



2023 FINDINGS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR



Empowering Change

Introducing the Redesigned 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The State of Global Child Labor

Emerging Trends and Children at Higher Risk



Dedication to Marcia Eugenio:

This edition of the *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* (TDA report) and *List Produced with Child Labor or Forced Labor* is dedicated to Marcia Eugenio, as we celebrate her retirement and honor her remarkable contributions to the global fight against child labor and forced labor.

For over three decades, Marcia has been a tireless advocate for the rights of workers and children worldwide. As the Director of the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) in the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), her unwavering commitment and visionary leadership have been instrumental in advancing the cause to which she has devoted her career.

Marcia's legacy is deeply intertwined with the TDA report itself. As one of the original drafters, she poured her expertise and passion into its creation, shaping it into the comprehensive and influential resource it is today. In the early days of OCFT, when the office was a small, tight-knit team, Marcia wrote many sections of the report herself, laying the groundwork for its future growth and impact. Her stewardship has been instrumental in the report's development over the years, making it a powerful tool for shedding light on the plight of children worldwide and driving change in policy and practice.

Under Marcia's guidance, OCFT has also made significant strides in providing education, training, and livelihood opportunities to millions of children and their families, empowering them to break free from the cycle of poverty and exploitation. Her dedication to forging partnerships with governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector has been crucial in advancing supply chain transparency and accountability, working to ensure that the goods we consume are not tainted by the exploitation of the most vulnerable.

Marcia's legacy is one of compassion, determination, and the unwavering belief that every child deserves a chance to thrive. As she embarks on a new chapter, we commemorate her remarkable contributions and the indelible impact she has made on countless lives. Her work will continue to inspire us all as we strive towards a world free from child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

With deep admiration and thanks,

Your devoted team at the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking

Cover photo:

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Artisanal miners Mama Natalie and her sons, Johnathan and King, dig for cobalt by hand on the edge of an industrial mine. Kolwezi, DRC. 2021.

How to Access Our Reports

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On Your Computer

All three of the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) flagship reports on international child labor and forced labor are available on our website in HTML and PDF formats at dol.gov/ChildLaborReports. These reports include *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, as required by the Trade and Development Act of 2000; *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, as required by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005; and *List of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor*, as required by Executive Order 13126. On our website, you can navigate to individual country pages where you can find information on the prevalence and sectoral distribution of the worst forms of child labor; specific goods produced by child labor or forced labor; efforts each country has made to implement their commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the areas of laws and regulations, institutional mechanisms for enforcement and coordination, and government policies and social programs; and specific suggestions for government actions to address the issue of child labor.

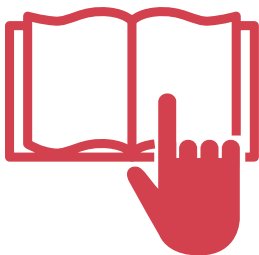
You can also access USDOL's *Comply Chain: Business Tools for Labor Compliance in Global Supply Chains* online at dol.gov/ComplyChain. *Comply Chain* is a practical guide for companies to develop strong social compliance systems to reduce child labor and forced labor in supply chains. Companies can explore modules including stakeholder engagement, code of conduct provisions, auditing, remediation, reporting, and engagement, among others.

Finally, you can access USDOL's *Better Trade Tool* on our website at dol.gov/BetterTradeTool. This tool's dynamic dashboards and custom queries allow users to view and analyze U.S. and global trade data for use in identifying potential child labor and forced labor risks in global supply chains.



On Your Phone

The Department of Labor's *Sweat & Toil* mobile application contains research from all three reports and helps you easily sort data by region, country, assessment level, good, and type of exploitation, all without the need for an internet connection. The app also includes information from USDOL's technical assistance projects around the world and data visualizations that allow users to view goods produced with exploitative labor by region and sector, the sectoral distribution of where children work by country, and labor inspectorate information by region. You can download the free app from Apple's App Store or the Google Play Store and access the data on our website at dol.gov/AppSweat&Toil.



On Paper

The *Sweat & Toil* magazine is published in hardcopy and provides an overall summary of USDOL's flagship reports on international child labor and forced labor. Send an e-mail to GlobalKids@dol.gov to request hard copies or download them from the Department's website at dol.gov/ChildLaborReports.

How to Access ILAB's Tools and Resources



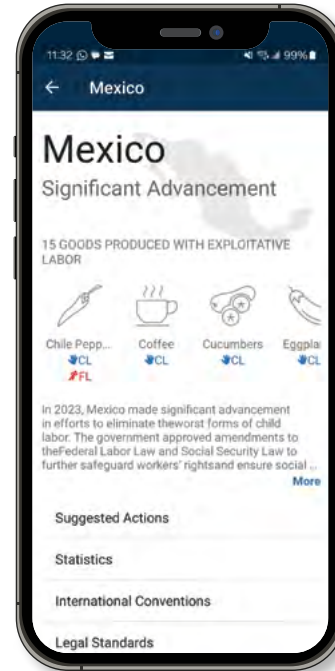
Sweat & Toil

Starting point for inquiry, action, and change

NEW: Browse new goods produced with labor exploitation

Check countries' **efforts** to eliminate child labor

Review **laws** and **ratifications** and **enforcement efforts**



Browse **goods** produced with child labor or forced labor

Find child labor **data** and see what countries can do to end child labor

Download the free app from Apple's App Store or the Google Play Store and access the data on our website at dol.gov/AppSweat&Toil

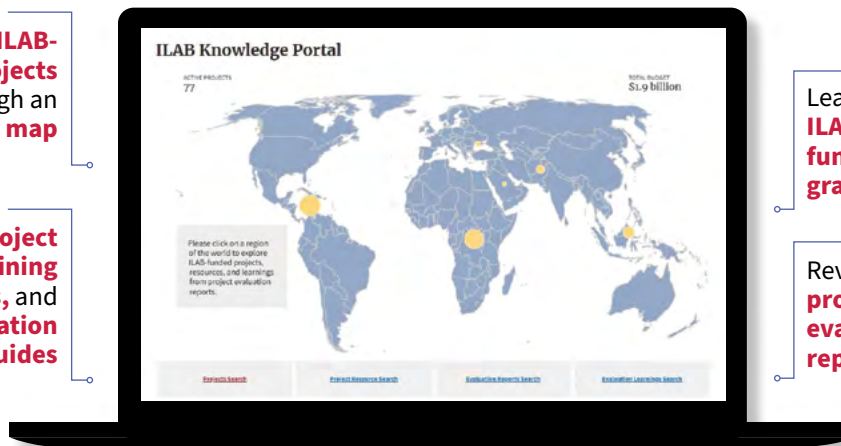


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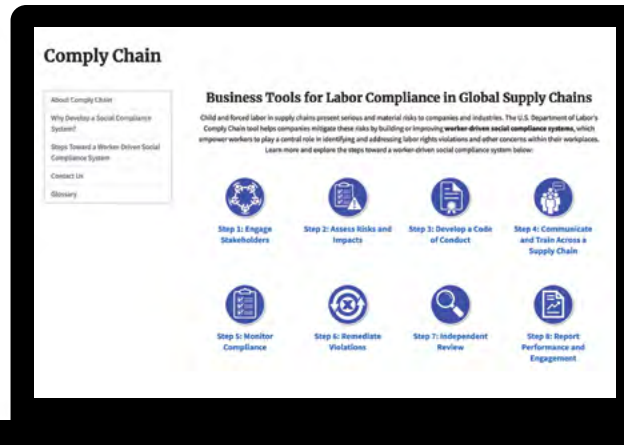


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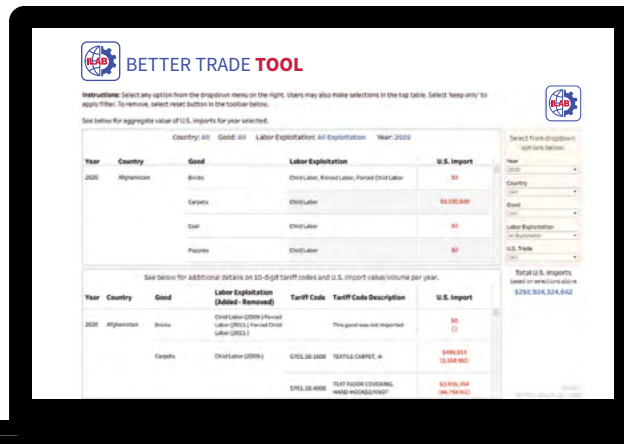


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September 2019 - September 2024

Together, children themselves can be part of solutions that aid in preventing child labor within their communities. Da Nang, Vietnam. July 2023.

ACE, funded by DOL, strengthens governments' and communities' capacity to address the worst forms of child labor, including the online sexual exploitation of children. The project also promotes acceptable work conditions through a unified and participatory approach.

Learn more on our website at dol.gov/ACEProject

Foreword

When America does right by its workers, it strengthens our nation. This principle has guided my career in public service and continues to drive my work as Acting Secretary of Labor. As we release the 2023 *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* and the 2024 *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, our efforts to protect workers' rights and build an economy that works for everyone are more important than ever.

In today's global economy, a labor rights violation in one part of the world has detrimental ripple effects everywhere. But I've also seen the flip side. When more workers can find and exercise their power, it leads to stronger economies, healthier communities, and more vibrant democracies.

This is why the Biden-Harris Administration is focused on advancing workers' rights both at home and abroad. The **Presidential Memorandum on Global Labor Rights** marks a historic whole-of-government approach to elevating labor rights in our work overseas. This groundbreaking initiative directs departments and agencies to prioritize workers' rights in all aspects of our global engagement.

Advancing worker-driven social compliance is a proven approach that empowers workers and holds companies accountable for ethical labor practices. By unleashing worker voice through protecting freedom of association and collective bargaining, we can sustain good jobs throughout global supply chains. And this is not just the right thing to do. Research shows that respecting workers' rights maximizes market access and protects corporate reputations.

The reports released here provide a comprehensive look at the state of child labor

and forced labor worldwide. However, we must also acknowledge illegal child labor within our own borders. No child should be working on dangerous equipment in the United States. No child should be sleeping through school because they have been cleaning an auto parts factory floor overnight—just as no child anywhere in the world should be working in cobalt mines or on fishing boats.



Julie A. Su
Acting Secretary of Labor

We cannot ignore this reality. My department continues to vigorously enforce domestic child labor laws. But we alone cannot eradicate child labor. We must partner with communities and empower them not only to identify child labor violations without fear of retaliation but to use their collective voice to create the conditions in which they and their families can thrive.

As we pursue our mission to end child labor and forced labor globally, let us remember that our success depends on our ability to work together. I urge all stakeholders to use these reports, along with tools like **Comply Chain** and the **Better Trade Tool**, to advance supply chain transparency and accountability, and prioritize workers' rights. We must seize this moment to do what's right for workers. Together, we can build an economy that lifts up every worker and creates a brighter future for generations to come.

Julie A. Su
Acting Secretary of Labor
September 2024

Statement

Freedom of association and collective bargaining help workers build power from the bottom up, and that power is essential to ending child labor, forced labor, and other violations of workers' rights in global supply chains.

Workers' participation is essential to identifying problems that exacerbate child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking risks and for generating solutions. Workers should not face retaliation when they raise grievances. And most of all, workers need to be able to collectively bargain for better wages and working conditions through participation in democratic and independent unions or other worker-led organizations. Only then will genuine **worker voice** flourish, leading to respect, dignity, and decent work.

Forced labor and child labor are all too common globally—even in times of prosperity and in both wealthy and poor countries. And, while comprehensive and accurate statistics are not always available, global trends show that both **child labor** and **forced labor** are on the rise.

The overwhelming majority of forced labor, 86 percent, is found in the private economy—in both formal and informal businesses. People work in conditions of forced labor in homes, mines, factories, or fields that labor inspectors rarely visit and often where global supply chains begin.

We've seen this in 2024 through media exposés on forced labor in the fishing industry, which puts the seafood on our plates. And rather than having the opportunity to attend school, tens of thousands of children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo spend their days under dangerous and illegal conditions mining the cobalt that powers our cell phones and electric cars. Our research now identifies forced labor in cobalt and highlights the risks

in that supply chain. Labor abuses often do not occur in isolation, and they thrive in an environment with a lack of oversight and the suppression of worker-driven actions. These are not models for a sustainable future.

Sadly, situations like these exist all over the world.

The scope of these abuses is detailed in this year's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* and *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*—and the picture they paint is daunting.

A convoluted web of social, economic, political, and environmental issues makes labor exploitation an enduring problem—but not an unsolvable one. We know that governments play a pivotal role in addressing these issues through solid legal frameworks and robust enforcement. We also know that worker-driven social compliance and due diligence must be at the center of the global effort to address these challenges.

And we need to hold companies accountable for that effort.

Businesses have the power to improve how they engage with consumers, workers, and suppliers to actively combat the use of child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking in supply chains. Companies can do this not only through partnerships with public entities, but also through meaningful internal due diligence practices, including traceability.

Freedom of association and collective bargaining can help improve labor practices and bring to light abuses that may not be apparent



Thea Mei Lee
Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs

in periodic audits. Companies are projected to spend over \$27 billion a year by 2026 on social audits to report on labor abuses in their supply chains, even though audits have been shown time and again to be inadequate as the sole mechanism for addressing human rights risks. Promoting binding and enforceable agreements like the **Bangladesh Accord**—so workers themselves are empowered to monitor and call out violations in the workplace—is the way forward.

We urge companies to include workers' rights as a primary consideration when making business decisions about where and from whom to purchase goods and to partner and engage in honest open dialogue with governments in the global fight against child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. When we hold each other accountable, we reinforce our commitment to protecting labor rights globally.

The path to a world free of child labor and forced labor is challenging, but I'm optimistic.

As an economist and public servant, I know from talking to policymakers, lawmakers, and civil society organizations that enforceable trade measures and robust mandatory human rights due diligence regulations are fundamentally changing the power dynamics of the global labor market.

Given the rapidly evolving global legislative landscape, solid reporting by journalists and civil society, and strong consumer engagement, it is clear that the companies and governments that take these challenges seriously and are willing to empower workers and implement **worker-driven social compliance** will thrive. We look forward to continuing our work with business, labor, civil society, academics, and journalists to make the world of work safer, more just, and more dignified.

Thea Mei Lee

Thea Mei Lee
Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs
September 2024



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A child laborer in Bangladesh helped to fill sacks at a grain mill before she was able to stop working and attend school. Dhaka, Bangladesh. December 2019.



© Ebrahim Noroozi/ AP Images

Afghan children work in a brick factory on the outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan. Aid agencies say the number of children working in Afghanistan has grown since the economy collapsed following the Taliban takeover. Kabul, Afghanistan. August 20, 2022.

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Bedine, 10, a housekeeper for a local family in Koudougou, Burkina Faso, shells peanuts. It is not unusual for the families of young girls to send them to wealthier families to help with household chores. Koudougou, Boulkiemde, Burkina Faso. March 2021.

Empowering Change

Introducing the Redesigned Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The 2023 edition of the *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* marks a significant milestone in ILAB's commitment to eradicating child labor and forced labor worldwide. This comprehensive report provides governments, employers, civil society, and worker organizations with the knowledge and tools necessary to effect tangible change and create a brighter future for children everywhere.

Over the past two decades, global communications have evolved dramatically, and so have the needs and expectations of our diverse stakeholders. With each iteration of this report, we have incorporated new features and enhancements, such as enforcement information, child labor data, and suggested actions for governments.

Now, in 2023, we are thrilled to unveil a redesign of the country-specific profiles within our report. This new design prioritizes visual communication, practical insights, intuitive navigation, and consistency across different mediums, ensuring that critical information and actionable recommendations are readily accessible to those who need them most.

The redesigned profiles feature engaging infographics that transform complex data into easily digestible visual elements. With an intuitive layout that mirrors our [Sweat & Toil mobile application](#), the new profiles offer a seamless user experience, enabling frequent users to navigate content effortlessly and access the information they need.

Overview of 2023 Assessments

In 2023, six countries achieved the highest assessment of Significant Advancement: **Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Moldova**. This is the first year for **Moldova** and **Colombia** its eleventh. Eight additional countries—**Brazil, Guinea, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Togo**—would have received this assessment had they met the baseline level of protections. For a global breakdown of country assessments and more information about the baseline of minimally acceptable protections, see [Figures 1 and 2](#).

Figure 1

Global Breakdown of Country Assessments

6 Significant Advancement

Argentina | **Chile** ↑ | Colombia | **Ecuador** ↑ | **Mexico** ↑ | **Moldova** ↑

64 Moderate Advancement

Albania | **Algeria** ↑ | Angola | Belize | Benin | Bolivia | Botswana | Brazil | Burkina Faso | Cabo Verde | Cameroon | Christmas Island | Cocos (Keeling) Islands | Costa Rica | **Côte d'Ivoire** ↓ | El Salvador | Ethiopia | Georgia | Ghana | Guatemala | Guinea | Guinea-Bissau | **Guyana** ↑ | Honduras | India | Indonesia | Jamaica | Jordan | **Kiribati** ↑ | Kosovo | Liberia | Madagascar | Malawi | Maldives | Mauritius | Mongolia | **Montenegro** ↑ | Morocco | **Mozambique** ↑ | **Namibia** ↑ | Nepal | Norfolk Island | **North Macedonia** ↑ | Oman | Pakistan | Panama | Paraguay | Peru | Philippines | **Republic of the Congo** ↑ | Samoa | Senegal | Serbia | Sierra Leone | Solomon Islands | South Africa | Sri Lanka | Suriname | Tanzania | Thailand | The Gambia | Togo | Western Sahara | Zambia

47 Minimal Advancement

Armenia* | Azerbaijan* | Bangladesh* | **Bhutan** ↓ | **Bosnia and Herzegovina** ↓ | **Burundi*** ↓ | Cambodia* | Central African Republic* | **Comoros*** ↓ | Cook Islands | Democratic Republic of the Congo* | **Djibouti** ↓ | Dominica | Dominican Republic* | **Egypt** ↓ | Eswatini | Fiji | Gabon* | **Grenada** ↑ | Haiti | Iraq* | Kazakhstan* | Kenya* | Kyrgyz Republic* | Lebanon | **Lesotho** ↓ | Mali* | Mauritania* | Nicaragua* | Niger | **Nigeria** ↓ | Papua New Guinea | Rwanda* | **Saint Lucia** ↓ | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | São Tomé and Príncipe | Somalia* | Timor-Leste* | Tonga* | **Tunisia** ↓ | Tuvalu | **Uganda*** ↓ | Ukraine* | **Uzbekistan** ↓ | **Vanuatu** ↓ | West Bank and the Gaza Strip | Zimbabwe*

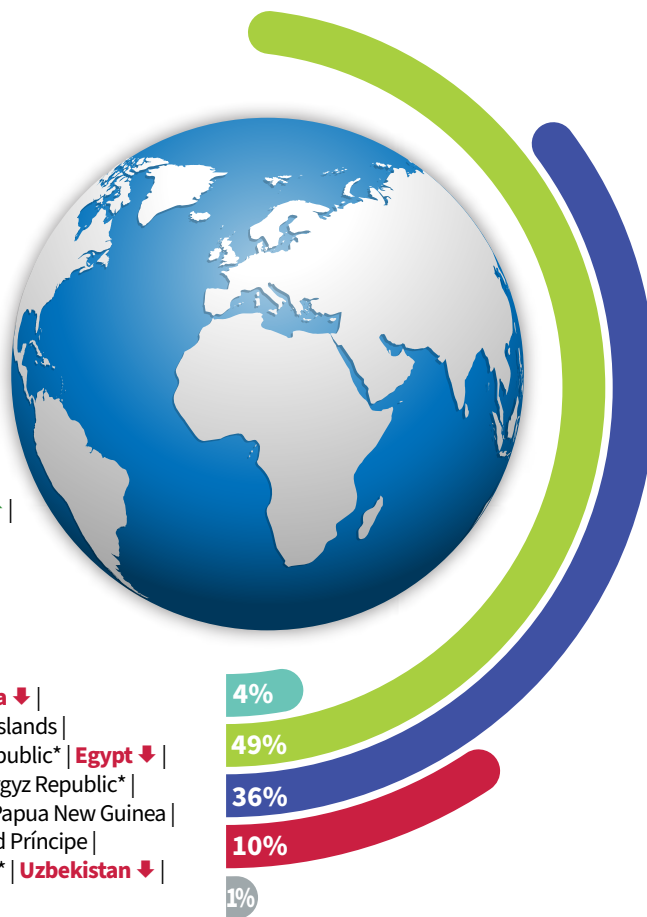
13 No Advancement

Afghanistan | Anguilla | British Virgin Islands | Burma‡ | **Chad**‡ ↓ | Eritrea‡ | Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) | Montserrat* | **Niue** ↓ | **Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha** ↓ | South Sudan‡ | **Tokelau** ↓ | **Yemen** ↓

1 No Assessment

Wallis and Futuna

* Efforts made but regression or continued law, policy, or practice that delayed advancement
 ‡ Efforts made but complicit in forced child labor



↑ Increase in assessment level
 ↓ Decrease in assessment level

Sixty-four countries received an assessment of Moderate Advancement, a decline from 69 last year, while 47 countries received an assessment of Minimal Advancement. Of these, 25 countries—**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Iraq, Kazakhstan,**

Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Somalia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and **Zimbabwe**—implemented or failed to remedy a law, policy, or practice that undermined their advancement related to education, minimum age for work, labor inspection, impunity for perpetrators, criminal treatment of victims,

Figure 2

Baseline of Minimally Acceptable Protections



or the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Seven of these countries were new to this list: **Burundi, Comoros, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.**

Thirteen countries received an assessment of No Advancement: **Afghanistan; Anguilla; British Virgin Islands; Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas); Montserrat; Niue; Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha; Tokelau; and Yemen.** Additionally, **Burma, Chad, Eritrea, and South Sudan** received this assessment for their complicity in the use of worst forms of child labor. **Burma** forced children to perform work in conflict areas. Government officials in **Chad** were complicit in the trafficking of children for use as livestock herders, as some officials approved the transfer from the children’s parents to the herd owners, and others exploiting children directly. **Eritrea** forced children to work in public works projects. And **South Sudan** forcibly recruited children for armed conflict. Only **Wallis and Futuna** received No Assessment.

