

In 2020, Algeria made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased its number of labor inspectors from 645 in 2019 to 885 in 2020 and implemented a new strategy to address forced child begging by conducting periodic visits to transportation hubs and storage facilities. In an effort to address the challenge of enforcing labor laws in the informal economy, the government also led an initiative with an Algerian think tank to explore ways to reach children involved in informal work. However, children in Algeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street vending. The government has not sufficiently prohibited the use of children in illicit activities or determined by national law or regulation the types of work that are hazardous for children to perform.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Algeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street vending. (1-3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Algeria.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	6.7 (413,729)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	92.3
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	7.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		105.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4 (MICS 4), 2012–2013. (5)

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 olives (6-8)
Industry	Construction, activities unknown (1,7,9)
Services	Street work, including vending, collecting plastics, and begging (1,2,8,10,11)
	Domestic work (1,9)
	Working in small workshops and businesses, including mechanics’ shops (6,8,9)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,10)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (7)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (9,10)
	Forced domestic work, including drawing water from wells, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10)

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

Evidence suggests that children, primarily unaccompanied Sub-Saharan migrants, are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and forced domestic work. (1,8,12,13) Evidence also suggests that children’s work is often part-time and informal in nature, with some migrant children working in small-scale family-run businesses such as

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restaurants or small stores. Children also work in informal street markets in street vending and begging, exposing them to dangerous and hazardous conditions. (8,9,14-17) Research could not find a current and comprehensive study on the activities and scope of the child labor situation in Algeria, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic also had an impact on the increasing number of children and migrants working in the agricultural sector and family-run stores in rural settings; however, in urban environments, the economic downturn associated with the onset of the pandemic decreased employment, including child labor. (17)

Child begging also continued during the reporting period, prompting governmental efforts to dismantle begging networks in the country. More than 6,000 children have allegedly been forced to join begging networks. (17) Evidence suggests that the majority of begging networks use migrant children from Africa. (17)

Research also found that girls were trafficked from West Africa for sexual exploitation. However, the government did not provide data that disaggregated figures pertaining to sexual abuse and those related to commercial sexual exploitation of children, which is considered one of the worst forms of child labor. (17)

According to the Directorate General for National Security (DGSN), there were 485 cases of children being used in illegal activities. (17)

The Algerian public education system is free and open to all children between the ages of 6 and 16, regardless of ethnicity and nationality. However, despite access to universal education, attendance problems persist at schools in the southern regions of Algeria, with children as young as 13 or 14 dropping out of school. (17)




Non-Algerian children must provide documentation of grade level or sit for testing to determine their level. (8,9,17,18) There are no laws or regulations that prevent access to school, although there are reports of isolated cases of migrant children without valid documentation being denied enrollment by school administrators and reported to authorities. (8,17) In addition, the language of instruction (Arabic) is not necessarily understood by migrants, whose native languages are likely to be different, making effective schooling a challenging prospect. (17) Some migrant families may also not be familiar with Algerian law granting free education to all children. (17)

Many children with disabilities do not have access to mainstream education because of social stigma, the relatively low number of teachers with specialized training, the lack of a transportation system for children with disabilities, and the limited accessibility of school buildings. Barriers to education, including those placed on migrant children and children with disabilities, result in absence from school and increased vulnerability to child labor. (8,13,15,18)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Algeria 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 Algeria's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of a comprehensive hazardous work list for children and prohibitions related to the use of children in illicit activities.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 15 of the Labor Code; Article 7 of Executive Decree No. 96–98 on the List and Content of Special Books and Registers Mandatory for Employers (19,20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 15 of the Labor Code; Article 7 of Executive Decree No. 96–98 on the List and Content of Special Books and Registers Mandatory for Employers (19,20)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 303 <i>bis</i> 4 of the Penal Code (21)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 303 <i>bis</i> 4 and 319 of the Penal Code (21)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 319, 333 <i>bis</i> 1, 343, and 344 of the Penal Code (21)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 195 <i>bis</i> of the Penal Code (21)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	17	Article 14 of Presidential Decree No. 08-134 on the National People's Army (22)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 3 of Law No. 14-06 on National Service (23)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 12 of Law No. 08-04 on National Education (24)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 13 of Law No. 08-04 on National Education (24)

