorial offices. (4) KP officers received training on trafficking, including forced labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities, and the KP reported that resources and training related to child labor were sufficient. (4)

Legal training on human trafficking for prosecutors and judges was insufficient, causing inadequate prosecutions and incorrect legal application. (11,16,17,42,51) In addition, better supervision and standardized data collection of human trafficking cases, as well as specialization of prosecutors and judges, would improve the pace and quality of case processing. (2,22,29,51,52) The government did not provide information on the number of convictions related to the worst forms of child labor for inclusion in this report.

The KP systematically tracks the children referred to CSWs as a result of investigations conducted by its domestic violence and trafficking units. (11,55,44) However, CSWs reported the need for a shelter and short-term care services for child labor victims. (1) In addition, CSWs did not adequately identify cases of forced begging, which are instead typically classified as parental neglect or abuse. (2)

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 adequate coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Committee for Prevention and Elimination of Hazardous Forms of Child Labor	Coordinates government policies to combat child labor. Oversees and provides policy guidance for activities to prevent and eliminate child labor. Comprises representatives of government agencies, KP, trade unions, and an NGO. (4) In 2019, the committee held two annual and two coordination meetings, resulting in Memorandums of Understanding on child labor prevention efforts with all but four northern municipalities. (4)
Child Labor Monitoring System	Addresses child labor at the municipal level, identifies and provides existing child services, documents child labor trends, and evaluates local responses to child labor. (14)

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP)	Coordinates policy implementation, and monitors and reports on actions to combat child trafficking through a National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (NATC). (16,56) NATC is a deputy Interior Minister. (15,53) Includes representatives from the government, judiciary, municipal offices, NGOs, and the international community. (42,53) During the reporting period, NAATIP held regular meetings that included representatives from eight government ministries, municipal offices, victim advocates, the judiciary, NGOs, and international observers. These meetings include a quarterly review of the National Action Plan and National Strategy. (57) In October and November 2019, NAATIP launched its annual campaign to proactively educate potential victims of trafficking. (57)
Municipal Local Action Committees	Aim to prevent and eliminate child labor; report to the Child Labor Monitoring System. Members include representatives from schools, municipal education departments, and KP. (58) Research was unable to determine whether the committees were active during the reporting period.

Since 2013, the government has been collecting and processing data on labor violations, which are made available to all ministries and law enforcement bodies. (14) However, the Child Labor Monitoring System lacks quality data analysis, and there is unsatisfactory data sharing between municipal authorities and the national government. (10,11,15,42,56)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Children's Rights Action Plan (2019–2021)	Passed in January 2019. (4) Aims to improve social, economic, and legislative rights and the protection of children through developing institutions at the local and national levels. (51,59) Includes an accompanying Children's Rights Strategy (2019–2023). (51,59) The Strategy includes five objectives, one of which is the prevention, protection, and reintegration of child laborers. (51) Research was unable to determine whether the policy was active during the reporting period.
National Strategy and Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2015–2019)	Aims to prevent and combat human trafficking by raising awareness, identifying victims, and strengthening criminal law enforcement. (60,61) Implemented in 2019 through KP-initiated raids and awareness campaigns, along with law enforcement and judiciary trainings. (4)
Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities (2016–2020)	Focuses on employment, social issues, healthcare, and housing for the Ashkali and Roma communities. Aims to strengthen individual's rights and full integration into society. (62) A special educational component promotes inclusive education for children from these communities. (63) In 2019, 2,750 Roma and Ashkali families benefited from social welfare programs. (4)
Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2017–2021)	Emphasizes the inclusion of vulnerable minorities in the education system, especially for preschool children of the Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian communities. Establishes regulations at the municipality level to facilitate preschool enrollment and raise awareness of school attendance and enrollment. (64) In 2019, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology offered students free school meals and textbooks, along with fee and document waivers for returnees and other vulnerable children from minority communities. (4)
Regulation on the Implementation of the Rights of Children Through a Child Friendly Municipal Governance System	Protects and promotes the rights of children. Ensures that municipalities are child friendly and guarantees that all children receive social services, education, and safety. (65) Research was unable to determine whether the policy was active during the reporting period.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, the government provided \$353,790 in social welfare assistance to families as part of the Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities. In addition, the government contributed \$2,772,656 for programs assisting Roma and Ashkali children with special needs. (4) However, the Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities does not include child labor prevention and elimination strategies. Additionally, research was unable to determine whether the government initiated activities related to the Children's Rights Action Plan during the reporting period.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, 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 funding.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement (MAPI6) Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor	USDOL-funded global project implemented by ILO to (1) improve the knowledge base on child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking; (2) improve awareness of these issues through the use of data-driven techniques; (3) strengthen policies and improve the capacity of governments and other stakeholders to combat child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking through national, regional, and global initiatives; and (4) strengthen partnerships to accelerate progress in combating child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. Additional information is available on the USDOL website. (66)
Hope and Homes for Children†	Government-funded NGO shelter. Accommodates child victims of abuse and human trafficking. (50) In 2019, the program continued to provide housing for children removed from abusive situations. (57)
UN Common Development Plan (2016–2020)	Funded and implemented by the UN Kosovo Team. Promotes international standards and human rights safeguards of migrants, as well as the social protection and educational inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian communities. (31) Research was unable to determine whether the plan was active during the reporting period.
The Helpline‡	Government-operated hotline for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. (2) In 2019, the Helpline received a total of 813 calls, of which 13 were classified as human trafficking-related. (47)

† Program is funded by the Republic of Kosovo.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (2,4,67)

The government continued to support social assistance to at-risk families and provided free school meals and textbooks. In 2019, the government of Kosovo and World Vision conducted five regional workshops to create a regional agreement on a joint monitoring system for child labor cases. (4)

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 Kosovo (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Clearly delineate the duties of each government entity appointed to absorb the responsibilities of the former Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.	2018 – 2019
	Ensure that Centers for Social Work have sufficient capacity and resources, such as personnel and training, to address the specific needs of child labor victims and properly screen child beggars.	2018 – 2019
	Ensure that mechanisms exist to enforce protections for children in the informal sector.	2017 – 2019
	Ensure that labor inspectors conduct child labor inspections on private farms and in areas with ethnic Serb majorities.	2017 – 2019
	Improve the collection, publication, and standardization of data related to human trafficking cases to improve the pace and quality of case processing.	2019
	Incorporate topics on child labor, including hazardous child labor, in both new employee training and refresher courses; ensure trainings on new child labor laws for all labor inspectors.	2017 – 2019
	Ensure that the penalties in the legal framework regulating the crime of human trafficking are correctly applied, including by providing training and supervision to prosecutors and judges on the legal framework for human trafficking cases.	2012 – 2019
Coordination	Increase inter-ministerial communication to adequately combat child labor and commercial sexual exploitation.	2012 – 2019
	Improve the capacity of the Child Labor Monitoring System to better analyze data on child labor and improve data sharing between municipal authorities and the national government.	2013 – 2019
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities.	2016 – 2019
	Ensure that the Children's Rights Strategy and Action Plan is active.	2019

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Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2019
	Make additional efforts to register Ashkali, Balkan Egyptian, and Roma children at birth.	2011 – 2019
	Fully fund and operate shelters that house child victims of trafficking for interviewing and accommodating child victims.	2016 – 2019

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