The State of Global Child Labor: Emerging Trends and Children at Higher Risk

Drawing from the latest global findings presented in this year’s report, this section delves into the complex landscape of child labor. By examining current trends, identifying root causes, and shedding light on the children most vulnerable to exploitation, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the state of child labor worldwide.

Globally, most children work in agriculture raising livestock and poultry and harvesting crops such as beans, cocoa, coffee, and rice. Many children are also involved in harvesting crops that are used for the production of illicit substances—poppies for opium and heroin in **Afghanistan** and **Mexico**; coca leaves in **Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru**; and *khat* and *miraa* in **Ethiopia** and **Kenya**. In **Cabo Verde, Cambodia, and Ghana**, children are involved in artisanal and deep-sea fishing, while in **Honduras**, children dive for lobster.

In **Colombia, Mexico, South Sudan, and Sri Lanka**, 20 to 40 percent of children work in industries such as construction. Children produce bricks in **Argentina, India, and Pakistan** and baked goods in the **Dominican Republic** and **El Salvador**. Many children also work in mining and quarrying in countries like **Angola, Bolivia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Papua New Guinea.**

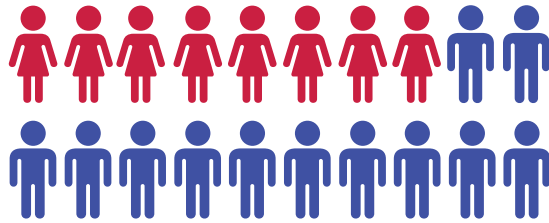
In **Egypt** and **Guinea-Bissau**, children can be found repairing automobiles and heavy machinery, while children in **Albania** work in call centers. In **Bangladesh, Burundi, and Peru**, children work in kitchens as cleaning staff, or as receptionists in restaurants, bars, and hotels. Children also work in shops and markets in **Angola, Bolivia, Lebanon, and Timor-Leste.** Learn more in **Figures 3 and 4.**

Unfortunately, commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs in every country around the world, and the use of forced child labor is common. For example, in **Malawi** children are forced to produce tobacco, and in **India** and **Ethiopia**, they are forced to embroider and manufacture textiles. Children are also forced to work in construction in **Burma, Chile, and Zambia**, and are subjected to forced domestic servitude in **Botswana, Egypt, and Haiti.** Both state and non-state armed groups recruit children for use in armed conflict, including in **Afghanistan, Central African Republic,**

Figure 3

Global Data on Child Labor

TOTAL POPULATION, 5-17 YEARS OLD*



160 million children in child labor

79 million children in hazardous child labor*

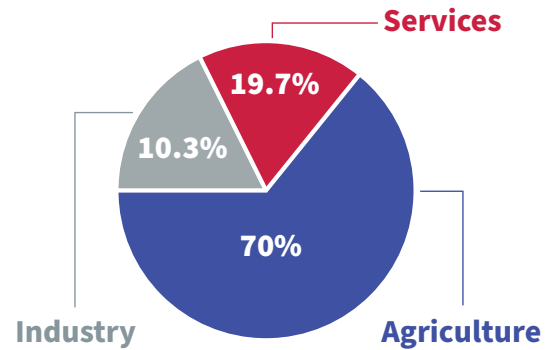
BY SEX



61%
Boys

39%
Girls

BY TYPE



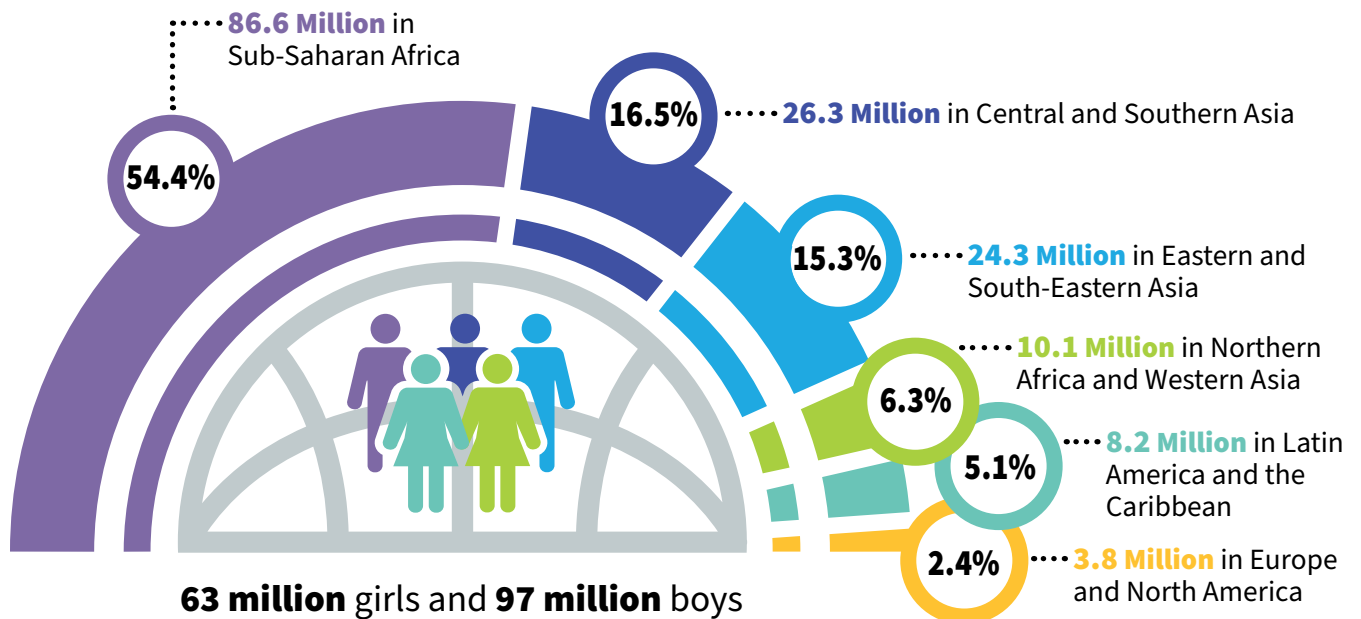
KEY  = **8,000,000** children

*Global estimates on the number of children engaged in categorical worst forms of child labor do not exist.

Source: ILO and UNICEF. Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward. New York, 2021

Figure 4

Percentage and Number of Child Laborers, By Region



*The region of Oceania is omitted because of low data coverage. For this reason, region-specific numbers do not add up to the global total.

Pakistan, and **South Sudan**. Similarly, in **Jamaica**, gangs and criminal groups often use children to commit crimes such as trafficking drugs or robberies. Children are forced to beg in **Armenia**, **Colombia**, **Georgia**, and **Jordan**, and children in Koranic schools may be forced by their teachers to beg in **Benin**, **Burkina Faso**, **Cameroon**, **Senegal**, **The Gambia**, and **Togo**. Finally, children in **Mali**, **Mauritania**, and **Niger** can still be found in hereditary slavery.

Certain groups of children are at higher risk of engaging in the worst forms of child labor. LGBTQIA+ children in **Belize**, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, **Jamaica**, **Kenya**, **Solomon Islands**, **Timor-Leste**, **Thailand**, and **Uganda** are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Roma children in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Caucasus face additional discrimination. In **Albania**, **Kosovo**, and **North Macedonia**, children from the Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian minority ethnic groups are at higher risk of being forced into street work and begging. In **Serbia**, Roma children are at higher risk of being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. Ethnicity-based discrimination in **Botswana**, **Mali**, and **Namibia** can also lead to children being subjected to debt bondage or forced labor. In addition, in **Colombia**, indigenous and Afro-descendant children are more likely to be recruited as child soldiers, while in **Honduras**, they may be subjected to forced labor.

Refugee and migrant children are at increased risk of exploitation in neighboring countries. In **Thailand**, migrant children are more likely to work in the dangerous fishing sector, while in **Suriname** they experience higher levels of commercial sexual exploitation. Migrant and refugee children in **Colombia**, **Guyana**, and **Zimbabwe** are often exploited in child labor in urban centers and marketplaces.

Children with disabilities are also vulnerable to child labor and exploitation. In **Pakistan**, they are often found begging in the streets and are

extremely vulnerable to criminal organizations engaged in forced begging operations. In **Rwanda**, children with disabilities are at higher risk of being trafficked within and outside of the country, while in **South Africa** and **Tanzania** they face a higher risk of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation.

Free, quality public education and robust social protection systems can protect children from child labor. Barriers to education, such as lack of learning materials, insufficient transportation, and inadequate teachers and schools, persist. In **Cameroon**, **Eritrea**, **Indonesia**, and **Jamaica**, free public education is not guaranteed by law. Even where free education is legally available, school-related fees in countries like **Angola**, **Madagascar**, and **Uzbekistan** may impede children's access to education. In addition, in **Bangladesh**, the **Dominican Republic**, and **Mauritania**, the lack of identity documents may prevent children from completing compulsory education. These barriers perpetuate the cycle of poverty and child labor by hindering children's potential.

This year's report also identifies 29 countries facing challenges in ensuring freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, which can hinder efforts to combat child labor. These countries include **Algeria**, **Azerbaijan**, **Bangladesh**, **Brazil**, **Burundi**, **Burma**, **Cambodia**, **Colombia**, **Djibouti**, **Ecuador**, **Egypt**, **Eswatini**, **Ethiopia**, **Eritrea**, **Guatemala**, **Haiti**, **Honduras**, **Indonesia**, **India**, **Jordan**, **Kazakhstan**, **Nicaragua**, **Pakistan**, **Philippines**, **Somalia**, **Thailand**, **Uzbekistan**, **Yemen**, and **Zimbabwe**.

While not formally part of the TDA assessment criteria, freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining are Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and also 'enabling rights.' They thus play an important role in combating child labor. Freedom of association enables workers (and employers) to form and join organizations of their choosing. These workers, most frequently organized into unions, can

then bargain collectively on wages, working conditions, and safety and health measures, among other things. Further, empowered union workers are on the frontlines of identifying, addressing, and remediating violations wherever they occur.

The growth of a strong, independent, and democratic labor movement, complemented by voluntary, independent labor market regulation through collective bargaining can effectively address the root causes and economic drivers of child labor. As **recently published research** has shown, union membership and the establishment of terms and conditions of work through collective bargaining can result in “[...] improvements in workers’ families’ socioeconomic conditions, which have been proven to be essential for reducing child labor and improving children’s life outcomes (Edmonds, 2005; Fors, 2010; Soares, Kruger, & Berthelon, 2012; Filho, 2012; Tagliati, 2021).” (21) This is of particular importance in reversing situations where a lack of opportunity for adult, working-age members of families to find good, well-paid work, creates circumstances for child labor to persist.

Our case study on **Worker Voice and Organizing in Efforts to Eliminate Child Labor** highlights numerous examples where workers negotiate, advocate, mobilize (within and across borders), or otherwise push for the creation of decent work and the eradication of child labor. Unions and worker-led cooperatives advocate for policies that protect children’s rights and ensure their education, and they push for stronger legal protections and stricter enforcement of laws against child labor. They monitor workplaces to identify instances of child labor, working with partners such as NGOs and government agencies to report violations, file complaints, and seek remedy. With an increasing focus on supply chain due diligence, the presence of legitimate workers’ organizations within a workplace, or in a sector, can be strong allies in constructing and implementing measures to identify, remedy, and prevent child labor in corporate human rights due diligence policies.

Addressing child labor requires a multi-faceted approach. Governments must mandate free quality public education, prioritize education in national budgets, increase access to identity documents, effectively enforce labor laws, hold perpetrators of child labor accountable, promote good jobs for adults, establish robust social protection systems, especially for vulnerable populations, and ensure the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. By raising awareness of children at higher risk for child labor and ensuring that marginalized groups are afforded the same protections, opportunities, and support, we can work toward eliminating child labor once and for all.

Overview of Meaningful Efforts

Despite the persistence of child labor and its worst forms, there are commendable efforts that deserve recognition. These initiatives provide valuable insights into how countries are tackling child labor and underscore the transformative potential of collaborative action. By examining these approaches and their impact, we gain a deeper understanding of effective practices and the power of unified efforts in advancing the global mission to eradicate child labor.

Legal

This year’s reporting cycle witnessed several countries making significant strides in ratifying key international commitments and enacting national legislation to protect children from child labor. These efforts demonstrate a growing global commitment to upholding fundamental principles and rights at work.

In 2024, Australia ratified the ILO’s Minimum Age Convention 138, extending its provisions to **Christmas Island**, the **Cocos (Keeling) Islands**, and **Norfolk Island**. This convention

establishes a minimum age of 15 years for work (with some exceptions) and 18 years for hazardous work. The **Solomon Islands** acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, which prohibits the conscription of children under age 18 and protects those ages 16 and 17 from direct involvement in hostilities. Recognizing that children with disabilities are at higher risk of engaging in child labor due to limited access to education and social services, **South Sudan** signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which promotes and protects human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons with disabilities.

National legislation was also strengthened to protect children from child labor. **Armenia** and **Moldova** amended their Labor Codes to extend protections to children working in the informal sector, aligning with ILO C. 138. **Burkina Faso** introduced a light work framework specifying permitted occupations for children ages 13–16, while the **Maldives** amended its Child Rights Protection Act to specify prohibited work for children. The **Dominican Republic** modified its hazardous work list to include domestic work, and **Mozambique** raised its minimum age for work from 15 to 18 years old. Learn more about the minimum age for work in **Figure 5** and hazardous child labor in **Figure 6**.

Figure 5



Minimum Age for Work

ILO C. 138 sets the minimum age for work at 15 years (or 14 as appropriate)* and specifies that it shall not be less than the compulsory education age.

83

countries do not have a minimum age for work that meets international standards

Of the 83 countries, **14** have laws excluding certain groups of working children from minimum age protections. **3** countries have no minimum age for work at all.

Niue ■ Tokelau ■ Tonga

Governments also made efforts to protect children from the worst forms of child labor. **Algeria** updated its laws to include penalties for using children to procure narcotics and other illicit substances, and **Guyana** expanded its legal definition of exploitation to include the use, procuring, or offering of a child to produce or trafficking of narcotics.

Laws were enacted to protect children in their daily lives as well. **Kosovo** adopted a new Law on Social and Family Services, providing compensation for child crime survivors and medical and psychological treatment for child abuse survivors. **Mexico**, in compliance with the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement Labor Chapter, banned the importation of goods produced by forced or compulsory child labor. **Mongolia** revised its Law on Education to ensure inclusive education for all children, including those with disabilities.

Enforcement

Robust legal standards, when backed by effective enforcement, form the foundation upon which countries can address the worst forms of child labor. In 2023, several countries made significant strides in strengthening their labor inspectorates and criminal enforcement authorities to better protect children and workers from exploitation.

* Countries whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed may initially specify a minimum legal working age of 14 when ratifying the convention.

Labor inspectors play a pivotal role in identifying, investigating, and, in many cases, rescuing children from illegal and exploitative working conditions. To that end, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** hired 1,117 labor inspectors, 1,105 controllers, and 157 other agents, totaling 2,379 new staff to support labor law enforcement efforts throughout the country. **Algeria, Chile, Kosovo, and Maldives** also increased their number of labor inspectors, while **Ghana** and **Morocco** saw a notable rise in the number of inspections conducted.

Ukraine resumed unannounced inspections, and **North Macedonia, Algeria, Kazakhstan, Guatemala, and Paraguay** made improvements to their inspectorate operations through digital recordkeeping, mobile reporting, territorial mobile teams, electronic case management, and system digitization.

On the criminal enforcement front, **India** renewed its Fast Track Special Courts to expedite proceedings related to sexual crimes against children, and the **Central African**

Figure 6



Minimum Age for Hazardous Work

ILO C. 138 sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 years (or 16 under certain strict conditions)*



countries do not have a minimum age for hazardous work that meets international standards

Anguilla ■ Belize ■ Dominica ■ Eritrea ■ Ethiopia ■ Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) ■ Gabon ■ Grenada ■ Guyana ■ Kazakhstan ■ Mozambique ■ Nepal ■ Niue ■ Pakistan ■ Panama ■ Papua New Guinea ■ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ■ Solomon Islands ■ Timor-Leste ■ Tokelau ■ Tonga ■ Uganda ■ Ukraine ■ Vanuatu

What is Hazardous Child Labor?

ILO Recommendation 190¹ calls on governments to consider the following when determining work that is prohibited for children.



Work which exposes children to physical, psychological, or sexual abuse



Work underground, under water, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaces



Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads



Work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health



Work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer

¹International Labor Organization. Recommendation 190. Geneva: June 1999. <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc87/com-chir.htm>.

Republic created key positions within the government to combat the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. **Kenya** updated its Child Protection Units Standard Operation Procedures, **Mauritius** established a Trafficking in Persons unit within its police force, and **Armenia** adopted guidelines for trauma awareness and victim-centered approaches when working with human trafficking survivors.

Although these global enforcement efforts demonstrate the commitment of countries to protect children and workers from the worst forms of child labor, continued progress and sustained efforts are necessary. Learn more about global enforcement efforts in *Figure 7*.

Coordination

Governments around the world made significant efforts throughout the year to combat child labor by establishing new—and reactivating dormant—coordination mechanisms. These interagency bodies play a crucial role in ensuring that criminals are prosecuted, victims receive care and support, and training on child labor-related issues is uniform across the government.

Costa Rica reactivated its National Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Workers. **Serbia**’s Anti-Trafficking Council met after multiple years of inactivity, while **Zimbabwe** relaunched its National Steering Committee to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor, which worked to integrate child labor issues into the forthcoming National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children.

New coordinating mechanisms were also established, such as **Burundi**’s Permanent National Multi-Sectoral Committee on Child Labor and Its Worst Forms, which brings together 21 representatives from various sectors to address child labor. **Togo** established its National Commission Against Trafficking in Persons, responsible for strengthening systems related to combating human trafficking.

Ensuring coordinating mechanisms are fully funded, supported, and carrying out their mandates is central to protecting children. To this end, several countries significantly augmented their coordinating groups. **Ecuador**’s Government approved a ministerial regulation to direct the Directorate for the Attention to Priority Groups to use a gender

Figure 7
Global Enforcement Efforts*



*Out of 131 countries

focus in strengthening policies and instruments to eliminate child labor. **Paraguay**'s National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor and Protect Adolescent Labor created two new committees, while **Eswatini**'s Department of Social Welfare launched the Primero Child Protection and Information Management System to enhance data collection and standard operating procedures for child protection across different government agencies. **Kenya**'s National Steering Committee continued the process of commissioning a national study to assess child labor prevalence in the country.

On an international level, **Benin, Central African Republic, Kenya, Malawi, Republic of the Congo, and Sri Lanka** made progress toward joining Alliance 8.7, a global partnership focused on Target 8.7 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which aims to eliminate forced labor, modern slavery, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labor.

Policies

Countries worldwide established and implemented policies to address child labor, with 2023 seeing the largest number of countries taking such actions. These policies ranged from national action plans to counter trafficking in persons to strategies focused on eliminating child labor and promoting social protection.

In the East Asia and the Pacific region, **Cambodia** launched a National Guideline on Online Child Protection, **Tonga** launched its National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons, and **Samoa** developed its National Strategy and Action Plan toward the Elimination of Child Labor. In South and Central Asia, **Nepal** implemented its School Education Sector Plan to ensure inclusive education for marginalized children.

In Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, **Armenia** and **Ukraine** adopted a National Action Plan to Counter Trafficking in Human Beings, **Kazakhstan** adopted a new National Action Plan to Counter Trafficking in Persons, and **Iraq** signed an action plan with the United

Nations to prevent the recruitment and use of children as combatants by the Popular Mobilization Forces

Sub-Saharan Africa saw the most policies implemented, with countries including **Comoros, Ghana, Mauritania, and Somalia** implementing national action plans to address and eliminate child labor. **Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Namibia, and São Tomé and Príncipe** enacted plans to address trafficking in persons and social protection issues. In the Western Hemisphere, **El Salvador** introduced the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, and **Honduras** approved its National Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor (2023–2026).

Countries also continued to fund and actively implement existing plans and policies. **Brazil** introduced a guide to identify and assist child victims of trafficking, **Liberia** conducted a study on children working and living on the streets, **Pakistan**'s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government released the results of its child labor survey, and **Papua New Guinea** increased funding for its Tuition Fee-Free Education Policy.

