

In 2021, Cameroon made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government launched the "Zero Children in Gold Mines" program to address child labor in the gold mining sector. The government also convened meetings at the level of the technical secretariat for the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons, where it adopted an Operational Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. However, children in Cameroon are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in the recruitment by non-state armed groups for use in conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cocoa production and gold mining. In addition, the government has not addressed gaps in Cameroon's legal framework regarding the prohibition of use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs, and the prohibition of the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.



### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Cameroon are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in the recruitment by non-state armed groups for use in conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cocoa production and gold mining. (1,2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Cameroon. 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	43.7 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	80.0
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	42.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		65.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (3)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5 (MICS 5), 2014. (4)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

**Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of bananas, kola nuts, cocoa, onions, coffee, and tea, including handling pesticides, using machetes, clearing fields, climbing trees, and lifting heavy loads† (2,5-7)
	Raising livestock (1,2)
	Fishing (1,2,8)
Industry	Working in artisanal gold mines† and gravel quarries,† transporting heavy loads of sand or gravel, breaking stones, handling mercury, and digging or standing in stagnant water to extract minerals (1,2,9-11)
	Construction, including carrying water, concrete, and cement blocks (2,7)
Services	Domestic work (1,2,12)
	Working in restaurants and as phone booth operators (2)
	Working in transportation as assistants to bus drivers (1,8,13)
	Street work, including vending and begging (1,2)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,14,15)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict, including suicide bombing, fighting, gathering intelligence, providing operational support as porters and cooks, and sexual slavery (1,2,14-16)
	Forced labor in agriculture in the production of cocoa, cotton, onions, and tea; fishing; livestock raising; domestic work; spare parts shops; artisanal gold mines and gravel quarries; street vending; and construction (1,6-8,13,17)
	Forced begging (1,2)

† 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.

Cameroon is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking from neighboring countries in Central and West Africa, and child trafficking also occurs within Cameroon. (1,15) Children are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, and forced labor in mining and agriculture. (1,15) Parents often entrust children to intermediaries who promise to take them to urban centers for education or improved living conditions, and these children are often subject to exploitation. (1) In the artisanal mining sector in eastern Cameroon, children are subject to hazardous conditions, including frequent collapses of open pit mines and use of dangerous chemicals including mercury. The Government of Cameroon banned the presence of children at mining sites in August 2021, but research indicates that child labor continues to be widespread in the sector. (2,9,10,18,19)

Several crises within Cameroon and in neighboring countries have heightened children’s vulnerability. (20) The crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions began in 2016 as mass protests by lawyers and teachers, and it has since evolved into an armed separatist movement exacerbated by criminal opportunists taking advantage of the general insecurity in the two regions. Violence continued to escalate in the second half of 2021, and to date, the crisis has claimed an estimated 4,000 civilian lives and internally displaced approximately 573,000 people. (16,21,22) Nearly 2.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance due to the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions, including more than 1.2 million school-age children. Disruptions to family livelihoods as a result of the crisis place children at greater risk of human trafficking and child labor. (16) In Cameroon’s Far North Region, the non-state armed group Boko Haram continued its insurgency, launching multiple attacks on civilians during the reporting period. Although the death of Boko Haram leader Abdubakar Shekau in May significantly diminished the capacity of the terrorist group to carry out attacks on civilians in the second half of the year, the Boko Haram insurgency remains a major humanitarian crisis, and more than 350,000 people have been internally displaced. (22,23) Cameroon also hosts nearly half a million refugees, primarily from the Central African Republic and Nigeria. Between refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs, Cameroon, which has a population of 29.3 million people, is home to nearly 2 million displaced people. (22,24)

Children in Cameroon are subject to recruitment and use in non-state armed groups. (2) In 2021, in the Far North Region, Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa recruited children to act as soldiers and suicide bombers. They also forcibly recruited children to act as porters, scouts, and cooks. (2) English-speaking separatist groups in the Northwest and Southwest regions have recruited and used children as fighters. (16) Anecdotal evidence suggests that some community neighborhood watch groups in the Far North Region, known as Vigilance Committees, may have incorporated children into their ranks. Vigilance Committees carry out reconnaissance operations against Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, and some vigilance committees receive non-lethal material support from the government. (1,2,15)