The Labor Code prohibits anyone under the age of 19 from working at night and anyone under the age of 18 from performing work that is harmful to their health, safety, or morals. (19) Algeria has not determined by national law or regulation the types of work that are hazardous for children, and research did not determine whether the government commission tasked with proposing a list of hazardous professions continued to work on this issue in 2020. (16) Furthermore, research uncovered no additional information on efforts to revise the Labor Code during the reporting period. (1,2,8,19,25) Algerian law does not provide increased penalties for, or categorize as a separate crime, the involvement of children in either the production or trafficking of drugs. (21)

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 enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MTESS)	Enforces labor laws, including laws related to child labor, through its General Labor Inspectorate; issues citations noting violations of labor laws; and refers violations to the Ministry of Justice. (2, 18) Supervises the application of laws and regulations related to labor relations, working conditions, and worker safety. (7) Shares child labor reports with the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women to ensure follow up with social services. (7)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecutes child exploitation cases, including those related to non-compliance with labor laws, through its Office of Criminal Affairs and Amnesty Procedures, which is the lead enforcement agency for human trafficking issues. (17, 26)
The National Council for Human Rights (CNDH)	Housed under the authority of the President. Investigates human rights violations, including those pertaining to labor. (17) These investigations may result in the initiation of legal proceedings. (17)
Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women	Provides social services to children and families. Also conducts investigations, as directed by the Ministry of Justice, into issues related to children and families. (16)
Ministry of the Interior and Local Assemblies	The Ministry of the Interior and local assemblies enforce criminal laws related to child trafficking through the DGSN in urban areas, which comprises 8 active brigades of 77 specialized police officers focused on illegal immigration and human trafficking, and 50 Brigades for the Protection of Minors, including 300 police officers specializing in the protection of children. The Ministry of the Interior maintains a hotline to report child abuse and missing children, and may conduct investigations on child labor violations, as directed by the Ministry of Justice. (7, 10, 14-16, 27)
Ministry of National Defense	Enforces criminal laws pertaining to child labor, including child trafficking, in rural and border regions through the National Gendarmerie. As directed by the Ministry of Justice, may conduct investigations on child labor violations. (15) Works with DGSN and the NGO Algerian Network for the Defense of Children's Rights to administer hotlines for the reporting of child abuse; also receives training on child labor. (15) Maintains a website where individuals can file complaints. (15)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Algeria took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of The Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MTESS) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the lack of authority to inspect informal workplaces for child labor.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$15,300,000 (15)	Unknown (26)
Number of Labor Inspectors	645 (15)	885 (26)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (15)	Yes (26)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (15)	No (26)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (15)	N/A (26)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (15)	Yes (26)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	124,698 (15)	116,701 (26)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (15)	109,113 (26)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (15)	14 (26)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (15)	Unknown (26)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (15)	Unknown (26)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (26)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (15)	Yes (26)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (15)	Yes (26)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (26)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (15)	Yes (17)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (15)	Yes (17)

The government did not provide information on labor inspectorate funding for inclusion in this report. While the labor inspectorate is authorized to conduct inspections in all workplaces, inspectors do not investigate unmarked workplaces, such as houses or informal construction sites. (17, 28) However, it is suspected that child labor exists

within the construction sector, agriculture sector, cafe businesses, and informal street markets. (17) Due to the pandemic, the Minister of Labor announced during the reporting period that the Labor Department did not have the sufficient resources to carry out its regularly scheduled duties. (17)

The Government of Algeria does recognize the need to address issues in the informal economy, and has begun to monitor the informal economy more closely. As part of these efforts, the government has worked with the Algerian think tank, Center for Research in Applied Economics for Development, to learn more about the informal economy. (17) The government has also requested the ILO's assistance in transitioning informal businesses to become more transparent within a legal framework. (17) Additionally, on October 3, the Minister of the Interior announced a new strategy to track begging networks at checkpoints with periodic visits to transportation hubs and storage facilities. (17)

The labor inspectorate is empowered to conduct unannounced inspections and issue penalties. If child labor law violations are found, the children are removed from their worksites and placed in the schooling system. (17)

The number of labor inspectors is seemingly sufficient for the size of Algeria's workforce, which includes more than 10.85 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, it would be recommended that Algeria employ 723 inspectors, and there are currently 885 inspectors in the country. (29)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Algeria 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 the lack of training for criminal investigators.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (15)	No (26)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (15)	N/A (26)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (15)	Yes (26)
Number of Investigations	23 (15)	Unknown (26)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (15)	5,669 (26)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	32‡ (15)	Unknown (26)
Number of Convictions	27‡ (15)	Unknown (26)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (15)	Unknown (26)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (15)	Yes (26)

‡ Data are from January 1, 2019 to June 30, 2019.