Implementing new action plans and policies, as well as the continued funding and active implementation of existing ones, demonstrates the commitment of countries worldwide to address and eliminate all forms of child labor. It is crucial to ensure that these efforts are sustained and that the policies and plans are effectively executed to achieve lasting change.

Programs

Countries around the world are carrying out various programs to improve education access, facilitate birth registration, and monitor child labor prevalence to address the root causes of this issue. These efforts are crucial in the fight against child labor.

Several countries made significant strides in bolstering children's education access. **Eritrea** collaborated with UNICEF to improve early childhood education services, resulting in the enrollment of 3,324 pre-primary school-aged

children. **Gabon** increased its education sector budget to restore secondary school grants, repair and open boarding schools, and build additional classrooms. **Fiji** launched its Back-to-School Support Program, providing financial assistance to students, while **Grenada** adjusted its budget to enhance educational training for teachers and improve school infrastructure. **Mexico**'s Benito Juarez Wellbeing National Scholarship Program reached 10 million students, and **Bhutan**'s Shelters for Vulnerable Women and Children began offering vocational training to juvenile boys.

To ensure all children are eligible to enroll in school, **Chad** worked with UNICEF to issue birth certificates to newborns affected by the Sudanese crisis, while **Senegal** implemented a “mobile court” program to provide birth documentation to children in rural areas. **Cameroon** orchestrated a mass issuance of birth certificates for over 26 thousand children, and **Ethiopia** set up registration centers at IDP settlements, which increased children’s access to identification documents.

Monitoring child labor prevalence is also crucial in targeting enforcement, outreach, and support programs. The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** piloted a child labor monitoring and remediation system in artisanal cobalt mines, which registered 5,346 children. The **Kyrgyz**

Republic created a digital system to identify and support children vulnerable to child labor.

Overview of Major Gaps

Despite the progress made in combating child labor, significant gaps remain. This section highlights the major areas where efforts fall short, including inadequate legal protections, insufficient enforcement, and a lack of comprehensive coordination mechanisms, policies, and social protection systems.

Legal

Laws serve as the foundation for protecting children from child labor and its worst forms, providing prosecutors with the tools to hold perpetrators accountable. This year’s report highlights significant gaps in legal frameworks across the globe. A staggering 27 percent of the suggested actions in the report, amounting to 502 out of the total 1,900, relate to deficiencies in laws and regulations. This underscores the urgent need for countries to strengthen their legal systems to effectively combat child labor and ensure that those who exploit children face the consequences of their actions. See **Figure 8** for more information about global gaps in laws and regulations.

Figure 8

Global Gaps in Law and Regulations*



29 Countries’ prohibitions of child trafficking do not meet international standards

50 Countries’ prohibitions of commercial sexual exploitation of children do not meet international standards

17 Countries’ prohibitions of forced labor do not meet international standards

37 Countries’ prohibitions of the use of children in illicit activities do not meet international standards

*Out of 131 countries

29 Countries do not have minimum age protections that extend to the informal sector

For example, 24 countries lack minimum age protections for the informal sector, 29 countries do not have laws prohibiting child trafficking in accordance with international standards, and 51 countries have inadequate prohibitions related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. In **Mongolia**, children are permitted to participate in dangerous horse jockeying races, while **Angola**'s hazardous work law does not prohibit children from mining diamonds. **Algeria** also lacks a hazardous work list for prohibited occupations for children.

Access to free and compulsory education is another area of concern, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. **Eritrea**, **Ethiopia**, and **Guinea** have no laws providing free public education, while **Eswatini**, **Kenya**, and **Mali** restrict free public education to only citizens, leaving migrant, undocumented, and non-citizen children vulnerable to child labor.

Tanzania and **Zimbabwe** allow schools to charge attendance fees. Furthermore, in 27 countries across every region, the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to drop out of school prematurely. For more information about barriers to education access, see **Figure 9**.

By closing these legal loopholes, countries can create a stronger foundation for protecting children's rights.

Enforcement

Enforcement gaps remain a significant challenge in the global fight against child labor, with 35 percent of the suggested actions in this year's report focusing on this issue.

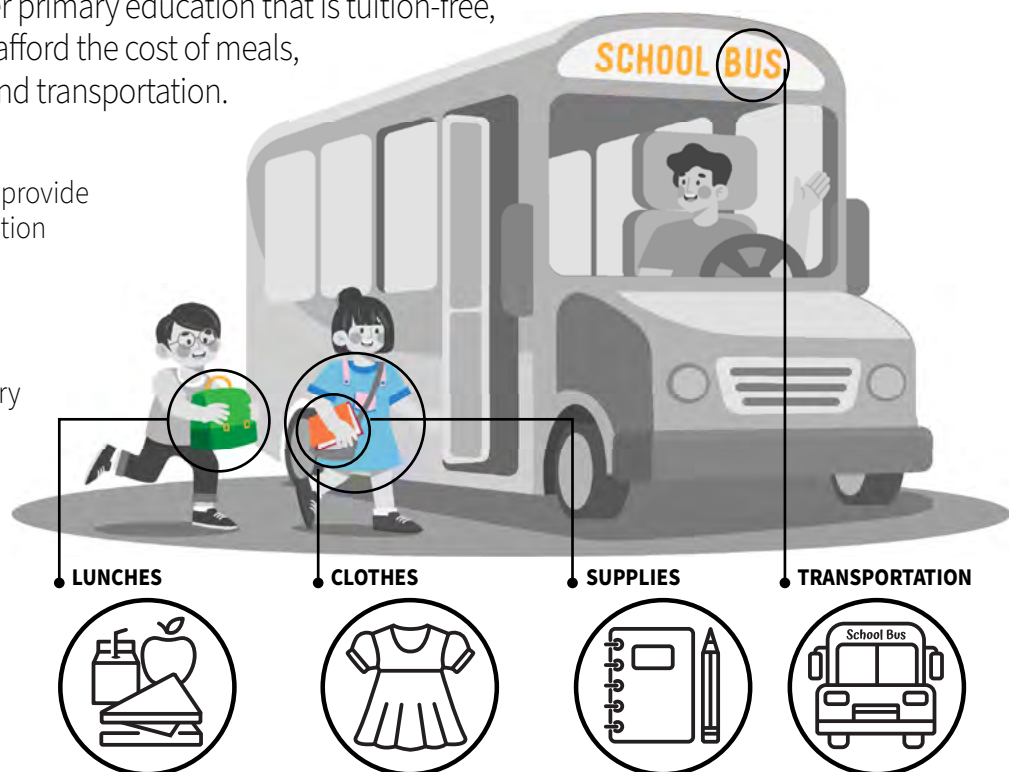
Many countries do not fully staff and fund their labor inspectorates, place limitations on

Figure 9

Cost of Education

Worldwide, millions of children and adolescents are unable to enter or complete school. Although countries may offer primary education that is tuition-free, families are often unable to afford the cost of meals, uniforms, school supplies, and transportation.

- 46** Countries do not provide free public education
- 27** Countries do not have a compulsory education age that meets international standards



inspectors' mandates, and do not effectively prosecute worst forms of child labor crimes. For example, **Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)**; **Ascension (of Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha)**; and **Tonga** lack functioning labor inspectorates, while **Central African Republic**, **Comoros**, **Gabon**, and **Yemen** conducted no worksite inspections. **Azerbaijan** and **Ukraine** also did not conduct routine labor inspections due to legal or regulatory prohibitions. Furthermore, 76 countries, including the **Philippines**, **Indonesia**, **Brazil**, **Jamaica**, and **Kenya**, lack a sufficient number of labor inspectors.

In some countries, labor inspectors face limitations on their mandates. For example, inspectors in **Bhutan**, **Timor-Leste**, **The Gambia**, **Mauritius**, and **Zambia** cannot conduct inspections in domestic households or on private farms, where child labor often occurs. The **Kyrgyz Republic** does not permit unannounced inspections and **Armenia** permits unannounced inspections only if it suspects employees without contracts are working. In **Kazakhstan**, unannounced inspections can only take place if there are suspicions of mass threats to life and health, law and social order, or national security. **Ukraine** also only permits unannounced inspections when specific criteria are met, including if informal employment is suspected of taking place.

Elsewhere, labor inspectors are required to go through burdensome administrative processes to receive permission to conduct inspections. In **Bangladesh**, the Department of Inspections and Factory Establishment is required to indirectly provide notice to the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority of upcoming inspections, which may result in employers being notified of inspections in advance. Similarly, in **Uzbekistan**, inspectors must receive approval from the Business

Ombudsman to conduct inspections of private enterprises. As a result, inspectors seldom request to conduct inspections; this process has also caused employers to receive advanced notice of inspections.

More than half of the countries covered in the report (70 countries) did not publish information related to their criminal law enforcement efforts during the reporting year. And in **Cambodia** and **Chad**, some government officials were found to be complicit in the worst forms of child labor by accepting bribes or directly exploiting children.

To help better target enforcement efforts and mitigate child labor risks in global supply, ILAB has developed tools like the **Better Trade Tool**, which links its flagship reports to trade data; **Comply Chain**, which provides best practices for due diligence systems to identify and mitigate child labor and forced labor risks in global production; and the **Sweat & Toil** mobile app, which contains information on child labor and forced labor worldwide.

Coordination

This year's report highlights persistent gaps in coordination, with the major issue being the inability of coordinating bodies to carry out their mandates due to lack of capacity, insufficient funding or staffing, and limited data. For example, in **Papua New Guinea**, senior government officials did not participate in the National Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, and in **Nicaragua**, the National Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons did not coordinate with local CSOs despite being required to do so by law.

Twenty countries, including **Armenia**, **Central African Republic**, **Chad**, **Djibouti**, **Eritrea**, **Georgia**, **Guinea**, **Maldives**, **Montenegro**, **Morocco** and **Western Sahara**, **Papua New**

Guinea, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, Tonga, Tunisia, Ukraine, and the **West Bank and Gaza Strip**, either lack a coordinating mechanism or have one that lacks mandates to address known and pervasive child labor issues. Notably, the **Central African Republic, Eritrea,** and **Guinea** have a committee that coordinates on trafficking in persons issues but lacks a mechanism to cover other forms of child labor in the country, including in mining, agriculture, and domestic work.

Chad and **Tonga** have not established any type of coordinating mechanism to address the worst forms of child labor, which may result in duplicative efforts and delayed or missing referrals from enforcement agencies to social services for children rescued from child labor.

Policies

Policies to address child labor help to ensure children are protected from work that harms their health, safety, and morals. Forty governments were identified as lacking policies that cover all relevant forms of child labor in their countries. **Botswana** lacks a policy that covers forced child labor in cattle herding and in domestic servitude, while **Iraq** lacks a policy that addresses forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation of children. **Papua New Guinea** does not have policies that address ongoing issues such as children engaging in illicit activities and forced labor in domestic work, and **Armenia** is missing policies that address child labor in agriculture, services, and other forms of informal work.

Many countries, such as **Moldova, Thailand, Paraguay,** and **Niger,** also did not publicize policy activities or efforts undertaken in 2023, indicating potential inactivity or inadequate implementation. In fact, this year's report includes over 49 unique country-specific recommendations to publish information on

policy activities or to renew or enact policies to replace those that have expired.

Programs

Social programs play a crucial role in addressing child labor by countering factors that perpetuate poverty and prevent children from pursuing their education. The absence of reliable data, limited access to social services, and barriers to education continue to hinder efforts to combat child labor effectively.

Reliable data is essential for designing impactful social programs that target populations most at risk of child labor and specific sectors with high rates of exploitative labor conditions. Unfortunately, countries like **Botswana, Eritrea, Lebanon, Mauritius, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu,** and **West Bank and Gaza Strip** lack child labor or labor force surveys and statistics on working children, hazardous work, education, and children combining work and education. In total, 47 countries have recommendations in the Suggested Actions section to collect additional data on child labor prevalence and education. Even when surveys are conducted, some countries, such as **Cambodia,** have not published the results, while others, like **Sri Lanka,** have used definitions within its survey that may result in inaccurate information.

This report offers suggested actions to numerous countries to expand their social programming to assist vulnerable children. **South Africa** lacks programs that address child forced begging or the use of children in illicit activities, while the **Dominican Republic** needs to include children without identity documents, such as Haitian and migrant children, in its social programming. The **Philippines** should develop programs to aid children trafficked for domestic work or commercial sexual

exploitation, and **Uzbekistan** should implement programs that address child labor in public work activities, street work, and agricultural sectors beyond cotton.

Preventing children from engaging in child labor remains one of the most important steps governments can take to break the vicious poverty cycle. Research found that a staggering 87 percent (114) of countries covered in the report have one or more suggested actions to address education access, with many recommendations focusing on removing barriers to education. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, there is a shortage of resources to implement inclusive education initiatives for students with disabilities. **Indonesia**'s migrant children face obstacles in obtaining birth registration or residency cards, hindering their school enrollment. In **Costa Rica**, LGBTQIA+ youth and children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities face discrimination in schools, leading to lower enrollment rates among these groups.

Addressing child labor requires a multi-faceted approach that includes reliable data collection and targeted social programs. By removing barriers to education and ensuring that all children have access to quality schooling, governments can take significant steps toward breaking the cycle of poverty and child labor. For more information about government efforts and persistent challenges from this year's report, see **Table 1**.

Call to Action

The 2023 *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* highlights both the challenges and the remarkable progress made in the fight against child labor. As we acknowledge the critical gaps in legal protections, enforcement, coordination, policies, and social programs, let us also draw inspiration from the meaningful efforts and transformative initiatives showcased in this report. We urge you to use this report to learn more about—and raise awareness of—child labor issues around the world. Information is power, and together, we can use this power to bring about transformative changes in the world of work.

Now is the time to reaffirm our commitment to ending child labor in all its forms. The U.S. Department of Labor has responded vigorously to the challenge, ramping up investigations and levying fines in every corner of the United States where we find child labor violations. We call upon governments, employers, civil society, worker organizations, and individuals to unite in this vital mission, wherever they are: Corporations need to step up and eliminate these practices in their supply chains and respect worker voice and workers' freedom of association. State governments need to get serious about protecting children in the world of work and following federal law. This is not an intractable problem; but it will require the concerted efforts of a range of stakeholders to address. We have a moral obligation to protect our children from egregious workplace exploitation—it is past time for all involved to step up and do their part.

Table 1

Regional Analysis of Government Efforts and Challenges

REGION	EFFORTS	CHALLENGES
Americas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened laws and policies to protect children from labor abuse in agriculture and increased penalties for using children in sexual exploitation. Improved education access by allowing foreign children to go to school and giving more money to programs that educate at-risk children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many children, both citizens and migrants, don't have birth certificates or documents, which makes them more vulnerable to exploitation. Labor inspectors do not have enough resources or people to monitor places where child labor happens, like informal businesses and rural areas.
East Asia & the Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made education more accessible, especially for children with disabilities, by improving laws, schools, and funding. Created new plans to fight the growing problem of online sexual exploitation of children, such as updating court processes, making guidelines to keep children safe online, and spreading awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased migration led to more migrant children working. Hazardous work prohibitions do not meet international standards or include all the risky areas where children work.
Europe & Eurasia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gave labor inspectors the authority to conduct labor inspections and more resources to do their jobs better and reach rural areas. Increased support for social programs and services, like giving more cash benefits and helping homeless children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laws do not meet international standards for protecting young workers in informal jobs and preventing the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Lack of coordination due to insufficient resources and poor cooperation between social protection, health, and law enforcement agencies made it harder to fight child labor.
Middle East & North Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passed new laws to better protect children from forced labor, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation. Increased cash transfers and social programs to help vulnerable children go to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak implementation and enforcement of laws due to governance issues and armed conflicts. Labor inspectors are understaffed, under-resourced, and lack authority or don't inspect all areas, like informal construction sites.
South & Central Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passed legislation to ban forced child labor and list dangerous jobs that children under age 18 cannot do. Expanded social programs and coordination efforts for children at higher risk of child labor, like programs to help street children, children from minority groups, and boys leaving juvenile detention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor coordination between national and local authorities led to limited local implementation of enforcement guidelines and policies related to child labor. Labor inspectors do not have enough resources and could not do unannounced inspections or monitor for labor violations.
Sub-Saharan Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passed laws to protect children from sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced labor, and recruitment by armed groups. Increased birth registrations to help children go to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum age for work laws do not cover children working in informal jobs. Governments continued to exploit children, including recruiting them into armed conflict and supporting armed groups that use child soldiers.

Survivors' Reflection

Leadership Spotlight: Aubrey Lloyd and Suleman Masood

Aubrey Lloyd and Suleman Masood, both recognized leaders in the anti-trafficking movement, provide federal guidance and insight related to child labor, forced labor, and sex trafficking. Their unique perspectives, informed by their own experiences as survivors, add depth and authenticity to their work.

Remediation—Persistent Challenges Amid Global Rebuilding

Four years after a global pandemic disrupted our world, nations are still rebuilding. The 2022 *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* recommended a just transition, which includes decent wages, health and economic benefits for communities, respect for labor rights, and the eradication of child and forced labor. However, the pandemic made it challenging to implement these recommendations and challenges persist even where some sectors have made progress.

One significant challenge within the context of child and forced labor is the uncertainty in defining and implementing remediation efforts. Remediation, defined as the process of improving or correcting a situation, involves three key parts: (1) defining the totality of the concern; (2) understanding causation; and (3) implementing corrective and sustainable efforts.

While understanding of the problematic and exploitative realities of child and forced labor has increased, recognizing survivors beyond their trauma narrative remains inconsistent. The forced labor sector has complicated identification and thus effective response and recovery by focusing more on

the crime than the person who exists outside of the victimization.

We should collectively challenge ourselves to define survivor success outside of what an organization can offer beyond offering survivors new employment. Even if these options may appear “better,” they do not get to the root of the initial concern. A whole-person response must look at the drivers that created the exploitation, whether that is economic drivers within a community and/or the demand for goods that drive exploitative practices. Accountability from communities and industries are important remediation considerations for individuals who have been exploited.

Sharing trauma narratives about the hazards of forced labor without a solution to address that reality is voyeuristic at best. Solutions should have survivors interwoven into the response and come from a space of change and reform, not exploitative storytelling. It is also important to understand our drive and demand for goods is at the center of this issue, and it is not just textiles and products being produced, but the demand for food 24 hours a day or not addressing pay equity in industries like healthcare that create space and avenues for these crimes to flourish.

Another challenge in remediation is the prevailing assumption that sex trafficking is a more “traumatic” form of victimization than child and/or forced labor. This assumption is fundamentally flawed and has led to an increase in trainings focused on immediate response (e.g., access to shelter, food, rape kits, etc.) following a report of suspected sex trafficking. What often goes unrecognized is that these immediate needs are equally crucial for survivors of child and forced labor. The issue extends beyond the mere absence of pay; it involves being compelled to work in hazardous, often inhumane conditions for the exclusive benefit of a trafficking scheme. This line of reasoning perpetuates forced labor, making it both prosperous and profitable for those who exploit others. This not only limits our understanding of the full scope of the crime but also hinders the development of proper and sustainable solutions.

As mentioned above, industries that benefit from labor exploitation, and their response are critical to remediation efforts. According to the International Labor Organization, roughly \$236 billion in annual profit is generated from forced labor in the world today. The report highlights that among cases of forced labor in the private economy where the type of work is known, the four broad sectors accounting for the majority of total forced labor are industry, services, agriculture, and domestic work. (20) Corporate entities who oversee these sectors continually find ways to bypass laws involving hiring and the upkeep of a safe work environment (e.g., personal protective equipment, wage and overtime laws, adequate meals and breaks, etc.).

The sheer reluctance to provide information on rights afforded to workers (regardless of the jurisdiction) makes it increasingly difficult for workers to ask for help. For

many, these jobs may be the only way they may be able to support their families; those hired through a staffing agency and brought into the country to work are continuously reminded of how dispensable they are. Through this manipulation, workers feel that they have no choice but to endure the trauma they experience. Corporations must be held accountable for the working conditions they set. Companies should take responsibility for addressing and remediating labor exploitation in their supply chains, respecting labor rights and worker voice, and acting ethically, starting with recruitment.

In conclusion, to begin and maintain authentic conversations on remediation service provision for survivors of child and/or forced labor, we must also find ways to develop partnerships with “lived experience” experts centered on strategies to promote and enhance outreach on worker’s rights, and that can aide in offerings for multiple pathways towards an individuals’ healing. Our partnerships must also extend to corporations whose workforces influence our reliance on the goods we consume daily. Strengthening our understanding of how forced labor affects the goods we consume may in turn present as an opportunity to dismantle the power dynamics survivors of child and/or forced labor face.

Ultimately, survivors have the power to heal and chart their own aspirations for the future. Recognizing the harsh truths of child and forced labor, shaping how we provide transformative opportunities to survivors, and ensuring our collective commitment to change in our communities and industries are pivotal. These actions will progressively dismantle the enduring obstacles and lay down concrete measures for comprehensive recovery for survivors and the communities we are part of.



© Scott F. Kohn, Department of Labor
Acting U.S. Secretary of Labor Julie Su delivers remarks at
the Apprenticeship Ready Program Briefing & Tour at the
Plumbers Union Hall, Houston, Texas. July 28, 2023.