Ongoing violence in Cameroon and the surrounding regions has significantly disrupted children’s schooling, making both Cameroonian and refugee children vulnerable to exploitation. Since 2016, armed separatist groups have violently enforced school boycotts, leading to long-term disruptions of education for children in the Northwest and Southwest regions. (16) Separatists frequently attacked and kidnapped students and teachers who attended classes, often releasing them only after collecting ransom. In 2021, approximately 700,000 children




were not in school due to these boycotts, making them more vulnerable to child labor. (2,13,16) In addition, armed separatists have occupied and used schools as camps and bases for their operations. (16) Although the "Interim Government of Ambazonia," one of the largest separatist groups in Cameroon, allowed hundreds of schools to open for the first time in 5 years in August 2021, by November, the same organization announced a renewed school boycott. (16,25) In the Far North Region, terrorist activity by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa has also disrupted children's schooling. (2,20)

The government requires children to have identification documents, including birth certificates, to fully access education. Those without birth certificates often face difficulties registering for end-of-course examinations to enter secondary school. (2) Many public officials in the Northwest and Southwest regions have fled since the beginning of the crisis in those regions, reducing access to birth registration services. In addition, many internally displaced children lost their birth certificates as they fled the violence due to the Anglophone crisis and have been unable to participate in end-of-course examinations. (2) In September 2021, certain schools in the West Region refused to admit 700 internally displaced children into school due to their lack of documentation. (2) The law guarantees free education up to the age of 12, but in practice, additional school fees are often charged and families must pay the cost of books and uniforms, which is a significant barrier for many families. In the Far North region, for example, 61 percent of teachers are paid by parents. (2,26,27) In addition, at the secondary school level, students are responsible for the cost of tuition, additional fees, books, and uniforms, rendering secondary education unaffordable for many families. (27) Further barriers to education include inadequate school facility infrastructure, including toilets and sanitation facilities, and an insufficient number of teachers. (2,28)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cameroon 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 Cameroon's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of prohibition of 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	14	Article 2 of Order N° 17 on Child Labor; Section 86 of the Labor Code (29,30)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 9–23 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor; Section 86 of the Labor Code (29,30)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 9–23 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor (30)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 2–6 of the Law Relating to the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery; Articles 11, 342-1, and 352–353 of the Penal Code; Section 2 of the Labor Code (29,31,32)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Sections 2 and 4–6 of the Law Relating to the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery; Articles 11, 342-1, and 352–354 of the Penal Code (31,32)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 294 and 344–347 of the Penal Code; Articles 76 and 81–82 of the Law on Cybersecurity and Cybercriminality (31,33)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 12 of the Decree Concerning the Status of Non-Defense Military Personnel; Article 2a of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Admission to Military Training Schools for Officers (34,35)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Article 12 of the Decree Concerning the Status of Non-Defense Military Personnel; Article 2a of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Admission to Military Training Schools for Officers (34,35)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No	12‡	Preamble of the Constitution; Articles 9 and 16 of the Law Orienting the Education System (36,37)
Free Public Education	No		Article 46-2 and Articles 47–48 of the Decree on the Organization of Public Schools (38)

\* Country has no conscription (39)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (27)

Children in Cameroon are required to attend only 6 years of primary school, which typically concludes at age 12. This standard makes children ages 13 through 14 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work. (36,37) In addition, the Decree on the Organization of Public Schools provides for free schooling only through primary school, but basic education is a total of 9 years and includes three years of lower secondary school. The failure to provide for complete free basic education may increase the risk of children's involvement in the worst forms of child labor. (38) Human trafficking provisions do not meet international standards because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking, and individuals ages 16 to 18 are not considered children for the purposes for trafficking in persons provisions. (31,32) In addition, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18 are not comprehensive, because work at dangerous heights and underwater is not prohibited. (30,40)

### 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.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MINLSS)	Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor; promotes decent working conditions, and leads the National Committee to Combat Child Labor (CNLCTE). (41)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Prosecutes cases referred by the General Delegate for National Security or the Ministry of Defense's National Gendarmerie (SED), and contributes to investigations, as appropriate. (2,41)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
General Delegate for National Security	Operates as the national police service of Cameroon. Enforces laws against the worst forms of child labor and investigates violations in urban areas. (2,41) Through its Special Vice Squad, investigates cases of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse against women and children. Refers cases to MOJ or the Ministry of Defense for investigation by SED. (2,41) In the reporting period, coordinated with NGOs and a partner government to conduct trainings for law enforcement on identifying and assisting human trafficking victims. (1)
SED	Investigates cases of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in both urban and rural areas before referring cases to MOJ for prosecution. (2,41) Operates a reporting hotline for human trafficking cases. (2,41,42)