Although the government reported conducting investigations and achieving convictions in cases related to human trafficking, it did not provide information on whether these cases involved child victims. In addition, the government did not provide for inclusion in this report specific information on its criminal law enforcement efforts in regards to other worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed. (26)

Despite these limitations, the government took meaningful steps in terms of trainings. For example, 27 judges who specialize in juvenile cases received training in March from the National Authority for the Protection and Promotion of Children (ONPPE) and International Organization for Penal Reform. (26) ONPPE carried out a training on at-risk children that same month at the Judicial Police Academy of the National Gendarmerie. ONPPE also organized a seminar on international and national mechanisms against child labor at the Graduate School of the National Gendarmerie in November of the reporting period. (26)

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IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Authority for the Protection and Promotion of Children (ONPPE)	Protects and promotes children’s rights and advocates for children in danger of economic exploitation. Acts as a liaison between the Ministry of Justice and members of the public alleging violations of children’s rights, and oversees efforts of the National Commission for the Prevention of and Fight Against Child Labor. (1,7,8,27,30,31) Runs a national hotline and website to field questions and complaints about the mistreatment of children. (17) In 2020, the Authority continued to run the hotline and website, and held trainings for government officials and members of the Algerian media on the protection and promotion of children’s rights. (17)
National Committee for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons	Monitors implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons. Comprises representatives from the President’s Office; the Prime Minister’s Office; 12 ministries, including MTESS; and other government entities. (7,30,32,33) During the reporting period, the Committee worked to raise awareness on human trafficking as it relates to children. (17) Committee members also participated in an online seminar on the pandemic’s impact on human trafficking, which was organized by the UNODC and the League of Arab States. (34) In July 2020, under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNODC, the Committee organized a workshop titled “No to the Exploitation of Persons.” (17)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including the lack of a policy specifically dedicated to addressing the worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons	Aims to prevent and reduce human trafficking by raising awareness, strengthening legislation, prosecuting human trafficking crimes, improving the provision of protective services to victims, and increasing collaboration with national and international NGOs. (17,35) Research could not determine specific activities carried out under this policy during the reporting period.

The Algerian government does not have a national action plan to address the worst forms of child labor. However, the government’s 2019–2021 National Action Plan for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons dedicates specialized attention to child victims of trafficking, which could include those trafficked for labor. (17)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2020, 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 programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Child Labor Awareness Campaign†	Campaign carried out through the ONPPE and other government agencies that makes various efforts to raise awareness about child labor throughout the year. The Ministry of Solidarity also has a communication plan for each of the country’s 48 <i>wilayas</i> (governates) on child-related messaging. (17)
Children Assistance Facilities‡	Facilities operated by the government to provide support for children, namely orphans and children in dangerous situations who are taken into custody by the state. In 2020, these centers continued to operate. (17)

† Program is funded by the Government of Algeria.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. (9,15,30)

Although Algeria has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, forced begging, and street work. The government did not provide information on the activities of existing social programs in 2020 for inclusion in this report. (36)

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 Algeria (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws increase penalties for, or categorize as a separate crime, the involvement of children in all illicit activities, including using, procuring, and offering children for the production and trafficking of drugs.	2013 – 2020
	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2009 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020
Enforcement	Publish information on the labor law enforcement of child labor laws, including labor inspectorate funding, number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed, and penalties collected.	2009 – 2020
	Ensure that new labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive initial training.	2020
	Publish information on the criminal enforcement of child labor laws including the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor.	2020
Government Policies	Adopt a national policy that includes all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and street work.	2015 – 2020
	Publish activities undertaken to implement the National Action Plan for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons during the reporting period.	2020
Social Programs	Research and publish detailed information on children involved in child labor, or at risk of being involved; specify these activities, including those carried out in construction work, and publish information to inform policies.	2014 – 2020
	Ensure that social programs address the increasing number of migrant children involved in rural family-run businesses and agricultural work, as well as subjected to forced begging.	2020
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, street work, and forced begging.	2016 – 2020
	Publish disaggregated figures on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in order to fully assess its scope and tailor social programs accordingly.	2020
	Ensure that isolated cases of school administrators denying enrollment to migrant children are stopped in accordance with laws allowing for free public education for all children.	2018 – 2020
	Take measures to remove barriers to education for migrant children and children with disabilities, including: language barriers, lack of specialized training, transportation and accessibility of school buildings.	2015 – 2020
	Expand social programs to address school dropout rates in the southern region of the country.	2020
	Publish information on the activities of existing social programs as they relate to the worst forms of child labor.	2020

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