The U.S. Experience

“While positive and safe first work experiences can allow young people to develop skills, earn money, and learn what it means to be part of the labor force, a job should not jeopardize a child’s well-being or their educational opportunities.”

Julie A. Su, Acting Secretary of Labor April 17, 2024

Although the U.S. has enacted vital worker protections across several decades, the conditions associated with oppressive child labor persist even today. The past year has shown that the century-old scourge of child labor exploitation still exists, though in industries that are vastly more complex than in the past. Since 2019, the U.S. Department of Labor has seen an 88 percent increase in the number of children employed in violation of federal child labor laws.

In the current economic environment, children are extremely vulnerable to exploitation for many reasons. They often work for subcontractors, or subcontractors of subcontractors. Multi-national brands source products and services from these subcontractors, but frequently have no visibility into them. Employers hold ultimate responsibility for complying with labor laws. Ensuring visibility across the breadth of supply chains is required to root out abuses. This can be done, but it will take a commitment from industry as well as diligent enforcement of the law.

In fiscal year 2023, the Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division (WHD) identified child labor violations in 955 cases involving 5,792 children and assessed employers more than \$8 million in penalties for child labor violations. (22) February 2023 was a pivotal month for enforcement of child labor laws. One of the nation’s largest food safety sanitation services providers paid \$1.5 million in civil money penalties after investigations by WHD found the company employed at least 102 children—from 13 to 17 years of age—in eight states to work overnight shifts using harsh chemicals to clean the equipment used to kill and process meat. (23) This case represented one of the largest child labor cases in WHD’s history, brought national attention to this troubling trend, and galvanized a multi-agency response.

That same month, the U.S. Department of Labor-led Interagency Taskforce to Combat Child Labor Exploitation was formed and, in the following month, entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to deepen information-sharing, coordination, training, and education. (24) The WHD also launched the National Strategic Enforcement Initiative on Child Labor to increase the focus on children working in exploitive conditions. (25)

Since the start of the Initiative, WHD has concluded 964 investigations affecting more than 6,000 children and assessed more than \$8 million in penalties. These cases reflect a 54 percent increase in children found employed in violation of federal labor laws and a 75 percent increase in penalties assessed from the same period in the previous year.

In California, WHD found that Exclusive Poultry, Inc., and related businesses illegally employed children as young as age 14 to debone poultry using sharp knives and operate power-driven lifts. As a result, the employer was required to pay nearly \$3.8 million in back wages, damages, and penalties. (26) An Ohio lathe mill operator paid a child labor enforcement penalty of \$22,093 after investigators found the company illegally employed a 15-year-old worker in the operation of a sawmill, which led the worker to suffer an injury when he became entangled in the gears of a powered wood processing machine. (27) In a Wisconsin sawmill, the Department invoked the “hot goods” provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), preventing the shipment of goods produced with illegal child labor, after an illegally employed 16-year-old worker became trapped in a stick stacker and died after sustaining severe injuries. The Division also fined the sawmill nearly \$1.4 million. (28)

Although in recent years some states have enacted laws that weaken child labor protections on the state level, the federal law continues to apply regardless of state law and the Department of Labor continues to use every tool available to combat exploitative child labor. This includes not only litigation, civil money penalties, and the use of “hot goods” provisions, but also disgorgement of profits made from the use of illegal labor.

When investigators found that a Tennessee power equipment parts manufacturer subjected children to oppressive child labor and illegally employed children to operate a power-driven lifting apparatus, the Department of Labor required the employer to set aside \$1.5 million as disgorgement of 30 days profits related to its use of child labor in addition to paying a nearly \$300,000 civil money penalty. (29)

In California, when investigators found children as young as 14-years-old were exposed to meat freezers and illegally employed to use sharp knives to debone poultry, the WHD obtained a judgment requiring the employer to pay \$221,919 in penalties and to set aside \$1 million as disgorgement of profits related to its use of oppressive child labor. The case also included widespread wage theft and retaliation against workers. (30)



© Shawn T. Moore, Department of Labor
Acting U.S. Secretary of Labor Julie Su visits the HVAC Lab of Carver House Vocational School along with Mitch Landrieu, Senior Advisor to the President for Infrastructure Coordination, and the Governor of Maryland Wes Moore. Baltimore, Maryland. November 13, 2023.

In these investigations, the Department has made clear that combating exploitive child labor is a top priority and that they will use strategic enforcement, innovation, and every available tool to hold to full account any employer that attempts to profit by means of illegal child labor. See **Figure 10** for more information.

In addition, the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) ensures safe and healthy working conditions by setting standards to reduce and eliminate workplace hazards for all employees, regardless of age. OSHA is focusing on interagency communication in cases where illegal child labor is encountered. Employers must train all workers, including young workers, in the hazards of the workplace and in a language they understand. Young employees have the same right to required personal protective equipment as do older employees. Additionally, if young workers are exposed to a

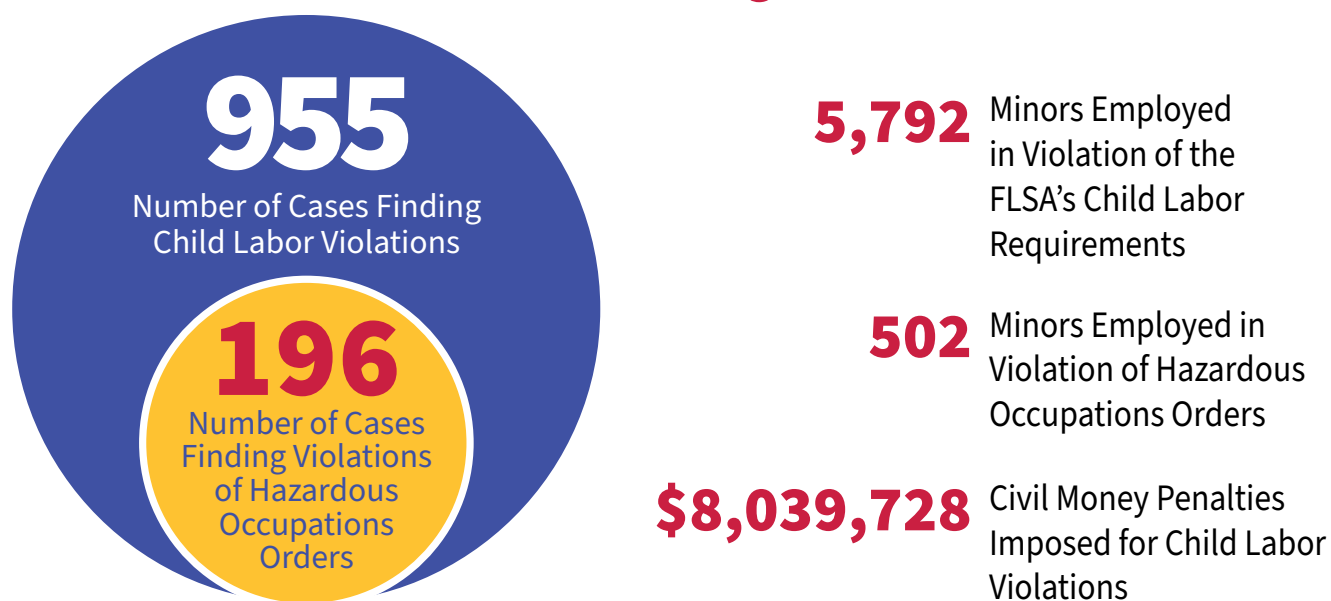
hazard, they can file a confidential complaint with OSHA and exercise their workplace safety rights without fear of retaliation or discrimination.

During the course of inspections, OSHA's field compliance officers are trained to recognize potential youth employment deficiencies and make interagency referrals to WHD. An example of a referral is a recent case at a sawmill where OSHA responded to a fatality and found the deceased person was the 16-year-old son of one of the other workers at the facility. OSHA referred the facility to WHD who initiated an investigation and identified additional underage workers at the site. In addition, WHD found violations of the FLSA and OSHA found violations of safety and health standards. (28)

Finally, the Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics measures labor market activity, working conditions, price changes, and

Figure 10

Wage and Hour Division Rigorously Enforces the Fair Labor Standards Act, Including Child Labor Laws



More specific information about each of these cases can be found in the WHD's enforcement database at dol.gov/DataEnforcement and WHD's website at dol.gov/WHDFiscalYearData.

production in the U.S. economy to support private and public decision-making. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also conducts research and publishes reports on youth employment trends.

The U.S. Federal Minimum Ages for Work

The FLSA guarantees basic rights and protections to ensure the safety and well-being of child workers. The child labor regulations of the FLSA are designed to ensure children's educational opportunities are not harmed by early employment and to prohibit children's employment in jobs that are detrimental to their health and safety.

The FLSA and its implementing regulations have established the following standards:

Non-Agricultural Work

- A minimum age of 14 for light work in non-agricultural industries, with limits on the times of day, number of hours, and tasks that can be performed by 14- and 15-year-olds. (31; 32)
- A minimum age of 16 for most employment in non-hazardous, non-agricultural industries. (31)
- A minimum age of 18 for employment in hazardous occupations as deemed by the Department's issuance of 17 non-agricultural Hazardous Occupations Orders. (31; 32)

Agricultural Work

- A minimum age of 14 for agricultural work outside of school hours, without limits on permitted occupations (other than hazardous work limits) or the number of hours such children may work. (31) A minimum age of 12–14 for non-hazardous agricultural work outside of school hours with the consent of a parent employed on the same farm. No

minimum age for children in non-hazardous agricultural work outside of school hours with the consent of their parents on farms that use less than 500 man-days of agricultural labor in any calendar quarter.

- A minimum age of 16 for agricultural employment in hazardous occupations, as identified by the Department of Labor, except for children employed by a parent on a farm operated by the parent. (31; 32)

All states have child labor standards and mandatory school attendance laws. When state and federal child labor standards differ, the rule that provides the most protections for the young worker is the one that must be followed.

According to Department of Labor records, there were 2,451,000 youth, ages 16 to 17, employed in the United States in 2023, and 2,463,000 employed in 2022. Despite the restrictions and limitations placed on youth work, there were 13 fatal occupational injuries in the United States among youth ages 16 to 17, and 6 fatal occupational injuries among youth below the age of 16 in 2022 (the most recent year for which data are available).

Wage and Hour Division

The Wage and Hour Division conducts a review of child labor in every FLSA investigation. In addition to its rigorous enforcement efforts, WHD works to prevent violations from occurring in the first place by educating employers, workers, and the public about federal child labor law compliance. In 2023, the Wage and Hour Division conducted more than 4,500 outreach events involving more than 450,000 participants.

Through its YouthRules! initiative, WHD also provides information to young workers, parents, educators, and employers to safeguard the rights of workers under the age of 18 and help ensure that children's work experiences are legal, safe,

and do not disrupt their education. (33) For more information, see **Figure 11**.

WHD online resources include fact sheets, FAQs, on-demand video training, PowerPoint presentations, and extensive information on all laws enforced by the agency, including a comprehensive child labor webpage to help parents, educators, young workers, and employers better understand federal child labor laws. (34)

The agency also provides a free Timesheet App in English and Spanish for Android and Apple mobile device users that allows employers and employees to track their hours of work and calculate wages due. The app can empower young workers to ensure they are receiving the wages they are due or get assistance if a dispute arises.

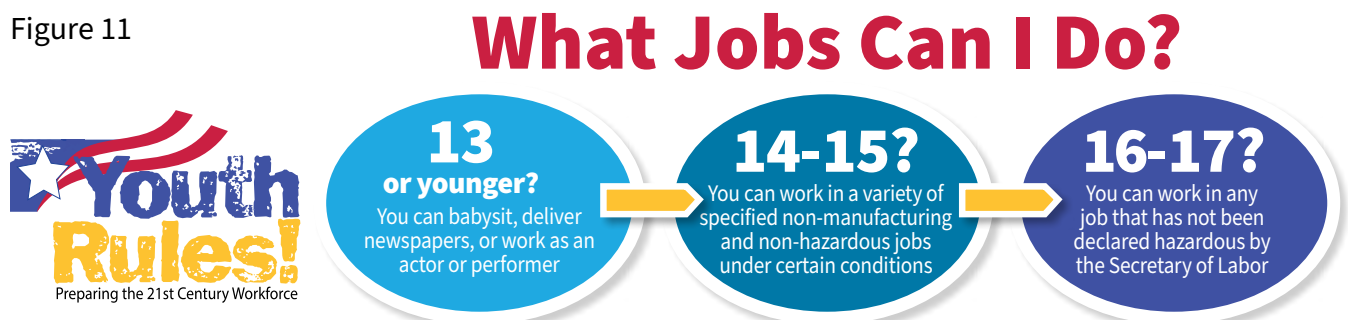
The Department’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provides workforce training and development programs to remove barriers to good jobs and improve economic mobility for all Americans. ETA programs include Registered Apprenticeship Programs, YouthBuild, Job Corps, Reentry Employment Opportunities, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act Youth Formula Program. These programs seek to empower historically disadvantaged populations, including women, people of color, and youth, by providing them with work-ready skills and pathways to industry accreditation.

In January 2024, ETA announced its second cohort of the Youth Systems Building Academy, providing technical assistance to build youth employment and training organizations’ capacity

to seamlessly offer “no wrong door” services and supports to youth from marginalized and underrepresented communities. (35) In May 2024, ETA awarded \$98 million in YouthBuild grants, which support pre-apprenticeships to educate and train young people, ages 16–24, who are neither enrolled in school or now in the labor market, for jobs in construction and other high-demand industries. YouthBuild enables participants to build or rehabilitate affordable housing in their communities for people in need. For 2024, ETA prioritized YouthBuild proposals that align with local infrastructure projects funded by the Biden-Harris administration’s Investing in America agenda. (36)

ETA-funded State Workforce Agency (SWA) staff may interact with individuals experiencing exploitive child labor because they provide frontline services to the public at American Job Centers (AJC) and through outreach to farmworkers. If a SWA, Employment Service, or outreach staff receives a complaint or otherwise receives information regarding a suspected violation of child labor laws, the staff must document the suspected violation and process it according to Employment Service regulations. Complaints and apparent violations involving alleged exploitive child labor are referred to appropriate enforcement agencies, including certifying agencies for U and T visas, which provide benefits and protections for victims of qualifying crimes. SWAs are also required to stop providing Employment Services to employers that have been found to have violated child labor laws. (80)

Figure 11



For more information on the specific jobs you can and can’t do, visit www.youthrules.gov/know-the-limits
To Find Out More: Visit youthrules.dol.gov or Call 1-866-4US-WAGE



© Campos de Esperanza, Mexico

November 2016 - July 2024

Kids playing a game. Oaxaca, Mexico. June 10, 2022.

Campos de Esperanza (Fields of Hope) engages the government, the private sector, and civil society to reduce child labor in migrant agricultural communities, particularly in the coffee and sugarcane sectors in Veracruz and Oaxaca. The project links children and youth to existing educational programs and refers vulnerable households to existing government programs to improve income and reduce the need for child labor. Campos de Esperanza also works to strengthen the Mexican government's capacity to prevent and manage Chronic Kidney Disease of unknown causes and improve working conditions based on regional and international best practices in partnership with the private sector and community-based groups.

Learn more on our website at dol.gov/CamposDeEsperanzaMexico

About the Iqbal Masih Award



The United States Congress established the Iqbal Masih Award for the Elimination of Child Labor in 2008 to recognize exceptional efforts by an individual, company, organization, or national government to end the worst forms of child labor. The award reflects the spirit of Iqbal Masih, a Pakistani child sold into bonded labor as a carpet weaver at age 4. He escaped his servitude at age 10 and became an outspoken advocate of children’s rights, drawing international attention to his fight against child labor. Iqbal was killed in Pakistan in 1995 at the age of 12, as he continued to call for an end to child labor. Further information about the Iqbal Masih Award and USDOL’s efforts to combat child labor is available on the USDOL website at www.dol.gov/Iqbal.

In 2024, Acting U.S. Secretary of Labor Julie Su selected Wadi El Nil Association, an Egyptian civil society organization, and Andrews Addoquaye Tagoe, a leading trade unionist from Ghana, to receive the Iqbal Masih Award in recognition of their extraordinary efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor.



Wadi El Nil Association receiving the 2024 Iqbal Masih Award in Cairo, Egypt.

Left to right: Hossam Wasfy Aziz, Executive Director of Wadi El Nil; Mona Mamdouh Labib, Financial Manager of Wadi El Nil; Nathaniel Turner, Deputy Political Counselor, U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt; Maher Boushra Henien, Founder of Wadi El Nil; Manal Ali Mohamed, Project Manager, Economic Development and Small Microenterprises For the Mothers of the Children; Christine Maher Boushra, Co-founder of Wadi El Nil

Wadi El Nil Association

Wadi El Nil Association has dedicated its work to eradicating the worst forms of child labor and empowering vulnerable children in the limestone mining sector of Egypt's Minya region for over 20 years. The organization employs a multifaceted approach that features three core strategies: removing children from quarries and facilitating their return to school or entry into safe work skills training; providing micro-loans for families to develop alternate income sources and afford education-related expenses; and raising awareness of child labor risks, laws, and resources among children, families, and quarry owners. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Wadi El Nil Association expanded its outreach to bolster families' resiliency against dependence on child labor and coordinated educational activities among local organizations and volunteers to protect communities from the pandemic's impacts. Through its extraordinary commitment and efforts, Wadi El Nil Association has become a pivotal organization for defending the rights of children and assisting their families to create a healthy and productive environment for their development as the future of Egypt.



Andrews Addoquaye Tagoe (right) receiving the 2024 Iqbal Masih Award from Rolf Olson, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana.

Andrews Addoquaye Tagoe

Andrews Addoquaye Tagoe’s work as a trade unionist in Ghana spans more than two decades and has contributed significantly to addressing child labor at national and international levels. Andrews wields a major role in advancing children’s and workers’ rights as both the Deputy General Secretary of the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) of the Ghana Trade Union Congress and the Regional Coordinator of Global March Against Child Labor for Anglophone Africa. His work with GAWU to organize and formalize the informal economy in Ghana has elevated the rights of rural workers in agricultural communities and resulted in the withdrawal from the worst forms of child labor of thousands of children in rural communities. His efforts have raised the visibility of child labor issues within Ghana’s trade union movement, particularly by equipping trade union activists to work on child labor issues and advancing child labor clauses in all collective bargaining agreements signed by GAWU with its agricultural-related member enterprises in Ghana. Andrews’s efforts to end child labor have inspired child protection committees, community leaders, school administrators, and the next generation of champions.



© Tinnakorn Jorruang/Alamy Stock Photo/ Alamy
Poor children forced to work at a construction site in Thailand.
Thailand. January 10, 2022.

Acknowledgments

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Copies of this and other reports in ILAB’s child labor and forced labor series may be obtained by contacting the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room S-5315, Washington, D.C. 20210. Telephone: (202) 693-4843; e-mail: GlobalKids@dol.gov. The reports are also available on the web at <https://www.dol.gov/ilab>. Comments on these reports are welcome and may be submitted to GlobalKids@dol.gov.



© **Pilares Project, Colombia**

December 2017 - May 2025

Two women visit the apiary of the Corpilares beekeeping Pilares project, supported by DOL, to check the progress of harvesting honey. Barranco de Lobo, Colombia. August 2023.

Pilares project supports civil society organizations in Colombia to more effectively detect and combat child labor and unacceptable working conditions in artisanal and small-scale mines. Pilares forms networks of civil society organizations and empowers local communities to build grassroots movements. Collectively, these movements and networks are improving working conditions and reducing the risk that children will be used in this harmful work.

Learn more on our website at dol.gov/PilaresProjectColombia

Appendix 1

Purpose of This Report

Research Focus of the *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*

USDOL prepared the *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* report in accordance with the Trade and Development Act of 2000 (TDA). (37) The TDA set forth the requirement that a country must implement its commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor for the President of the United States to designate the country a beneficiary developing country under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program (subject to an exception if designation is in the national economic interest of the United States). (38) The TDA also mandated that the President submit to the United States Congress the Secretary of Labor’s findings with respect to each “beneficiary country’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.” (37) ILAB carries out this responsibility on behalf of the Secretary.

Country Coverage

This report covers 119 independent countries and 15 non-independent countries and territories designated as GSP beneficiaries. This includes former GSP recipients who have negotiated free trade agreements with the United States. (39) Because the population of children is extremely small (fewer than 50) or non-existent in the British Indian Ocean Territory, Heard Island and McDonald Islands, and the Pitcairn Islands, the report does not contain a discussion of these three non-independent countries and territories. The use of “countries” in this report includes territories, and because the report focuses on government efforts, non-independent countries and territories are classified by their associated regions.

Population Covered

In undertaking research on the “worst forms of child labor,” ILAB relies on the definition contained in International Labor Organization Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (ILO C. 182), which defines “child” as a person under age 18.

Reporting Period

The reporting period for this year’s report is January 2023 through December 2023. In certain cases, significant events or government efforts that occurred in early 2024 were included, as appropriate.

Type of Work

This report focuses on child labor and the worst forms of child labor. Definitions related to these types of work are primarily guided by International Labor Organization Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age (ILO C. 138) and ILO C. 182. Child labor includes work below the age of 15 (age 14 in developing economies where specified at the time of ratification of C. 138) or the higher minimum age as established in national legislation (excluding permissible light work) and the worst forms of child labor. The definition of “worst forms of child labor” is found in the TDA and is the same as that included in ILO C. 182. It includes (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale or trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, or forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring, or offering of a child for

prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs; and (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances under which it is

carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children. (37; 40) Similar to ILO C. 182, the TDA states that the work described in subparagraph (d) shall be determined by the laws, regulations, or competent authority of the beneficiary developing country involved.