Although it does not play a direct role in enforcement, Cameroon's National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms advises government ministries on the enforcement of laws related to child labor and advocates for sanctions as appropriate. (43,44)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Cameroon took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient financial resource allocation.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (13)	\$1,840,000 (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	300 (13)	223 (2)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (29)	Yes (29)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (13)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (13)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (13)	Yes (2)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	3,591 (13)	5,348 (2)
Number Conducted at Worksite	3,591 (13)	Unknown (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (13)	0 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (13)	0 (2)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (13)	0 (2)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (13)	Yes (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (13)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (29)	Yes (29)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (13)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (13)	No (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (13)	Yes (2)

In January 2021, inspectors from the East Region Delegate of Social Affairs found that 605 children were subjected to child labor in 29 mining sites in the region. (2) The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Cameroon's workforce, which includes approximately 12 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Cameroon would need to employ about 797 labor inspectors, but it currently employs only 223. (2,45-47) Labor inspectors are not empowered to conduct inspections in the informal sector, in which the majority of child labor occurs. (2,48) The labor inspectorate lacked sufficient resources, including transportation, to carry out its mission. (2) In Cameroon's largest city, Douala, there were only 15 inspectors, which trade union leaders described as "totally inadequate" to inspect the thousands of workplaces in the city. (2,41) Government officials and NGOs in the East Region indicated that labor inspections rarely took place, especially at rural mining sites. (2)

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Although the government has not created a formal mechanism for filing and responding to complaints about child labor, victims and their relatives can report directly to any of the institutions, including the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the State Defense Secretariat, and the Ministry of Justice. (2)

### **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Cameroon took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including insufficient allocation of financial resources.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (13)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (13)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (13)	Yes (2)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (13)	0 (22)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (13)	0 (22)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (13)	0 (22)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (13)	0 (22)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (13)	No (22)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (13)	Yes (2)

The General Delegate for National Security reported that in 2021, 154 police officers received training on portions of the Penal Code related to trafficking in persons as part of a 12-month refresher course. (15) In addition, the National Gendarmerie introduced a module on organized crime, including trafficking of persons, including children, into the training curriculum for the Judicial Police Officers. (15) Law enforcement officers, however, did not receive training specifically addressing child labor, and criminal law enforcement agencies do not receive adequate funding to investigate the worst forms of child labor. (2,5,13,43) In 2013, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the IOM developed the National Referral System and Standard Operating Procedures to coordinate the identification and assistance of human trafficking victims, including children found to be in the worst forms of child labor. Research shows no evidence of relevant stakeholders using this system during the reporting period. (2)

Research did not uncover information about any individuals involved in ongoing prosecutions that began in previous reporting periods. (2) While the government of Cameroon did not compile comprehensive statistics on trafficking prosecutions, conservative estimates from the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons indicate that authorities investigated 93 cases of trafficking in persons; these estimates did not disaggregate the number of individuals involved in each case or the number of children subject to trafficking in persons. (41) During the reporting period, despite credible evidence that children were involved in the worst forms of child labor, there were no reported investigations of forced child labor or commercial sexual exploitation of children. (2)

During the reporting period, Cameroonian Police in the capital city of Yaoundé arrested members of a human trafficking network that bought and sold newborn babies. The trafficking network operations are believed to expand beyond Cameroon and include Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Chad. (49) In addition, in February, the gendarmerie in Limbé region, in the Southwest, arrested 7 suspects who were accused of subjecting 29 children between the ages of 7 and 14 to domestic servitude. The suspects were charged under Cameroon's child trafficking laws. (1) Due to concerns about child trafficking, border police work to ensure that children have parental authorization when crossing a border without a parent. (15) While there have been past reports that indicate the government has held children as young as age 5 in detention facilities for prolonged periods due to suspicion of being affiliated with Boko Haram, or to prevent them from being recruited into Boko Haram, there were no reports during the reporting period that the government detained or punished any children found engaged in child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, illegal or illicit activities, or armed conflict. (2,44,50,51)