Appendix 2

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AF	Sub-Saharan Africa
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
CEACR	International Labor Organization Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAP	East Asia and the Pacific
EAPCCO	Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
EFA	Education for All
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
EU	European Union
EUR	Europe and Eurasia
FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act
GAWU	General Agricultural Workers Union of the Ghana Trade Union Congress
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICLS	International Conference of Labor Statisticians
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labor Organization
ILO C. 29	International Labor Organization Convention No. 29: Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labor, commonly known as the “Forced Labor Convention”
ILO C. 138	International Labor Organization Convention No. 138: Convention Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, commonly referred to as the “Minimum Age Convention”
ILO C. 182	International Labor Organization Convention No. 182: Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, commonly referred to as the “Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention”
ILO R. 190	International Labor Organization Recommendation No. 190: Recommendation Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, commonly referred to as the “Worst Forms of Child Labor Recommendation”
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LFS	Labor Force Survey

LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Survey
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the South (America); full members include Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela (membership currently suspended)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Palermo	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SCA	South and Central Asia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIMPOC	Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labor
TDA	Trade and Development Act
TVPRA	Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act
UCW	Understanding Children’s Work
UFLPA	United States’ Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
USDOL	U.S. Department of Labor
USDOS	U.S. Department of State
USHHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
WFP	World Food Program
WHA	Americas
WHD	Wage and Hour Division
WHO	World Health Organization
XUAR	Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Appendix 3

Definitions Related to Child Labor and Forced Labor

Definitions related to child labor are guided by ILO C. 138 on Minimum Age and ILO C. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. ILO's Resolution Concerning Statistics of Child Labor, developed during the 18th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS) and amendments made during the 20th ICLS, provide the international framework for measuring children's work.

Working Children

Per the Resolution Concerning Statistics of Child Labor developed during the 18th ICLS, working children are those engaged in any productive activity for at least 1 hour during the reference period. Productive activity includes market production and certain types of non-market production, principally the production of goods and services for their families' use. The 20th ICLS introduced changes to the definition of working children to align that definition with internationally accepted definitions of work for adults. The new definition classifies working children as those engaged in any activity to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for their own use. In summary, the new definition includes the production of additional types of services for family use, unpaid trainee work by children, volunteer work by children, and other work activities by children. Since most countries are in the process of adapting survey instruments to reflect this new definition, the definition of working children from the 18th ICLS Resolution has been used in this report. The work that children perform may be within the formal or informal economy, inside or outside of family settings, whether paid or unpaid. This includes children working in domestic service outside the child's own household for an employer, paid or unpaid. (41; 42)

Child Labor

Child labor is a subset of working children and is work below the minimum age for work, as established in national legislation that conforms to international standards. The definition includes the worst forms of child labor. Child labor is a subset of working children because child labor excludes children who work limited hours per week in permitted light work and those who are above the minimum age who engage in work not classified as a worst form of child labor. (41; 42)

Worst Forms of Child Labor

The term "worst forms of child labor" refers to activities described and as understood in ILO C. 182. (40) Under Article 3 of the Convention, the worst forms of child labor comprise the following activities:

- All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- The use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic performances;
- The use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; and
- Work which, by its nature or the circumstances under which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor

For this report, the term “categorical worst forms of child labor” refers to child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182. This category does not include the worst forms of child labor identified under Article 3(d) as “hazardous work.” (40)

Hazardous Work

The term “hazardous work” refers to the worst form of child labor identified in ILO C. 182, Article 3(d), “work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children.” ILO C. 182, Article 4, directs countries to consult with employers and workers to identify the types of hazardous work that should be prohibited by law or regulation. Hazardous work lists may describe specific activities, occupations, industries, or conditions. (40)

Forced Labor

Forced labor, under international standards, is defined as all work or service that is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the worker does not offer themselves voluntarily. (43) Menace of penalty refers to the means of coercion and includes threats or violence against workers or workers’ families and close associates; restrictions on workers’ movement; debt bondage; withholding of wages or promised benefits; withholding of documents; and abuse of workers’ vulnerability through the denial of rights or threats of dismissal or deportation. (44) “Circumstances that may give rise to involuntary work, when undertaken under deception or uninformed, include, inter alia, unfree recruitment at birth or through transactions such as slavery or bonded labor; situations in which the worker must perform a job of a different nature from that specified during recruitment without [their] consent; abusive requirements for

overtime or on-call work that were not previously agreed to with the employer; work in hazardous conditions to which the worker has not consented, with or without compensation or protective equipment; work with very low or no wages; in degrading living conditions imposed by the employer; work for other employers than agreed to; work for a longer period of time than agreed to; and work with no or limited freedom to terminate the work contract.” (44)

Slavery and Practices Similar to Slavery

Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. (45) Practices similar to slavery include the following:

- Debt bondage, defined as the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of their personal services or the services of a person under their control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied toward the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined;
- Serfdom, defined as the condition or status of a tenant who is by law, custom, or agreement bound to live and labor on land belonging to another person and to render some determinate service to such other person, whether for reward or not, and is not free to change their own status; and
- Forced or compulsory labor. (46)

Forced Child Labor

Forced child labor is a categorical worst form of child labor under ILO C. 182. (38) Children are in forced child labor if subjected to work under the threat or menace of penalty. Forced child labor also includes work performed with or for the child’s parents for a third party under the threat or menace of any penalty directly applied to the child or parents. (40; 44; 47)

Appendix 4

ILO Instruments Related to Child Labor and Forced Labor

The ILO brings together government, employer, and worker representatives of member states to establish and supervise the implementation of international labor standards and develop policies and implement programs to advance decent work. (48) International labor standards are legal instruments drawn up by these ILO constituents that set out basic principles and rights at work. They can take the form of either conventions, protocols, or recommendations. Conventions and protocols are international treaties that are legally binding on ratifying member states. Ratifying countries commit themselves to implementing the convention or protocol in national law and practice and reporting on its application at regular intervals. Recommendations are non-binding and provide guidelines for action, either as a complement to a convention or as a stand-alone instrument. The following paragraphs describe key ILO instruments related to child labor and the minimum ages set by countries related to these instruments.

ILO Convention No. 138: Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, 1973

ILO C. 138 establishes that the minimum age of admission into employment or work in any occupation “shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling, and, in any case, shall not be less than fifteen” (Article 2(3)). Countries whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed may initially specify a minimum legal working age of 14 when ratifying the Convention. In addition, Article 7(1) says that national laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of children ages 13 to 15 years for light work. Countries that specify a

minimum legal working age of 14 may permit light work for children ages 12 to 14. (49)

ILO Convention No. 182: Worst Forms of Child Labor, 1999

ILO C. 182 defines the worst forms of child labor and requires ratifying countries to take immediate action to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor for persons under age 18.

Among other actions, ILO C. 182 requires ratifying countries to take effective and timebound measures to prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labor; help remove children from the worst forms of child labor and provide for their rehabilitation and social integration; ensure that children removed from the worst forms of child labor have access to free basic education and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training; identify and reach out to children at special risk; take into account the special situation of girls; consult with employer and worker organizations to create appropriate mechanisms to monitor implementation of the convention; and assist one another in implementing the convention. (40)

Worst Forms of Child Labor Recommendation No. 190, 1999

Recommendation No. 190 supplements ILO C. 182 and provides non-binding practical guidance in applying the Convention. Among other provisions, it includes a list of working conditions and types of work that should be considered when determining what comprises hazardous work. (50)

ILO Convention No. 29: Forced Labor, 1930

ILO C. 29 prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor, which is defined as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the person has not offered himself voluntarily.” (43)

ILO Convention No. 105: Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, 1957

ILO C. 105 prohibits forced or compulsory labor as a means of political coercion or education, or as a punishment for holding or expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social, or economic system; as a method of mobilizing and using labor for economic development; as a means of labor discipline; as a punishment for having participated in strikes; and as a means of racial, social, national, or religious discrimination. (51)

Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labor Convention, 1930

The Protocol reaffirms the forced labor definition in ILO C. 29. It requires ratifying countries to take effective measures to prevent and eliminate forced and compulsory labor, to sanction perpetrators, and provide victims with

protection and access to appropriate remedies, such as compensation. It also requires ratifying countries to develop a national policy and plan of action to address forced or compulsory labor in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations. (78) The Protocol supplements ILO C. 29; as such, only ILO member states that have ratified the convention can ratify the protocol. (52)

Forced Labor (Supplementary Measures) Recommendation No. 203, 2014

Recommendation No. 203 provides non-binding practical guidance in the areas of prevention, protection of victims and ensuring their access to justice and remedies, enforcement, and international cooperation. It supplements both the protocol and the convention. (53)

ILO Convention No. 81: Labor Inspection Convention, 1947

ILO C. 81 establishes the duties, functions, and responsibilities of countries’ labor inspection systems and labor inspectors. These functions include enforcing legal provisions related to general conditions of work and worker protection in all workplaces as defined by national laws or regulations. (54)



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People work in a cotton factory in Awat County, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwest China. With a long history of cotton planting, Awat is known as the “Town of Cotton” in China. The county boasts high-quality cotton and high production efficiency. Awat County, Xinjiang, China. October 27, 2019.

Appendix 5

TDA Country Assessment Criteria

Each country in this report receives an assessment to indicate the U.S. Department of Labor's findings on the country's level of advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period. There are five possible assessment levels: Significant Advancement, Moderate Advancement, Minimal Advancement, No Advancement, or No Assessment.

Significant Advancement

For a country to be assessed as having significantly advanced efforts in 2023, the country must have (1) instituted the minimum requirements related to laws and regulations, mechanisms, and programs to address and prevent the worst forms of child labor (see *Exhibit 1*); and (2) during the reporting period, made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas covering laws and regulations, enforcement, coordination, policies, and social programs, which may have included taking suggested actions recommended in the 2022 report.

Moderate Advancement

A country moderately advanced its efforts in eliminating the worst forms of child labor in 2023 if it made meaningful efforts during

the reporting period in some relevant areas covering laws and regulations, enforcement, coordination, policies, and social programs, which may have included taking suggested actions recommended in 2022.

Minimal Advancement

Three types of countries made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in 2023. The first is a country that made meaningful efforts during the reporting period in a few relevant areas covering laws and regulations, enforcement, coordination, policies, and social programs, which may have included taking suggested actions recommended in 2022.

The other two types of countries are those that, regardless of meaningful efforts made in relevant areas, minimally advanced as a result of establishing or failing to remedy regressive or significantly detrimental laws, policies, or practices that delayed advancement in the elimination of the worst forms of child labor. Examples of regressive or significantly detrimental laws, policies, or practices include lowering the minimum age for work below international standards, recruiting or using children in armed conflict, and continuing to impose administrative barriers to child labor inspections. The following points make distinctions between regression and continued law, policy, or practice:

Exhibit 1

Minimum Requirements Needed to be Considered for a Significant Advancement Assessment

In order for a country to be eligible to receive an assessment of Significant Advancement, a country must have:

- Established a minimum age for work that meets international standards;
- Established a minimum age for hazardous work that meets international standards;
- Established legal prohibitions against forced labor that meet international standards;
- Established legal prohibitions against child trafficking that meet international standards;
- Established legal prohibitions against commercial sexual exploitation of children that meet international standards;
- Established legal prohibitions against the use of children for illicit activities that meet international standards;
- Designated a competent authority or implemented institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor;
- Imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor;
- Took active measures to ensure that children are not inappropriately incarcerated, penalized, or physically harmed for unlawful acts as a direct result of being a victim of the worst forms of child labor;
- Took active measures to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence public officials who participate in or facilitate the worst forms of child labor;
- Made a good-faith effort to collect and publish labor and criminal law enforcement data; and
- Directly funded a significant social program that includes the goal of eliminating child labor or addressing the root causes of the problem, such as lack of educational opportunities, poverty, or discrimination.

Regression in Law, Policy, or Practice that Delayed Advancement.

This type of country made meaningful efforts in a few or more relevant areas but established a regressive or significantly detrimental law, policy, or practice during the reporting period that delayed advancement in eliminating the worst forms of child labor.

Continued Law, Policy, or Practice that Delayed Advancement.

This type of country made meaningful efforts in a few or more relevant areas but failed to remedy a regressive or significantly detrimental law, policy, or practice established in previous

years, which delayed advancement in eliminating the worst forms of child labor.

No Advancement

Three types of countries made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in 2023. The first is a country that made no meaningful efforts to advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period.

The other two types of countries are those that, regardless of whether meaningful efforts in relevant areas were made, had a policy or demonstrated a practice of being complicit

in the use of forced child labor in more than isolated incidents, which is considered an egregious form of exploitation. Complicity can occur when a government is involved in forced child labor at any level of government, including at the local, regional, or national level. Such incidents involve direct or proactive government action to compel children under age 18 to work. The following points make distinctions between a country making no efforts and being complicit and a country making efforts but being complicit:

No Efforts and Complicit in Forced Child Labor.

This type of country made no meaningful efforts, took no suggested actions reported in 2022, and had a policy or demonstrated a practice of being complicit in the use of forced child labor in more than isolated incidents in 2023.

Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor.

This type of country made meaningful efforts, which may have included taking suggested actions reported in 2022 but had a policy or demonstrated a practice of being complicit in the use of forced child labor in more than isolated incidents in 2023.

No Assessment

This assessment is reserved for countries in which the population of children is either non-existent or extremely small (fewer than 50), there is no evidence of the worst forms of child labor and the country appears to have an adequate preventive legal and enforcement framework on child labor, or when a country is included in the report for the first time or receives a suggested action for the first time. This year, no assessment has been made for Wallis and Futuna.



TDA Country Assessments, by Assessment

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT		
Argentina	WHA	Significant Advancement
Chile	WHA	Significant Advancement
Colombia	WHA	Significant Advancement
Ecuador	WHA	Significant Advancement
Mexico	WHA	Significant Advancement
Moldova	EUR	Significant Advancement
MODERATE ADVANCEMENT		
Albania	EUR	Moderate Advancement
Algeria	MENA	Moderate Advancement
Angola	AF	Moderate Advancement
Belize	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Benin	AF	Moderate Advancement
Bolivia	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Botswana	AF	Moderate Advancement
Brazil	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Burkina Faso	AF	Moderate Advancement
Cabo Verde	AF	Moderate Advancement
Cameroon	AF	Moderate Advancement
Christmas Island	EAP	Moderate Advancement
Cocos (Keeling) Islands	EAP	Moderate Advancement
Congo, Republic of the	AF	Moderate Advancement
Costa Rica	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Côte d'Ivoire	AF	Moderate Advancement
El Salvador	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Ethiopia	AF	Moderate Advancement
Georgia	EUR	Moderate Advancement
Ghana	AF	Moderate Advancement
Guatemala	WHA	Moderate Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
MODERATE ADVANCEMENT (CONTINUED)		
Guinea	AF	Moderate Advancement
Guinea-Bissau	AF	Moderate Advancement
Guyana	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Honduras	WHA	Moderate Advancement
India	SCA	Moderate Advancement
Indonesia	EAP	Moderate Advancement
Jamaica	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Jordan	MENA	Moderate Advancement
Kiribati	EAP	Moderate Advancement
Kosovo	EUR	Moderate Advancement
Liberia	AF	Moderate Advancement
Madagascar	AF	Moderate Advancement
Malawi	AF	Moderate Advancement
Maldives	SCA	Moderate Advancement
Mauritius	AF	Moderate Advancement
Mongolia	EAP	Moderate Advancement
Montenegro	EUR	Moderate Advancement
Morocco	MENA	Moderate Advancement
Mozambique	AF	Moderate Advancement
Namibia	AF	Moderate Advancement
Nepal	SCA	Moderate Advancement
Norfolk Island	EAP	Moderate Advancement
North Macedonia	EUR	Moderate Advancement
Oman	MENA	Moderate Advancement
Pakistan	SCA	Moderate Advancement
Panama	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Paraguay	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Peru	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Philippines	EAP	Moderate Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
MODERATE ADVANCEMENT (CONTINUED)		
Samoa	EAP	Moderate Advancement
Senegal	AF	Moderate Advancement
Serbia	EUR	Moderate Advancement
Sierra Leone	AF	Moderate Advancement
Solomon Islands	EAP	Moderate Advancement
South Africa	AF	Moderate Advancement
Sri Lanka	SCA	Moderate Advancement
Suriname	WHA	Moderate Advancement
Tanzania	AF	Moderate Advancement
Thailand	EAP	Moderate Advancement
The Gambia	AF	Moderate Advancement
Togo	AF	Moderate Advancement
Western Sahara	MENA	Moderate Advancement
Zambia	AF	Moderate Advancement
MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT		
Bhutan	SCA	Minimal Advancement
Bosnia and Herzegovina	EUR	Minimal Advancement
Cook Islands	EAP	Minimal Advancement
Djibouti	AF	Minimal Advancement
Dominica	WHA	Minimal Advancement
Egypt	MENA	Minimal Advancement
Eswatini	AF	Minimal Advancement
Fiji	EAP	Minimal Advancement
Grenada	WHA	Minimal Advancement
Haiti	WHA	Minimal Advancement
Lebanon	MENA	Minimal Advancement
Lesotho	AF	Minimal Advancement
Niger	AF	Minimal Advancement
Nigeria	AF	Minimal Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT (CONTINUED)		
Papua New Guinea	EAP	Minimal Advancement
Saint Lucia	WHA	Minimal Advancement
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	WHA	Minimal Advancement
São Tomé and Príncipe	AF	Minimal Advancement
Tunisia	MENA	Minimal Advancement
Tuvalu	EAP	Minimal Advancement
Vanuatu	EAP	Minimal Advancement
West Bank and the Gaza Strip	MENA	Minimal Advancement
MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN LAW/POLICY/PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT		
Comoros	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement
Rwanda	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement
Uganda	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement
MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED LAW/POLICY/PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT		
Armenia	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Azerbaijan	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Bangladesh	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement
Burundi	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Policy that Delayed Advancement
Cambodia	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Central African Republic	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Dominican Republic	WHA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Gabon	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
Iraq	MENA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Kazakhstan	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Kenya	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Kyrgyz Republic	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement
Mali	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Mauritania	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Nicaragua	WHA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Somalia	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Timor-Leste	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Tonga	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Ukraine	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Uzbekistan	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Zimbabwe	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
NO ADVANCEMENT		
Afghanistan	SCA	No Advancement
Anguilla	EUR	No Advancement
British Virgin Islands	EUR	No Advancement
Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)	EUR	No Advancement
Montserrat	EUR	No Advancement
Niue	EAP	No Advancement
Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha	WHA	No Advancement
Tokelau	EAP	No Advancement
Yemen	MENA	No Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
NO ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT COMPLICIT IN FORCED CHILD LABOR		
Burma	EAP	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor
Chad	AF	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor
Eritrea	AF	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor
South Sudan	AF	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor
NO ASSESSMENT		
Wallis and Futuna	EUR	No Assessment



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 On International Labor Day in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, a Palestinian child loads recyclable materials such as paper, metal, glass, and plastic on a horse cart. Each 4 kilos of recyclables is sold for \$1 and provides money to support their family. Gaza, Palestine. May 1, 2023.

Comparisons in TDA Assessments From 2022 to 2023, by Country

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2022 ASSESSMENT LEVEL	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
Afghanistan	SCA	No Advancement	No Advancement
Albania	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Algeria	MENA	Minimal Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Angola	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Anguilla	EUR	No Advancement	No Advancement
Argentina	WHA	Significant Advancement	Significant Advancement
Armenia	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Azerbaijan	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Bangladesh	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practices that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement
Belize	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Benin	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Bhutan	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Bolivia	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Bosnia and Herzegovina	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Botswana	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Brazil	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
British Virgin Islands	EUR	No Advancement	No Advancement
Burkina Faso	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Burma	EAP	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor
Burundi	AF	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Policy that Delayed Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2022 ASSESSMENT LEVEL	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
Cabo Verde	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Cambodia	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Cameroon	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Central African Republic	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Chad	AF	Minimal Advancement	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor
Chile	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Significant Advancement
Christmas Island	EAP	No Assessment	Moderate Advancement
Cocos (Keeling) Islands	EAP	No Assessment	Moderate Advancement
Colombia	WHA	Significant Advancement	Significant Advancement
Comoros	AF	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Congo, Republic of the	AF	Minimal Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Cook Islands	EAP	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Costa Rica	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Côte d'Ivoire	AF	Significant Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Djibouti	AF	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Dominica	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Dominican Republic	WHA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Ecuador	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Significant Advancement
Egypt	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
El Salvador	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Eritrea	AF	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2022 ASSESSMENT LEVEL	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
Eswatini	AF	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Ethiopia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)	EUR	No Advancement	No Advancement
Fiji	EAP	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Gabon	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Georgia	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Ghana	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Grenada	WHA	No Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Guatemala	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Guinea	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Guinea-Bissau	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Guyana	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Haiti	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Honduras	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
India	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Indonesia	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Iraq	MENA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Jamaica	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Jordan	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Kazakhstan	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Kenya	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Kiribati	EAP	Minimal Advancement	Moderate Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2022 ASSESSMENT LEVEL	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
Kosovo	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Kyrgyz Republic	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement
Lebanon	MENA	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Lesotho	AF	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Liberia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Madagascar	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Malawi	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Maldives	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Mali	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Mauritania	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Mauritius	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Mexico	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Significant Advancement
Moldova	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Significant Advancement
Mongolia	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Montenegro	EUR	Minimal Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Montserrat	EUR	No Advancement	No Advancement
Morocco	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Mozambique	AF	Minimal Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Namibia	AF	Minimal Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Nepal	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Nicaragua	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Niger	AF	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Nigeria	AF	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Niue	EAP	Minimal Advancement	No Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2022 ASSESSMENT LEVEL	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
Norfolk Island	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
North Macedonia	EUR	Minimal Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Oman	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Pakistan	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Panama	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Papua New Guinea	EAP	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Paraguay	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Peru	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Philippines	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Rwanda	AF	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement
Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristán da Cunha	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	No Advancement
Saint Lucia	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Samoa	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
São Tomé and Príncipe	AF	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Senegal	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Serbia	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Sierra Leone	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Solomon Islands	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Somalia	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
South Africa	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
South Sudan	AF	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor
Sri Lanka	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Suriname	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement

COUNTRY/AREA	REGION	2022 ASSESSMENT LEVEL	2023 ASSESSMENT LEVEL
Tanzania	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Thailand	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
The Gambia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Timor-Leste	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Togo	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Tokelau	EAP	Minimal Advancement	No Advancement
Tonga	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Tunisia	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Tuvalu	EAP	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Uganda	AF	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement
Ukraine	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement
Uzbekistan	SCA	Significant Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement
Vanuatu	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Wallis and Futuna	EUR	No Assessment	No Assessment
West Bank and the Gaza Strip	MENA	Minimal Advancement	Minimal Advancement
Western Sahara	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Yemen	MENA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	No Advancement
Zambia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Moderate Advancement
Zimbabwe	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement



© **She Thrives, Ethiopia**

December 2020 – February 2025

Girls sitting around a table during music class. Gedeo Zone, Ethiopia. 2022.

The She Thrives project, supported by DOL, builds the agency of vulnerable women and girls in the Ethiopian agricultural sector, changes community social norms that uphold child labor and gender inequality, and transforms laws, policies, and institutions to be more gender equitable.

Learn more on our website at dol.gov/SheThrivesEthiopia

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GROUP

Appendix 6

TDA Laws and Ratifications,
by Country

COUNTRY/ AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT	ILO C. 138	ILO C. 182	CRC	CRC OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS		PALER- MO PROTO- COL	MIN. AGE FOR WORK	EDUCATION	
						CRC- CSEC	CRC- AC			COMPUL- SORY EDUCA- TION AGE	FREE PUBLIC EDUCA- TION
Afghanistan	SCA	No Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	15	Yes
Albania	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Algeria	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Angola	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	14	Yes
Anguilla	EUR	No Advancement	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	12	17	No
Argentina	WHA	Significant Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	18	Yes
Armenia	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	18	Yes
Azerbaijan	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
Bangladesh	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	N/A	Yes
Belize	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	14	Yes
Benin	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	11	No
Bhutan	SCA	Minimal Advancement	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	13	N/A	Yes
Bolivia	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	17	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	EUR	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Botswana	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	N/A	Yes
Brazil	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	17	Yes

COUNTRY/ AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT	ILO C. 138	ILO C. 182	CRC	CRC OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS		PALER- MO PROTO- COL	MIN. AGE FOR WORK	EDUCATION	
						CRC- CSEC	CRC- AC			COMPUL- SORY EDUCA- TION AGE	FREE PUBLIC EDUCA- TION
British Virgin Islands	EUR	No Advancement	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	16	17	No
Burkina Faso	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Burma	EAP	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	10	Yes
Burundi	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Policy that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	15	No
Cabo Verde	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Cambodia	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	N/A	No
Cameroon	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	14	12	No
Central African Republic	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	16	No
Chad	AF	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	16	No
Chile	WHA	Significant Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	18	Yes
Christmas Island	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	17.5	17.5	No
Cocos (Keeling) Island	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	17.5	17.5	No
Colombia	WHA	Significant Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	18	Yes
Comoros	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	No

COUNTRY/ AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT	ILO C. 138	ILO C. 182	CRC	CRC OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS		PALER- MO PROTO- COL	MIN. AGE FOR WORK	EDUCATION	
						CRC- CSEC	CRC- AC			COMPUL- SORY EDUCA- TION AGE	FREE PUBLIC EDUCA- TION
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	12	No
Congo, Republic of the	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Cook Islands	EAP	Minimal Advancement	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	16	16	No
Costa Rica	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	17	Yes
Côte d'Ivoire	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	No
Djibouti	AF	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Dominica	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	No
Dominican Republic	WHA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	14	Yes
Ecuador	WHA	Significant Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Egypt	MENA	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
El Salvador	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Eritrea	AF	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	14	No
Eswatini	AF	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	12/13	No
Ethiopia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	N/A	No
Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)	EUR	No Advancement	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	14	16	Yes
Fiji	EAP	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
Gabon	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes

2023 FINDINGS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

COUNTRY/ AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT	ILO C. 138	ILO C. 182	CRC	CRC OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS		PALER- MO PROTO- COL	MIN. AGE FOR WORK	EDUCATION	
						CRC- CSEC	CRC- AC			COMPUL- SORY EDUCA- TION AGE	FREE PUBLIC EDUCA- TION
Georgia	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	15	Yes
Ghana	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Grenada	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	No
Guatemala	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	15	Yes
Guinea	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	No
Guinea-Bissau	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	15	No
Guyana	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Haiti	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	15	Yes
Honduras	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	17	Yes
India	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	14	Yes
Indonesia	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
Iraq	MENA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	12	Yes
Jamaica	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	No
Jordan	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Kazakhstan	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	17	Yes
Kenya	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	16	18	No
Kiribati	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	15	Yes
Kosovo	EUR	Moderate Advancement	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	15	15	Yes
Kyrgyz Republic	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	17	Yes

COUNTRY/ AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT	ILO C. 138	ILO C. 182	CRC	CRC OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS		PALER- MO PROTO- COL	MIN. AGE FOR WORK	EDUCATION	
						CRC- CSEC	CRC- AC			COMPUL- SORY EDUCA- TION AGE	FREE PUBLIC EDUCA- TION
Lebanon	MENA	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	14	15	Yes
Lesotho	AF	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	13	Yes
Liberia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	15	14	Yes
Madagascar	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Malawi	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	18	Yes
Maldives	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Mali	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
Mauritania	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16	14	Yes
Mauritius	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Mexico	WHA	Significant Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	18	Yes
Moldova	EUR	Significant Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Mongolia	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	17	Yes
Montenegro	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Montserrat	EUR	No Advancement	No	No	No	No	No	No	16	16	Yes
Morocco	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Mozambique	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	15	Yes
Namibia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	18	Yes
Nepal	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	14	Yes
Nicaragua	WHA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	12	Yes
Niger	AF	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	N/A	Yes
Nigeria	AF	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	12	15	Yes

COUNTRY/ AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT	ILO C. 138	ILO C. 182	CRC	CRC OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS		PALER- MO PROTO- COL	MIN. AGE FOR WORK	EDUCATION	
						CRC- CSEC	CRC- AC			COMPUL- SORY EDUCA- TION AGE	FREE PUBLIC EDUCA- TION
Niue	EAP	No Advancement	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	16	Yes
Norfolk Island	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	No
North Macedonia	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	Yes
Oman	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Pakistan	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	Yes
Panama	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	15	Yes
Papua New Guinea	EAP	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	16	N/A	No
Paraguay	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	17	Yes
Peru	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	17	17	Yes
Philippines	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	18	Yes
Rwanda	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	12	No
Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristán da Cunha	EUR	No Advancement	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	16	16	Yes
Saint Lucia	WHA	Minimal Advancement	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	WHA	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	16	No
Samoa	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	16	16	No
São Tomé and Príncipe	AF	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	15	15	Yes
Senegal	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	Yes
Serbia	EUR	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Sierra Leone	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
Solomon Islands	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	12	N/A	No

COUNTRY/ AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT	ILO C. 138	ILO C. 182	CRC	CRC OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS		PALER- MO PROTO- COL	MIN. AGE FOR WORK	EDUCATION	
						CRC- CSEC	CRC- AC			COMPUL- SORY EDUCA- TION AGE	FREE PUBLIC EDUCA- TION
Somalia	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	15	14	Yes
South Africa	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
South Sudan	AF	No Advancement – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	14	13	No
Sri Lanka	SCA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Suriname	WHA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	12	Yes
Tanzania	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	13	No
Thailand	EAP	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	Yes
The Gambia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	16	Yes
Timor-Leste	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	Yes
Togo	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	No
Tokelau	SCA	No Advancement	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	16	No
Tonga	EAP	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	18	No
Tunisia	MENA	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
Tuvalu	EAP	Minimal Advancement	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	15	15	No
Uganda	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	16	13	No
Ukraine	EUR	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	17	Yes

2023 FINDINGS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

COUNTRY/ AREA	REGION	2023 ASSESSMENT	ILO C. 138	ILO C. 182	CRC	CRC OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS		PALER- MO PROTO- COL	MIN. AGE FOR WORK	EDUCATION	
						CRC- CSEC	CRC- AC			COMPUL- SORY EDUCA- TION AGE	FREE PUBLIC EDUCA- TION
Uzbekistan	SCA	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	18	Yes
Vanuatu	EAP	Minimal Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	14	N/A	No
Wallis and Futuna	EUR	No Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	Yes
West Bank and the Gaza Strip	MENA	Minimal Advancement	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	16	Yes
Western Sahara	MENA	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15	15	Yes
Yemen	MENA	No Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	14	15	Yes
Zambia	AF	Moderate Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	15	N/A	Yes
Zimbabwe	AF	Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16	16	No



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Kevin Mutinda, 7, breaks rocks with a hammer along with his older sisters and mother at Kayole quarry in Nairobi, Kenya. Kevin's mother says she was left without a choice after she lost her cleaning job at a private school when pandemic restrictions were imposed. Nairobi, Kenya. September 29, 2020.

Appendix 7

Other Key Concepts and Definitions

Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions

In this report, 116 country profiles include a statistical table (Statistics on Children’s Work and Education) with data on the percentage of working children, school attendance rate, and percentage of children who combine school and work. In addition, some countries have further disaggregation by gender and urban/rural location and information on hazardous work by adolescents. For a smaller set of profiles, a chart lists the percentages of children who work by sector.

This appendix provides definitions and descriptions of the sources for these data and some of the strengths and weaknesses inherent within them. In a few cases, more current sources of data may be available than the ones used in this report; however, the most reliable, standardized sources available to date are used to allow for cross-country comparisons. Because reliable child labor surveys are not available for many countries, in some cases USDOL uses statistics from child labor surveys that are more than 10 years old (data from earlier than 2014). If data did not exist from the sources described below, if no other reliable and publicly available source of data exists for a country, or if data exist but have not been analyzed to allow for cross-country comparisons, this report concludes that the statistics are “unavailable.”

Working Children

Many of the statistical tables in the country profiles in this report present data on the percentage and number of working children. Data presented in the current report may differ from data that were presented in previous

reports because updated data have become available.

Definition

The term “working children” describes children engaged in any productive activity for at least 1 hour during the reference period. Productive activity includes market production and certain types of non-market production, principally the production of goods and services for own use. The work that children perform may be in the formal or informal economy, inside or outside family settings, or for pay or profit. This includes children working in domestic service outside the child’s own household for an employer, paid or unpaid. This definition is in accordance with the Resolution to Amend the 18th ICLS Resolution Concerning Statistics of Child Labor, adopted by the 20th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS) in 2018, and the ILO and UNICEF report *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020, Trends and the Road Forward*. (41; 55) The 20th ICLS definition classifies working children as those engaged in any activity to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for their own use. The definition also includes the production of additional types of services for family use, unpaid trainee work by children, volunteer work by children, and other work activities by children. Since most countries are in the process of adapting survey instruments to reflect this new definition, the definition of working children from the 18th ICLS Resolution has been used in this report.

Working Children Versus Children Engaged in Child Labor

This report presents statistics on “working children” rather than on “children involved in

child labor.” These terms are defined precisely in **Appendix 3**, “Definitions Related to Child Labor and Forced Labor.” The definition of working children does not vary among countries and, therefore, statistics on working children are comparable across country profiles. In contrast, the definition of children involved in child labor is based on national legislation, including, for example, the minimum age for work, which varies from country to country. As a result, child labor data are not comparable across countries. Furthermore, these country-level statistics may not disaggregate child labor from the broader category of child work, thereby including children who work only a few hours a week in permitted light work. For the purposes of this report, ILAB is unable to clearly articulate the proportion of working children who are involved in child labor.

Data Sources and Limitations

Data are primarily from the ILO’s analysis of four survey types: (1) the ILO’s Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labor (SIMPOC) surveys; (2) national Labor Force Surveys (LFS); (3) UNICEF’s Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS); and (4) other national and regional household surveys, including Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS).

According to ILO researchers, typical surveys on children’s work do not collect sufficiently detailed information on children’s activities to accurately measure economic activity. (56) This observation was repeated in December 2008 at the 18th ICLS. A resolution adopted at the conference provides guidelines for governments on collecting child labor data. Specifically, the guidance indicates that countries can choose to use a broad framework to measure children’s work and child labor that encompasses unpaid household services or countries can use a narrower definition of children’s work that excludes such services, as long as the definition used is clearly specified. This resolution is contributing to the collection of more comparable data on children’s involvement in

non-market activities. In addition, although the 20th ICLS introduced changes to the definition of working children to align it with internationally accepted definitions of work for adults, since most countries are in the process of adapting survey instruments to reflect this new definition, the definition of working children from the 18th ICLS Resolution has been used in this report. (41; 42)

In analyzing the data from the above-mentioned surveys, the ILO attempted to apply a standard definition of children’s work, although UNICEF’s MICS and ILO’s SIMPOC reports, for example, each use a different definition of work. As of the writing of this report, MICS reports include household chores in their definition of work, while some SIMPOC reports do not, depending on each country’s basis for reporting. To the extent possible, the ILO applied a common definition of work to the micro-data described. To date, this has resulted in the individual analysis of more than 250 datasets. While every attempt was made to present a standardized child work statistic, differences across surveys have the potential to affect the comparability of statistics across countries and across years. Some of these differences are explained in greater detail here; however, in general, they include differing age groups, questionnaire content and wording, purpose of the survey, sample design, non-sampling errors, and the year of data collection.

In general, data are presented for children ages 5 to 14; however, some of the profiles present a work statistic for children ages 6 to 14, 7 to 14, or 10 to 14, depending on the age categories used in the original survey. The wording of work-related questions also may affect the results. For example, the question on work in these surveys usually refers to work during the past 7 days; however, some surveys may refer to work activities during the past 12 months, and thus they are likely to capture a higher proportion of working children than surveys with 7-day timeframes. The purpose of the survey—whether specifically to measure children’s work and child labor (SIMPOC

surveys) or measure labor force participation of adults—may affect estimates of children’s work. (57) Sample design may also affect survey results. For example, children’s work is often clustered geographically; SIMPOC surveys are designed to capture children’s work in such geographic areas. As a result, estimates of working children vary across surveys that do not use the same sample design. (56) The ILO and UNICEF continue to investigate the effects of these survey differences on estimates of children’s work.

As noted, some country profiles also include the sectors in which children reportedly work. For some surveys, the sector of work was not reported by the entire sample of working children. Therefore, the distribution of children working by sector—agriculture, industry, and services—represents children with non-missing data for the sector of work. Additional information on the sectors of work reported in the chart.

Percentage of Children Attending School

The percentage of children attending school is the share of all children within a specified age group that reported attending school. The ILO data described above in the section “Working Children” are used to develop country-specific school attendance statistics. To be consistent with estimates of working children, the age group for which attendance statistics are calculated for children is generally ages 5 to 14. In some cases, however, different age categories are used, usually ages 6 to 14, 7 to 14, or 10 to 14.

Percentage of Children Combining Work and School

The percentage of children who combine work and school is the share of all children within a specified age group reporting both working and attending school. The ILO data described earlier under “Working Children” are used to develop country-specific statistics on children combining work and school. The age group for

which these statistics are calculated is usually for children ages 7 to 14 or 10 to 14.

Labor Law Enforcement: Sources and Definitions

Labor Force Calculation

This report uses data from either government-reported labor force statistics collected by the ILO or from labor force estimates by the ILO modeled on a combination of demographic and economic factors. Both sources of labor force data provide the most recent estimates for countries’ total labor force. This number is used to calculate a “sufficient number” of labor inspectors based on the country’s level of development, as determined by the UN. (58)

Country Classification

For analyses, the Development Policy and Analysis Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (UN DESA) classifies all countries of the world into one of four broad categories: (1) developed economies, (2) economies in transition, (3) developing economies, and (4) least developed countries. The composition of these groupings is intended to reflect basic economic country conditions. Several countries, in particular the economies in transition, have characteristics that could place them in more than one category; however, for analyses, the groupings have been made mutually exclusive. This is decided upon by the UN Economic and Social Council and, ultimately, by the General Assembly deciding on the list of least developed countries based on recommendations made by the Committee for Development Policy. The basic criteria for inclusion require that certain thresholds be met for per capita gross national income, a human assets index, and an economic vulnerability index. For the *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* report, “developed economies” equates to the ILO’s classification of “industrial market economies,” “economies in transition” to “transition economies,”

“developing economies” to “industrializing economies,” and “least developed countries” to “less developed countries.” Countries that appear on both “developing economies” and “least developed countries” lists are considered “least developed countries” for calculating a “sufficient number” of labor inspectors. (59)

Number of Labor Inspectors

Article 10 of ILO C. 81 calls for a “sufficient number” of inspectors to do the work required. Because each country assigns different priorities of enforcement to its inspectors, there is no official definition for a sufficient number of inspectors. In 2022, the ILO updated its guidance for assessing the size of country/territory labor inspectorates to emphasize a holistic evaluation of national context rather than solely a ratio of labor inspectors to labor force size. The factors that need to be considered include the number and nature of the functions assigned to the inspection system; the number, nature, size, and situation of the workplaces liable to inspection; the number of workers; the number and complexity of legal provisions to be enforced; the material and financial resources available to the inspectorate; and the practical conditions under which visits of inspection must be carried out in order to be effective. No single measure is sufficient; however, in many countries, the available data sources are weak. The ratio of inspectors per workforce is currently the only internationally comparable indicator available. In its policy and technical advisory services, the ILO has taken as reasonable benchmarks that the number of labor inspectors in relation to workers should approach 1:10,000 in industrial market economies, 1:15,000 in industrializing economies, 1:20,000 in transition economies, and 1:40,000 in less developed countries. (60; 61)

ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (ILO CEACR)

The ILO CEACR examines and makes two types of comments on the application of international

labor standards by states that are party to the relevant conventions. Direct Requests contain the Committee’s technical comments or questions about the state’s application of a particular convention, and these requests are sent directly to governments. Observations, which are published in the Committee’s annual report, contain comments on fundamental questions raised by a state’s application of a particular convention and recommendations for the state. (61)

Glossary of Other Terms

Basic Education

Article 7(c) of ILO C. 182 requires countries to “ensure access to free basic education.” According to the International Standard Classification of Education, “basic education” corresponds to the first 9 years of formal schooling and comprises primary and lower secondary education. Primary education is considered to be the first stage of basic education and covers 6 years of full-time schooling, with the legal age of entrance normally being no younger than age 5 or older than age 7. Primary education is designed to give pupils a sound basis in reading, writing, and mathematics, along with an elementary understanding of other subjects, such as history, geography, natural science, social sciences, religion, art, and music. Lower secondary education is more subject-focused and requires specialized teachers. It corresponds to about 3 years of schooling. Basic education also can include various non-formal and informal public and private educational activities offered to meet the defined basic learning needs of groups of people of all ages. (40)

Article 13 of the UN’s 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights indicates that primary education should be compulsory and free to all. Secondary education, including technical and vocational education, should be available and accessible to all, and free education should be progressively introduced. Article 28 of the 1989 Convention

on the Rights of the Child affirms the right of the child to an education and the state's duty to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory. (62; 63)

Bonded Labor, Debt Bondage

Bonded labor or debt bondage is “the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or those of a person under his control as security for a debt if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined,” as defined in the UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956). (46)

Bonded labor typically occurs when a person who needs a loan and has no security to offer pledges their labor, or that of someone under their control, as security for a loan. In some cases, the interest on the loan may be so high that it cannot be paid. In others, it may be deemed that the bonded individual's work repays the interest on the loan but not the principal. Thus, the loan is inherited and perpetuated, and becomes an inter-generational debt. (46)

Bonded labor is prohibited as one of the worst forms of child labor in ILO C. 182. (40)

Child Domestic Worker

A “child domestic worker” works in third-party private households under an employment relationship and engages in various tasks that include cleaning, cooking, gardening, collecting water, or caring for children and the elderly. Child domestic workers sometimes have live-in arrangements, whereby they live in their employer's household and work in exchange for room, board, and sometimes education. Child domestic workers are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including sexual, physical, and verbal abuse, in large part

because they often depend on their employers for basic needs and work in locations hidden from public view. (64; 65)

Child Labor Elimination Projects

Since 1995, USDOL has funded over 360 projects in 99 countries. USDOL currently oversees more than \$291 million in active programming to combat exploitative child labor. To date, USDOL-funded projects have provided nearly 2 million children with education and vocational training opportunities as a strategy for preventing and reducing child labor and increasing access to education in disadvantaged communities.