#### 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 the lack of resources to carry out mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee to Combat Child Labor	Coordinates government efforts to address child labor. Led by MINLSS, and includes representatives from other ministries and government bodies as well as representatives from civil society. (52) In 2021, CNLCTE undertook activities to operationalize the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Cameroon, 2018–2025. (22)
Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates government efforts to address human trafficking. Chaired by the Secretary General of the Office of the Prime Minister, and includes members of government ministries, law enforcement personnel, civil society organizations, and NGOs. (1,8,53) In 2021, the Government of Cameroon created the technical secretariat for the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons. The committee held two formal sessions to discuss anti-trafficking efforts, and it established four new committees in the East Region to address trafficking in persons. (2,15) In addition, members of the committee took a virtual training course on trafficking in persons and child exploitation. (22)
Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS)	Coordinates efforts to address human trafficking. Coordinates the National Referral System and Standard Operating Procedures, a set of formal written procedures meant to guide officials across the government in the proactive identification of victims of human trafficking, including trafficked children. (8) Admits children subject to abuse, including child trafficking survivors, into government-run institutions that provide shelter, food, medical care, education, vocational training, and family tracing. Conducts public awareness campaigns on human trafficking. (1,15) In 2021, MINAS earmarked \$82,000 (49 million CFA) to improve child protection. Its Child Protection Focal Team held a 3-day workshop for officials on child protection issues. (22) In collaboration with the Ministries of Basic Education and Secondary Education, it also launched a campaign, "We Ring the Bell," aimed to promote educational access for children with disabilities. (2) In addition, MINAS launched a new shelter for returning migrants, including human trafficking survivors, which includes dormitory space for up to 21 women and children. (15) Finally, it provided support, including school placement assistance and food, to 39,518 children from internally displaced families. (15)

A lack of resources, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and socio-political unrest and insecurity in the Far North, Northwest, and Southwest regions continued to hamper coordination efforts to address trafficking in persons and the worst forms of child labor. (2,15) Research indicates that the National Committee to Combat Child Labor has not made significant progress because of a lack of dedicated resources. There is also evidence to suggest that each of the government agencies represented in the committee looked for its own funding and initiated its own activities without significant coordination. (13) Various agencies and branch offices responsible for investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in persons did not provide full reports to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons. (15)

#### 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 child labor.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
NDS30 National Development Strategy (2020–2030)	Incorporates the reduction of poverty, improved access to basic services, and the elimination of child labor into the national development strategy. The strategy specifically calls for improved legal frameworks to address the worst forms of child labor, universal primary education enrollment and completion, and eventually, free education through 10 years of schooling. (54) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement NDS30 National Development Strategy (2020-2030) during the reporting period.
Operational Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (2021–2023)†	Focuses on addressing trafficking in persons, including child trafficking. Objectives include raising awareness, improving the provision of services to human trafficking survivors, increasing prosecution of traffickers, enhancing data collection, and coordinating execution of anti-trafficking efforts. (55) Includes the goals of identifying and suppressing forced child labor and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (55) During the reporting period, the plan was extended by two more years, through to the end of 2023. (15) The government also conducted several awareness-raising campaigns and provided funding to several agencies to carry out anti-trafficking activities. In addition, the government began work, in cooperation with the UNODC and the IOM, to revise its 2011 anti-trafficking law. (15)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

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In 2018, the Government of Cameroon drafted a National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Cameroon, 2018–2025. Although the government has yet to formally adopt this plan, in 2021, various government ministries began to deliberate and allocate funding to implement the plan's activities. (22,48,56) Cameroon is a member of the Alliance 8.7 program, an inclusive global partnership committed to achieving Target 8.7 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Target 8.7 seeks, among other objectives, to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor. (13,57)

### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2021, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the inadequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Project to Fight the Phenomenon of Street Children (Project 559)†	In conjunction with the National Employment Fund, this MINAS-funded program provides street children with health care, education, and psychosocial care, and supports the reintegration of street children by providing vocational training opportunities at the Betamba Childhood Institute. (2,5,43,58) In the reporting year, at least 51 street children received services through this program. (2)
Support Project in Quality Management for Cocoa and Coffee Production/Forever Chocolate (2019–2025)†	Promotes labor standards in the cocoa industry, including the elimination of child labor. (7) Implemented by NGO association <i>Enfant Jeunesse Avenir</i> , in partnership with Cameroon's largest cocoa processor, Cameroon Cacao Industrial Corporation. Key stakeholders of the project include government ministries such as the Ministry of Health, MINAS, the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family, MINLSS, and the Ministry of Basic Education. (7) The project is implemented in cocoa production basins using the Farmer Field School Extension Approach and is aimed at training cocoa farmers to produce cocoa that is free of child labor and utilizes environmentally friendly techniques. (7) The project provides services to children at risk of child labor, including school fee exemptions, school kits, and health services. The project also seeks to empower women and provide families with alternative sources of income to limit the involvement of children in child labor. (2) In addition, the project includes monitoring and remediation systems aimed at ensuring the traceability of cocoa supply chains and eliminating child labor. (2) The project continued in 2021. (2)
Support Program for the Reform of Education in Cameroon (2018–2026)†	\$130 million project implemented by the Ministry of Basic Education with lending from the World Bank. Promotes access to basic education, especially in disadvantaged areas. (59) At the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year, the government began providing \$1,600 (800,000 CFA) donations to 1,000 schools in the East Region, Adamawa Region, North Region, and Far North Region. (2) In addition, the project provided 2.5 million school textbooks to 13,000 primary schools, reducing schooling costs for parents with the aim of decreasing school dropout rates. (2)
Zero Children in Gold Mines† *	Project implemented by the state-owned National Mining Corporation, SONAMINES, to eliminate child labor in gold mining in the East Region, where there are more than 300 gold mining sites. During the reporting period, the project distributed money and educational materials to children, and promised to financially support the education of former child laborers who left the mines and returned to school. (2,15)
United States Government Programs (non-DOL)	\$27 million U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, implemented by Nascent Solutions in cooperation with the Ministry of Basic Education, which improves literacy and nutrition in primary schools. During the reporting period, in collaboration with the Ministry of Basic Education, the program equipped 148 school libraries, distributed 100,000 books in the Adamawa, East, and North Regions, and provided 48,000 books to 58 schools in the Northwest Region through mobile libraries. (2,5) To encourage school attendance, the program also provided 2,209 metric tons of food for more than 170,000 students, and distributed "take home rations" to students in their final 2 years of primary school who attended school regularly. (2)

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Cameroon.

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

Although the government has implemented programs to improve education access and address child labor in mining, street work, and cocoa production, research suggests that the scope of current programs is insufficient to address the extent of the problem due to limited resources and insufficient geographic coverage. (2)

Government-run centers can temporarily house survivors of human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor, but space is limited. (53,61) NGOs also provide shelter and assistance to survivors of child trafficking and labor exploitation. (13) These include the Network for Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa, which



provides housing and temporary assistance; the Kumba-based Survival Network, which provides shelter and scholarships to two survivors; and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Bamenda Catholic archdiocese in the Northwest Region, which assists IDPs. However, these organizations did not share an exact number of participants. (13)

### 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 Cameroon (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Establish a minimum age for compulsory education that is consistent with the minimum age for admission to work.	2009 – 2021
	Criminally prohibit the use of children for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2014 – 2021
	Establish, by law, free basic public education.	2019 – 2021
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2021
	Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be considered child trafficking, and that all children under age 18 are protected.	2015 – 2021
	Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include work at dangerous heights and underwater.	2014 – 2021
Enforcement	Establish a mechanism for the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to receive child labor complaints.	2021
	Collect and publish statistics on the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites.	2021
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate and criminal law enforcement agencies receive an adequate amount of funding, training, and resources with which to conduct inspections and investigations.	2009 – 2021
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by conducting inspections in all sectors, including the mining sector and the informal sector.	2013 – 2021
	Collect and publish comprehensive statistics on enforcement efforts, including the number of criminal labor law violations found, the number of investigations, the number of prosecutions, and the number of convictions.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that the National Referral System and Standard Operating Procedures work effectively to coordinate the identification and assistance of human trafficking victims.	2021
	Ensure that criminal offenses related to the worst forms of child labor are investigated and prosecuted.	2021
Coordination	Ensure that existing coordinating bodies are active and receive sufficient resources to carry out their stated mandates.	2014 – 2021
	Ensure that relevant agencies share criminal law enforcement data with the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons.	2021
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor.	2021
	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement NDS30 National Development Strategy (2020–2030) and publish results from activities implemented during the reporting period.	2020 – 2021
Social Programs	Ensure that internally displaced and refugee children have access to education, and ensure that schools remain free from violence and are not re-appropriated for other purposes.	2018 – 2021
	Make additional efforts to provide all children with birth documentation.	2020 – 2021
	Ensure that children are able to access education by eliminating or defraying the cost of school fees, books, and uniforms.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that the number of schools, teachers, potable water sources, and sanitation facilities are adequate throughout the country.	2009 – 2021
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem in Cameroon.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that all government-run centers have sufficient space to accommodate victims of child trafficking and children engaged in street work and domestic work.	2016 – 2021

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## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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