Child Trafficking

The UN's Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) states “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered ‘trafficking in persons’ even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this Article.” As such, there does not need to be abuse of power, control, coercion, or fraud present to constitute child trafficking, as the definition for trafficking adults requires. The Palermo Protocol provides a commonly accepted definition of human trafficking in Article 3(a) that trafficking in persons means “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.” (66)

The trafficking of children is prohibited as a worst form of child labor in ILO C. 182, Article 3(a). (40)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

Based on the 1996 Declaration and Agenda for Action of the First World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is defined as “sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or third person or persons.” (67) The remuneration dynamic distinguishes CSEC from the sexual abuse of a child, which does not include commercial gain; however, commercial sexual exploitation also involves abuse. The definition of CSEC includes these activities:

- Prostitution in the streets or indoors, and in such places as brothels, discotheques, massage parlors, bars, hotels, and restaurants
- Child sex tourism
- The production, promotion, and distribution of pornography involving children
- The use of children in sex shows (public or private)

ILO C. 182, Article 3(b), prohibits using, procuring, or offering a child for prostitution or for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances. (40)

Compulsory Education Age

The age up to which children and youth are legally required to attend school. (68)

Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child spells out the basic rights of children, such as the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to be protected from harmful influences, abuse, and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural, and social life. The Convention protects children’s rights by setting standards in health care; education; and legal,

civil, and social services. According to Article 32 of the Convention, children have the right “to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.” (62)

Hazardous Work

Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182 sets forth “work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children” as a worst form of child labor. This is colloquially referred to as “hazardous work.” Countries must determine which types of work are considered to be hazardous work by statute or regulation. ILO R. 190 includes factors for consideration in determining which types of work are hazardous. (50)

ILO Recommendation No. 190: Worst Forms of Child Labor

ILO R. 190 supplements the provisions of ILO C. 182 and provides guidance to ratifying countries regarding its implementation. It provides guidelines to assist countries in determining what types of work should be considered hazardous and thus what type of work countries should prohibit for all children as a worst form of child labor, in accordance with Article 4 of ILO C. 182. ILO R. 190 describes populations in need of specific attention regarding the worst forms of child labor, such as girls and children involved in hidden forms of work. It also provides guidance regarding specific steps that countries which have ratified ILO C. 182 should take to combat the worst forms of child labor, such as the collection and exchange of data on both the problem and best practices to address it; passage and enforcement of laws that penalize violations with criminal penalties; awareness raising about the problem; establishment of policies against the worst forms of child labor; and international cooperation through technical, legal, and other forms of assistance. (40; 50)

Illicit Activities

ILO C. 182, Article 3(c), prohibits “the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs.” Illicit activities in this context can include activities that are criminal under national law, however, the term refers to activities considered illicit under international instruments. (40) According to ILO R. 190 and the General Survey on the Fundamental Conventions Concerning Rights at Work, illicit activities can include “activities which involve the unlawful carrying or use of firearms or other weapons,” and “the use of children by criminal organizations for transporting weapons and carrying out arson attacks or destroying public or private property, illicit activities such as housebreaking and petty theft, and children being engaged by adults in car breaking, housebreaking, selling drugs and selling stolen goods, use of children for forced or organized begging, gambling, the unlawful carrying or use of firearms or other weapons, or for the commission of an offence or a crime using violence or the threat of violence.” (50)

Informal Sector

While the concept of the informal sector was introduced into international usage in the 1970s, it was only in 1993 at the 15th ICLS that an internationally recognized definition was established for data collection to delineate the “informal sector” as unincorporated, small, or unregistered enterprises, and the employees of those enterprises. An enterprise is unincorporated if no complete set of accounts are available that would permit a financial separation of the activities of the enterprise from that of its owners, and it produces marketable goods or services. The registration and size criteria are determined according to national circumstances and legislation, which provide a degree of flexibility in identifying the informal sector from country to country. However, all interpretations of this sector share the notion of enterprises whose activities are not covered or are insufficiently covered by law, or whose

activities are not covered by law in practice, meaning that the relevant law is not applied or enforced. Workers in such enterprises often lack the benefits of regular, stable, and protected employment. Because employers in the informal sector are generally either not covered by labor laws or are not held accountable for complying with labor protections, including occupational safety measures, children who work in “hazardous” informal settings likely face increased risk of exploitation, including injury. In addition, because businesses in the informal sector are not usually included in official statistics, children working in informal sector enterprises may not be counted in labor force activity rates. (69; 70)

Light Work

This report uses the definition of light work as established in ILO C. 138, Minimum Age for Admission to Employment. Under Article 7(1) of the Convention, “National laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons 13 to 15 years of age on light work which is (a) not likely to be harmful to their health or development; and (b) not such as to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority, or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received.” Countries that have specified a minimum legal working age of 14 may permit the employment or work of persons ages 12 to 14 in light work as defined in Article 7(1). Under Article 7(2), countries may also permit the employment in light work of children who are at least age 15 but have not yet completed compulsory schooling. Countries permitting light work under Article 7 must specify limitations on their hours of work, as well as activities and conditions in which light work may be undertaken. (49)

Minimum Age for Work

The minimum age for work is the age at which a child can enter into work other than light work or hazardous work. ILO C. 138 states that

the minimum age for admission to employment should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and should not be less than age 15, or age 14 for developing countries that specified a minimum legal age of 14 upon ratification of ILO C. 138. (49)

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

This optional UN protocol, adopted in 2000, addresses and commits ratifying countries to take action against the involvement of children in armed conflict, which is a worst form of child labor per ILO C. 182, Article 3(a). (71)

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

This optional UN protocol, adopted in 2000, addresses and commits ratifying countries to prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children, which is a worst form of child labor as defined in ILO C. 182, Article 3(b). (40; 72)

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

This document is written by the government of a developing country with the participation of civil society to serve as the basis for concessional lending from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as debt relief under the World Bank's Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. A poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) should be used to measure poverty in the country, identify goals for reducing poverty, and create a spending and policy program for reaching those goals. A PRSP also should ensure that a country's macroeconomic, structural, and social policies are consistent with the objectives of poverty reduction and social development. A new PRSP must be written every 3 years to continue

receiving assistance from international financial institutions such as the World Bank. (73)

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol)

The Palermo Protocol supplements the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and covers the trafficking of children, also delineated as a worst form of child labor under ILO C. 182, Article 3(a). (74) See "Child Trafficking" above. (40; 66)

Ratification

Ratification is a serious undertaking whereby a state formally accepts the terms of an international agreement, thus becoming legally bound to apply it. Generally, an ILO convention comes into force in a ratifying country 12 months after the government has deposited the requisite instrument of ratification. This grace period provides ILO members time to enact or modify legislation to comply with the convention before it comes into force. (48)

Slavery

Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. (45)

Unpaid Household Services

For this report, the term "unpaid household services by children" refers to the domestic and personal services a child performs within the child's own household, under the following conditions: (1) for long hours; (2) in an unhealthy environment, including equipment or heavy loads; or (3) in dangerous locations. (64)

Appendix 8



© **Adwuma Pa, Ghana**

November 2018 - November 2023

Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Municipality, Ghana. 2023.

The Adwamu Pa project, supported by DOL, worked in cocoa-producing communities in Ghana from 2018 to 2023. The project provided over 2,000 women in cocoa-growing communities with micro-enterprise training and access to business financial services, including starting or joining a Village Savings and Loan (VSLA).

These women can now generate and diversify their income, raising their family's living standard, often out of extreme poverty, and reducing their dependency on subsistence farming. This lessens reliance on child labor for needed income and allows children to return to school.

Learn more on our website at dol.gov/AdwumaPaGhana



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Workers carry a net full of fish during harvesting at a fish farm in Htantabin Township, outside Yangon. One in five children in Myanmar aged 10–17 goes to work instead of to school, according to figures from a census report on employment published in 2016. At Yangon's San Pya fish market, the country's largest, girls and boys as young as age 9 clean and process fish and unload boats and trucks during 12-hour overnight shifts. Htantabin Township, Myanmar. February 18, 2016.

Research Framework and Organization of Country Profiles

Research Methods

This section describes the research methods used for data collection, as well as the sources, analysis of information, and the limitations of these methods in this report.

Data Collection and Sources

Information was gathered for this report through desk research, U.S. embassy reporting, and limited fieldwork. Information also was received from some foreign governments. Desk research consisted of an extensive review of mostly online materials, which included both primary and secondary sources. The sources included academic and independent researchers, media outlets, NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and U.S. government agencies. Information also was collected from U.S. government-funded technical assistance and field research projects.

Examples of the sources used in this report are the most recent available editions of country laws relevant to child labor; national-level child labor surveys; NGO reports on the nature of child labor in various countries; and UN reports, including direct requests and observations by the ILO Committee of Experts. (61)

The U.S. Department of State and U.S. embassies and consulates abroad provided important information by gathering data from contacts, conducting site visits, and reviewing local media sources. A request for information from the public was published in the *Federal Register*, and a copy of the request was mailed

to the Washington, D.C.-based foreign embassies of the countries included in this report. (75) Data also were gathered through key informant interviews.

Analysis of Information

The existence of child labor, particularly in its worst forms, often involves violations of laws and regulations, including serious criminal violations. Information on child labor may be intentionally suppressed. Victims of the worst forms of child labor often are unable to claim their rights or even communicate the abuse they are suffering because they are traumatized, unaware of their rights under the law, or politically underrepresented or marginalized. These factors make information on the worst forms of child labor difficult to obtain. Therefore, to compile a credible and comprehensive report, ILAB uses the following criteria to assess information:

Nature of the information

Whether the information about child labor and government efforts to combat it gathered from research, public submissions, or other sources was relevant and probative, and covered the “worst forms of child labor” and “government efforts” as used in this report. Specific evidence of government efforts was preferred when it was available.

Date of the information

Whether the source information about child labor was no more than 5 years old. More current information was given priority, and to the extent possible, ILAB uses sources published during the reporting period. Information from sources older than 5 years was generally not considered.

In the case of child labor statistics, however, certain factors contribute to less frequent generation of new data. Because government and other efforts to address exploitative child labor take time to have an impact on national-level rates of child labor, children's involvement in such activities does not change dramatically from year to year. Child labor surveys are carried out infrequently, in part, because the child labor picture does not change frequently, although the number of surveys has increased recently. To present an overall picture of children's work in as many countries as possible, ILAB uses statistics that are, in some cases, more than 10 years old as of the writing of this report. For more information on the statistics used in this report, see "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" in **Appendix 7**.

In addition, in cases in which previous editions of this report have asserted that the worst forms of child labor exist in the production of goods, and in the absence of evidence that the problem has been effectively eliminated, sources more than 5 years old may be used. This practice makes the report's information on such forms of child labor consistent with USDOL's *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, as mandated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (TVPRA). Statements that the worst forms of child labor exist in the production of goods will be removed when there is evidence that the problem has been effectively eliminated.

Source of the information

Whether the information, either from primary or secondary sources, was from a source in which methodology, prior publications, degree of familiarity and experience with international labor standards, or reputation for accuracy and objectivity warranted a determination that it was relevant and probative.

Extent of the corroboration

Whether the information about the use of child labor was corroborated by other sources.

Limitations

While data on the worst forms of child labor and information about government efforts to provide remediation are improving, data are still insufficient to provide a complete understanding of the problem. A lack of information may create the impression that a country has less serious problems with the worst forms of child labor than it actually has. At the same time, a dearth of information may create the impression that a government is doing less than it should when, in fact, efforts to address child labor exist, but are simply unreported or unpublicized. Although countries with open and available information may sometimes appear to have greater problems relative to other countries, this may not be the case. In fact, countries that collect information on child labor are in a better position to eliminate the problem than countries in which such information is suppressed, because with better information, they can target policies and programs toward identified problem areas to achieve maximum impact.

Due to an inability to travel to each country covered in the report, ILAB relies on U.S. embassies, internet research, and submissions received in response to the *Federal Register* notice to gather primary and secondary sources of information. For countries where internet access and technology are limited, there may be less information available online. Countries

with more closed government processes and less civil society participation also may have less information readily available. When ILAB is unable to find information about report topics, including the content of important laws or enforcement efforts, this is noted in the report.

Most of ILAB’s online research is conducted in English; however, we also gather and read source materials written in Spanish, French, and, to a limited extent, Portuguese, Russian, and Arabic. Materials other than laws written in other languages are generally not reviewed.

Despite ILAB’s best efforts to cover relevant topics as comprehensively as possible, this report cannot address every salient issue that may affect children’s involvement in child labor. For example, there are many factors that affect whether a household sends a child to school, to work, or both. A lack of available information, however, limits the discussion of these issues for some countries. In these cases, we note that the profile’s information is incomplete. Furthermore, ILAB chose to limit its reporting of education to the issue of access, and generally does not cover the quality of education because research on the relationship between the quality of education and child labor is lacking.

Organization and Content of Country Profiles

ILAB organizes country profiles to track the types of efforts outlined in the TDA Conference Committee report. In this report, the Conference Committee indicated that the President should consider certain criteria when determining whether a country has met its obligation under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program to implement its international commitments to eliminate the

worst forms of child labor. (37) Each country profile contains an introductory paragraph that provides an assessment of government actions to advance efforts in eliminating the worst forms of child labor, six sections that describe the problem and different aspects of government efforts to address it, and a set of suggested actions. The following section describes the content in country profiles.

In addition, as freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining are not only Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, but enabling rights that play an important role in combating child labor, the report includes information about these issues in certain country profiles.

Summary Paragraph

Each country profile begins with a single-paragraph overview of 2023 and a statement identifying the assessment level assigned to the country for 2023. Following the statement of assessment, the summary includes meaningful efforts taken by a government to implement its commitment to eliminating child labor. The summary also notes where children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, or if no worst forms of child labor exist, where they are engaged in tasks for which there is evidence that such tasks fall into the categories suggested by ILO R. 190 for hazardous work—referred to as “dangerous tasks” in this report. Depending on the situation in the country, the summary also may discuss child labor that does not rise to the level of hazardous work. Finally, the paragraph highlights areas in which key gaps in government efforts remain.

Section I: Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of Child Labor

The first section of each country profile provides, to the extent that information is available, a comprehensive picture of child labor in the country. This section begins with a review of available data on working children and school attendance, followed by a

presentation of the most common sectors and activities in which children are engaged. The narrative also provides information about the nature and conditions of the work, specific populations that are particularly at high risk of engaging in child labor due to their status, gender, sexuality, location, or other factors; government complicity in the use of forced child labor; and events during the year that destabilized the country. In addition, this section recognizes the lack of education as a root cause of child labor and details circumstances that make accessing education difficult.

Section II: Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

The second section of the country profile is a set of suggested actions. These suggested actions serve as a roadmap of efforts that individual countries can follow to address the worst forms of child labor.

Section III: Legal Framework for Child Labor

The third section of the country profile addresses the second criteria included in the TDA Conference Committee report concerning whether the country has “adequate laws and regulations proscribing the worst forms of child labor.” (76) This section describes a country’s legal framework with regard to child labor and assesses the adequacy of that legal framework by comparing it, in general, to the standards set forth in ILO C. 182 and ILO C. 138, and to other international instruments, including the Palermo Protocol and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. ILAB considered whether the laws criminally prohibited the categorical worst forms of child labor in ILO C. 182, Articles 3(a)–(c), as suggested by ILO R. 190. In line with the ILO Committee of Experts, ILAB considered any law that could be used to prohibit child labor, including its worst forms. ILAB also considered whether the country had ratified key international instruments related to child labor.

It is important to note that ILAB analyzes a country’s legal framework regarding compliance with international standards, regardless of whether a problem exists in a country. This is to ensure that legal frameworks also serve as preventive mechanisms. For example, even in the case of a country that does not have a problem with the use of children in illicit activities, if there are no laws to prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, the report points out a gap when comparing laws on this issue against international standards.

The corresponding table indicates where the legal framework meets international standards and where it does not. For example, the table indicates whether the country’s minimum age for work complies with the international standard.

ILAB assesses whether a country has created a hazardous work list and whether the types of hazardous work prohibited are comprehensive, based on whether there is evidence that children engage in work which, according to ILO R. 190, may be hazardous. Because the standards on the minimum age for work in ILO C. 138 provide a foundation for protections against the worst forms of child labor, ILAB uses the standards embodied in that convention to assess each country’s minimum age for admission to work and the age up to which education is compulsory. ILO C. 138 establishes that countries should set a minimum age of 15 for work, or age 14 for countries with less-developed economies where the country has specified an age of 14 upon ratification of the convention. For countries that permit children to engage in light work, ILAB also indicates whether the country has set a minimum age of 13 for light work, or age 12 for less-developed economies, whether legislation related to light work determines permitted activities, and the number of hours per week and the conditions under which light work may be conducted.

ILAB assesses whether a country’s laws criminally prohibit slavery and practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage and

forced labor, as well as human trafficking. In accordance with the Palermo Protocol's standard for child trafficking, ILAB reviews statutes criminalizing international and domestic trafficking for both commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, including whether the legal protections prohibit the five actions that comprise the human trafficking process—recruiting, harboring, transporting, transferring, and receiving persons.

For the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children, ILAB assesses whether a country's laws criminally prohibit the using, procuring, and offering of children for prostitution; the production of child pornography; and the use of children in pornographic performances. For illicit activities, ILAB assesses whether laws criminally prohibit the using, procuring, and offering of a child in the production and trafficking of drugs.

In all cases in which countries maintain a military force, ILAB assesses whether the country prohibited the compulsory military recruitment of children and whether the minimum age for voluntary military recruitment is at least age 16, with certain safeguards to ensure voluntariness. For all countries, ILAB assesses whether the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups is criminally prohibited, even if non-state armed groups are not present in the country.

ILAB assesses whether the age for compulsory education aligns with the minimum age for work, in accordance with ILO C. 138, which states that the minimum age for work should not be less than the age up to which education is compulsory, and that it should be at least age 15, or age 14 for developing countries. However, the opposite situation—in which the minimum age for work is higher than the upper cut-off age for compulsory education—also should be avoided because when children are not required to be in school or permitted to work, they are susceptible to the worst forms of child labor.

Section IV: Enforcement of Laws on Child Labor

The fourth section of the country profile addresses the second and third criteria included in the TDA Conference Committee report concerning whether the country has “adequate laws and regulations for the implementation and enforcement of such measures,” and has “established formal institutional mechanisms to investigate and address complaints relating to allegations of the worst forms of child labor.” (76) This section describes the role of government agencies in enforcing laws relevant to child labor, including its worst forms, and reports on labor law and criminal law enforcement efforts during the reporting period.

In this section, ILAB analyzes whether and to what degree the country defines enforcement agency roles and investigates and addresses complaints related to allegations of child labor. Because ILO C. 182 only discusses enforcement to a limited extent, other international standards and practices also are considered as general evaluation guidelines, including from ILO C. 81 and ILO C. 129 on Labor Inspection and Labor Inspection in Agriculture, respectively. (54; 77) To the extent possible, ILAB assesses whether the country has taken these actions:

- Established labor inspection systems, including a functioning labor inspectorate.
- Provided sufficient funding and resources to enforce child labor laws and regulations.
- Employed a sufficient number of inspectors to enforce the country's child labor laws and regulations.
- Provided sufficient training for inspectors, including initial training for new employees, training on new laws related to child labor, and refresher courses.
- Developed and implemented an adequate labor inspection strategy that allows for different types of onsite inspections of worksites—such as routine, targeted, complaint-driven, and unannounced—

and conducted inspections with sufficient frequency and in all relevant sectors.

- Provided sufficient authority to the labor inspectorate to penalize child labor violations and follow through with sanctions, where appropriate.
- Published information on specific inspection results and fines or sanctions imposed for violation of child labor laws and regulations, including the worst forms of child labor.
- Established a complaint mechanism for labor violations.
- Set up a reciprocal referral mechanism between labor authorities and social services.

Although ILAB conducts research and requests law enforcement information on the topics for this year’s report, the information is not always available. For example, in many cases, ILAB does not have enough information to determine whether the number of inspectors was sufficient for the country. Only in certain situations, where a country’s government acknowledges that it does not have a sufficient number of labor inspectors or ILAB obtains information indicating that the number of labor inspectors is insufficient relative to the size of the country’s workforce, does ILAB issue findings of insufficiency. (78)

ILO R. 190 states that countries should criminally prohibit the categorical worst forms of child labor as set forth in ILO C. 182, Articles 3(a)–(c). (40; 50) Therefore, the report also assesses whether criminal law enforcement in the country has taken these actions:

- Established criminal investigation systems.
- Provided sufficient funding and resources to enforce the worst forms of child labor laws and regulations.
- Provided sufficient training for investigators, including initial training for new employees, training on new laws related to the worst forms of child labor, and refresher courses.
- Conducted a sufficient number of investigations related to the worst forms of child labor.

- Published information on specific investigation results and violations, prosecutions, and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.
- Imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.
- Established a reciprocal referral mechanism between criminal authorities and social services.

Section V: Coordination of Government Efforts on Child Labor

The fifth section of the country profile also addresses the third criterion included in the TDA Conference Committee report—whether the country has established “formal institutional mechanisms to investigate and address complaints relating to allegations of the worst forms of child labor.” (76) This section provides information on key institutions in the country charged with coordinating overall efforts to combat child labor, including its worst forms. Although the TDA Conference Committee report speaks only to whether such mechanisms are in place with regard to investigation and complaints of the worst forms of child labor, ILO C. 182, Article 5, states that “[e]ach Member shall, after consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations, establish or designate appropriate mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the provisions giving effect to this Convention.” ILAB applies this concept of monitoring to all provisions of the Convention, not just those directly related to the enforcement of child labor laws. However, because the term “monitor” is often associated exclusively with enforcement activities, ILAB uses the term “coordinate” to describe this function.

Section VI: Government Policies on Child Labor

The sixth section of the country profile provides information on the fourth criterion in the TDA Conference Committee report—whether the country has “a comprehensive policy for

the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.” (76) This section describes a country’s key policies and plans to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

ILAB uses the framework provided in ILO R. 190, Article 15(f), which illustrates measures that countries might take to combat the worst forms of child labor, such as “encouraging the development of policies by undertakings to promote the aims of the Convention.” (50) In ILO C. 182 and in comments from the ILO Committee of Experts, the terms “programs” and “plans of action” are often used interchangeably. Indeed, in some cases, it is difficult to distinguish among “a policy,” “a plan,” and “a program.” (40; 61) For the TDA Conference Committee report, a policy on child labor is defined as a framework that lays out general principles that are intended to guide a government’s actions on child labor. Although policies may call for the passage of new laws and the establishment of new programs, the actual adoption of laws and program implementation are reported in the “Legal Framework for the Worst Forms of Child Labor” or the “Social Programs to Address Child Labor” sections of the profiles.

Specifically, ILAB assesses whether governments have achieved the following activities:

- Established specific child labor policies, any related development policies that explicitly incorporate the issue of child labor, or any related development policies that do not explicitly target child labor but that could have an impact on the problem (because so few governments distinguish between worst forms of child labor and child labor, any policy on child labor, whether targeted toward the worst forms of child labor or not, may be reported).
- Ensured that these policies include specific action plans, assign responsibilities, establish goals, and set timetables.
- Implemented established policies and plans.

Section VII: Social Programs to Address Child Labor

The last section of each country profile provides information on the fifth criterion in the TDA Conference Committee report—whether social programs exist in the country “to prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labor and assist in the removal of children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.” (76) This section of the country profile reports on key programs focused on child labor and the worst forms of child labor because countries often do not distinguish between the two when creating child labor programs. This section of the profile also reports on programs that focus on child labor specifically, and programs that address poverty, education, and other related matters that could have a beneficial impact on child labor.

ILAB generally considers the implementation of projects through international organizations to be government efforts because the projects can be carried out only with the consent of the government, and such efforts are sometimes considered part of a country’s national budget.

ILAB applies the standards embodied in Articles 6 and 7 of ILO C. 182 to assess country programs to combat child labor. ILO R. 190 also is considered to determine the types of efforts that governments might make, such as giving special attention to girls, providing training to employers and workers, and raising awareness. ILAB assesses whether governments have taken the following actions:

- Participated in any social programs to combat child labor, including programs aimed at directly preventing and withdrawing children from participation in child labor.
- Implemented social programs with sufficient resources to combat the scope and magnitude of the child labor problem at issue.
- Targeted at-risk populations.
- Implemented social programs successfully and sustainably.

Framework for Country Assessments

Objective for Country Assessments

ILAB is using an assessment tool to clearly indicate and highlight the status of efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by each country that benefits from U.S. trade preferences.

Research Question Guiding Country Assessments

The assessment answers the question “To what extent did the beneficiary country advance efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period?”

Scope of Country Assessment

As discussed, the TDA Conference Committee report outlines the following six criteria that the President is asked to consider in determining whether a country is implementing its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor:

- Whether the country has adequate laws and regulations proscribing the worst forms of child labor
- Whether the country has adequate laws and regulations for the implementation and enforcement of such measures
- Whether the country has established formal institutional mechanisms to investigate and address the worst forms of child labor
- Whether the country has a comprehensive policy for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor
- Whether social programs exist in the country to prevent the engagement of children in the

worst forms of child labor and assist in the removal of children engaged in the worst forms of child labor

- Whether the country is making continual progress toward eliminating the worst forms of child labor

The country assessment tool is intended to inform the sixth criterion—whether the country is “making continual progress toward eliminating the worst forms of child labor.” (76) In preparing the assessments, ILAB evaluates the first five criteria, grouping them into the same five areas addressed in the individual country profiles: laws and regulations, enforcement, coordination, policies, and social programs. The assessment is based on an analysis of the status of each country’s efforts in these five areas considered as a whole and compared to the country’s prior efforts. The assessments do not consider the impact of government actions on the problem, or whether they have a documented effect on eliminating child labor. This type of analysis would require rigorous impact evaluations and assessments based on data from solid research designs, which is beyond the scope of this report. It is important to note that the assessment is not intended to reflect a determination of “whether a country has implemented its commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.” That determination is reserved for the President.

Method for Determining a Country Assessment

Each country profile in this report identifies a set of suggested actions for governments to take to advance efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The implementation—or lack of implementation—of these suggested actions establishes a baseline or point of reference from which to assess a country’s advancement. These actions, in combination with other efforts undertaken by a country,

were considered when assessing the level of a country’s advancement during the current reporting period and in comparison, with the previous reporting period.

After identifying and assessing a country’s efforts, ILAB considers the significance of the efforts undertaken during the reporting period—actions that could have an impact on eliminating the worst forms of child labor—and the extent to which these efforts addressed the first five TDA criteria, outlined above, in a limited or meaningful manner during the reporting period. In addition, ILAB reviews whether the government established or failed to remedy a regressive or significantly detrimental law, policy, or practice that delayed

advancement in eliminating child labor. Finally, ILAB also examines whether countries had a policy or demonstrated a practice of being *complicit in forced child labor* in more than isolated incidents at the national, regional, or local level.

To promote consistency and transparency, and to operationalize these first five TDA criteria, each country’s efforts are analyzed according to a uniform set of guidance questions related to the five general areas of laws and regulations, enforcement, coordination, policies, and social programs. Detailed information is given in “TDA Criteria and Corresponding Guidance Questions” in **Appendix 9**.



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September 2015 - July 2023

Training of former bonded laborers. Kanchanpur, Nepal. 2021.

The Bridge Project provided livelihood support to former bonded laborers (a majority of whom are women) across 16 different trades in three remote districts of Nepal. The livelihood interventions are integral to combatting gender stereotypes and discrimination.

Learn more on our website at dol.gov/TheBridgeProject



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Boy lassoing cows near the Tarabuco Market in Bolivia.
Tarabuco, Bolivia. May 11, 2019.

Appendix 9

TDA Criteria and Corresponding Guidance Questions

Assessment Level

TDA Conference Report Criterion:

- Whether the country is making continual progress toward eliminating the worst forms of child labor

Guidance Questions

- What efforts did the country make to address child labor during the year?
- Has the government instituted minimally acceptable laws and regulations, mechanisms, practices, and programs to address and prevent child labor?
- Did the government of the country establish or fail to remedy a regressive or significantly detrimental law, policy, or practice that delayed advancement in the elimination of child labor?*
- Was the government of the country complicit in the use of forced child labor in more than isolated incidents?*

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of Child Labor

Guidance Questions

- Were government officials complicit in the use of forced child labor in more than isolated incidents?*

- What are the prevalent types of child labor?
- Has the government conducted research on the prevalence and nature of the worst forms of child labor and made the results publicly available?
- Are specific populations vulnerable to child labor due to gender, race, ethnicity, origin, disability, language, or socio-economic status?
- Are there barriers to education access?
- Were there events during the year that destabilized the country, such as armed conflict; health epidemics and natural disasters; or other social, economic, and political crises?

* A “Yes” response likely means that the country will automatically receive an assessment of Minimal Advancement or No Advancement.

Legal Framework for the Worst Forms of Child Labor

TDA Conference Report Criterion:

- Whether the country has adequate laws and regulations proscribing the worst forms of child labor

Guidance Questions

- Did the laws meet international standards?
- Is the minimum age for admission to employment in line with ILO C. 138?
- Is the minimum age for admission to hazardous work in line with ILO C. 138 and C. 182?
- Are criminal prohibitions on slavery, debt bondage, forced child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and use of children in illicit activities in line with ILO C. 182?
- Is the prohibition against recruitment of children under age 18 for state compulsory military service in line with ILO C. 182 and the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict?
- Is the minimum age for recruitment into state voluntary military service in line with

the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict?

- Is the prohibition against recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups in line with ILO C. 182?
- Does the age up to which education is compulsory align with the minimum age for work and meet the standards in ILO C. 138?
- Is the provision of free public basic education in line with ILO C. 182?
- If the law permits light work, is the minimum age in line with ILO C. 138 and are there appropriate safeguards as outlined in ILO C. 138?
- Has the country ratified ILO C. 182 and C. 138, as well as other relevant conventions and protocols?
- If the country's laws are not compliant with international standards embodied in ILO C. 138 and C. 182, has there been any change in the laws that brings the country closer to being fully compliant?
- Are laws related to child labor available to the public?
- Did the country establish or fail to remedy a regressive or significantly detrimental law that delayed its advancement in the elimination of child labor?*

* A "Yes" response likely means that the country will automatically receive an assessment of *Minimal Advancement* or *No Advancement*.

Enforcement of Laws on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

TDA Conference Report Criteria:

- Whether the country has adequate laws and regulations for the implementation and enforcement of such measures
- Whether the country has established formal institutional mechanisms to investigate and address the worst forms of child labor

In this section of the country profiles, ILAB analyzes whether, or to what degree, a country has defined enforcement agency roles, conducted routine and targeted inspections, and unannounced inspections, and investigated and addressed complaints related to allegations of the worst forms of child labor. The analysis is based on the following guidance questions.

Guidance Questions

- Does the country have a labor inspectorate?
- Does the country have labor inspectors? Are its labor inspectors public servants as opposed to contractors?
- What was the amount of funding for the labor inspectorate? Was there an increase or decrease in the funding and resources to enforce child labor laws and regulations, and were these resources adequate given the incidence of child labor in the country?
- Was there an increase or reduction in the number of labor inspectors to enforce child labor laws and regulations, and was the number of labor inspectors adequate given the size of the country's workforce?
- Did the country offer initial training to new labor inspectors and investigators, including specialized training on child labor; training on new laws related to child labor, including its worst forms; and refresher courses?
- Did the labor inspectorate fail to conduct labor inspections during the reporting period?*
- Does the labor inspectorate lack legal authorization to conduct unannounced inspections?*
- Did the inspectorate conduct unannounced inspections?
- Did the government develop and implement a labor inspection strategy that allowed for different types of onsite inspections of worksites, such as routine, targeted, complaint-driven, or unannounced?

- Were inspections conducted with sufficient frequency and in all relevant sectors?
- Did the government provide the labor inspectorate with sufficient authority to sanction child labor violations?
- Did the country make available information on labor law enforcement efforts related to child labor, including the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites and by desk review, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed and collected?
- Does the government have a mechanism for filing and resolving complaints expeditiously regarding child labor?
- Does a reciprocal referral mechanism exist between labor and criminal authorities and social services?
- Did the government investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence cases of violations of criminal child labor statutes, including public officials who participate in or facilitate the worst forms of child labor?
- Did the government impose penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor?
- Did the country make available information on criminal law enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions obtained, and penalties imposed?
- Did the government establish or improve a process for information sharing among enforcement authorities?
- Did the government ensure that all children engaged in the worst forms of child labor were protected from inappropriate incarceration, penalties, or physical harm?
- Did the government hinder or place limitations on workers' rights, including the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining?

- Did the country establish or fail to remedy a regressive or significantly detrimental law enforcement practice that delayed its advancement in the elimination of child labor?*

* A "Yes" response likely means that the country will automatically receive an assessment of Minimal Advancement or No Advancement.

Coordination of Government Efforts on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

TDA Conference Report Criterion

- Whether the country has established formal institutional mechanisms to investigate and address complaints relating to allegations of the worst forms of child labor

In this section of the country profiles, ILAB analyzes whether, or to what degree, the country has an institution charged with coordinating overall efforts to combat child labor, including its worst forms. The analysis is based on the following guidance questions.

Guidance Questions

- Does the government have an agency or committee created to coordinate government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor? Did it create such an agency or committee during the reporting period?
- Does the agency or committee address all sectors of child labor that are prevalent in the country, or does it address only certain sectors?
- Did such an agency or committee meet regularly and take actions, or did it not meet regularly and take few or no actions?

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

TDA Conference Report Criterion

- Whether the country has a comprehensive policy for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor

Guidance Questions

- Did the government establish any new policies or plans that specifically address the worst forms of child labor or any one of the worst forms of child labor?
- Did the government incorporate the worst forms of child labor specifically as an issue to be addressed in poverty reduction, development, educational, or other social policies, such as poverty reduction strategy papers?
- If the country established any of the above policies or plans, do they designate responsibilities, establish goals, and set timelines?
- Did the government effectively implement existing policies and plans?
- Did the country establish or fail to remedy a regressive or significantly detrimental policy that delayed its advancement in the elimination of child labor?*

* A “Yes” response likely means that the country will automatically receive an assessment of *Minimal Advancement* or *No Advancement*.

Social Programs to Address Child Labor

TDA Conference Report Criterion

- Whether social programs exist in the country to prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labor and assist in the removal of children engaged in the worst forms of child labor

Guidance Questions

- Did the government fund or participate in any new or ongoing programs that aim to eliminate or prevent the worst forms of child labor?
- Did the government fund or participate in any social protection programs that could

reasonably be expected to have an impact on child labor? Were any of the country’s programs shown, through research, to have had an impact on child labor?

- Did the government make efforts to reduce children’s vulnerability to the worst forms of child labor by addressing factors such as
 - Country- and region-specific practices that make children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, and
 - Barriers to education, such as a lack of teachers; lack of schools or inadequate facilities; lack of infrastructure to access schools; lack of transportation; violence, including physical and sexual abuse; birth registration requirements; and the charging of school fees?
- Are the country’s programs sufficient to combat particular forms of child labor, considering the scope and magnitude of those problems?
- Do the programs provide services directly to children?
- Do the programs adequately target at-risk populations?
- Were the programs fully funded?
- Are the programs meeting their goals?
- Are the program efforts sustainable?
- Did existing government programs improve or worsen in quality or effectiveness compared with the previous year?
- Did the country establish or fail to remedy a regressive or significantly detrimental social program or other practice that delayed its advancement in the elimination of child labor?*

* A “Yes” response likely means that the country will automatically receive an assessment of *Minimal Advancement* or *No Advancement*.

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Damilola Samuel, 8, sells water sachets in a market. Her father is dead, and her mother cannot afford her school fees. Instead of attending school, Damilola sells water to help with their living costs. Bolorunduro, Ondo State, Nigeria. 2015.

Country Profiles



© Gary S. Chapman/Shutterstock
Girl carries a heavy load of bricks at a brick factory.
Nepal. March 24, 2013.



AFGHANISTAN

NO ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Afghanistan made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The humanitarian crisis following the Taliban takeover in August 2021 has resulted in an increase in the prevalence of child labor, including its worst forms, and exacerbated existing child labor risks for girls.

During the reporting period, the Taliban actively recruited and used children as part of their security forces.

Furthermore, the Taliban considered some child trafficking victims, especially those engaged in *bacha bazi* or in armed conflict, as criminals, housing them in juvenile detention centers, and subjecting them to physical abuse and other forms of ill treatment rather than referring them to victim support services. Additionally, since September 2021, the Taliban have prohibited Afghan girls from attending public secondary school. The Taliban also lack a mechanism to impose penalties for child labor violations and sufficient programs to address situations of child labor or prevent its occurrence. Lastly, Afghanistan’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because they do not apply to workers in the informal sector, or on the prohibition of forced labor because Afghan law does not sufficiently criminalize practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	22% (Unavailable)
Boys		24.5%
Girls		19.3%
Urban		10.3%
Rural		25.6%

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	39.2% (Unavailable)
Boys		49.7%
Girls		29%
Urban		22.1%
Rural		45.5%
Attending School	5 to 14	37%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	11.5%

Children in Afghanistan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced recruitment for use in armed conflict and recruitment by the Taliban for use in armed conflict.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including harvesting poppies, and herding.



Industry

Mining† of coal and salt, brickmaking, and carpet weaving.† Working in metal workshops and as tinsmiths and welders.† Construction, including painting.



Services

Collecting garbage† and street work, including peddling, vending, shoe shining, carrying goods, and begging. Domestic work. Transporting goods, including across international borders. Repairing automobiles and washing cars. Selling goods in stores, working as waiters in restaurants, and tailoring in garment workshops.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict, including for terrorist activities and suicide bombings, and recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including in pickpocketing, weapons trafficking, and in the production and trafficking of drugs. Forced labor in the production of bricks, domestic work, street begging, and for use as assistant truck drivers.

† 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.

Boys in Afghanistan are vulnerable to being recruited and used as child soldiers. The Taliban typically recruits boys between the ages of 14 and 17, and 97 percent of these recruits become part of the Taliban’s security forces. The Taliban does not have a formalized age verification mechanism to ensure children are not being recruited into the armed forces. Some boys are coerced or recruited under false promises or fraudulent circumstances. According to the UN, the Taliban recruited 342 children in 2023 into combat and support roles. However, 333 of the children recruited in 2023 were subsequently released.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Afghanistan’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the minimum age for work applies to all children, including those engaged in informal employment.

Increase the compulsory education age from 15 years old to 18 years old to align with the minimum age for work, and ensure this applies to all children, including girls.

Ensure that provisions of the penal code related to child trafficking and military recruitment and use of children are in effect and enforced.

Criminalize the use of boys and girls for prostitution.

Criminally prohibit debt bondage.

Enforcement

Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including information about the labor inspectorate’s funding, number of labor inspectors, number and type of child labor inspections, and number of violations found, and whether penalties were imposed and collected.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts undertaken, including training for criminal investigators, number of investigations, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, and imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.

Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties and establish implementing regulations for labor inspections.

Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive training on child labor.

Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints and ensure labor and criminal law authorities refer survivors to social services.

Ensure that victims of the worst forms of child labor are correctly identified as victims and referred to appropriate social services, not arrested, detained, or subjected to mistreatment or physical abuse.

Investigate, prosecute, and when appropriate, convict and sentence Taliban personnel complicit in facilitating the worst forms of child labor, such as *bachi bazi* and child soldier recruitment.

Ensure the investigative and prosecutorial duties of the now-closed Attorney General’s Office are carried out.

Establish Child Protection Action Networks in every province with trained staff that can accommodate persons that cannot read or write.

Employ at least 172 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 6.8 million workers.

Coordination

Ensure the National Commission on Protection of Child Rights is active and able to carry out its intended mandates, including by holding meetings at the mandated intervals.

Government Policies

Implement key policies related to child labor such as the National Labor Policy, the National Child Labor Strategy and Action Plan, and the National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Action Plan, and publish results from activities implemented.

Social Programs

Provide children with *e-tazkeera* national identity cards so they can register for school.

Implement key social programs to address child labor such as the Asia Regional Child Labor Program, deployment of Child Protection Units of the Afghan National Police, and the administration of Juvenile Rehabilitation Centers, and make information about implementation measures publicly available.

Ensure access to education for girls at all levels, provide children with *e-tazkeera* national identity cards so they can register for school, and address barriers to education such as corporal punishment, a lack of qualified teachers, teachers that speak the language of students, and the costs of attending school such as supplies, textbooks, and transportation.

Develop inter-governmental reporting channels for Child Protection Units to identify children, prevent them from joining the security forces, and refer them to shelter, social, and family reintegration services.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Boys in Afghanistan continue to be subjected to commercial sexual exploitation through the practice of *bacha bazi*, which typically entails keeping a boy for the purpose of sexual gratification. Some boys are sold into the practice by their families. Children subjected to *bacha bazi* often become further victimized by the threat of violence when returning to their families, necessitating the placement of these child victims in rehabilitation centers; however, research was unable to determine whether sufficient rehabilitation centers existed to meet this need. Additionally, girls from impoverished families are sold into marriage with adult men in order for the girls' families to obtain dowries.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Afghanistan face significant barriers to education due to poverty and Taliban restrictions on women and girls' roles in society. Since September 2021, Afghan girls have been prohibited from attending public secondary school and since December 2022, from attending university. Access to education is further hampered by lack of identity documents, which disproportionately affects girls. Since the Taliban banned women from teaching boys, schools face significant difficulties hiring teachers, resorting to hiring men with only high school diplomas or with no formal educational credentials. Some teachers only speak Pashto, leaving Dari-speaking children unable to understand lessons. Some positions remain unfilled, leaving children with no instructor at all and corporal punishment also discourages children from attending school. Additionally, the cost of school supplies, textbooks, and transportation prevent some Afghan children from attending school.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Afghanistan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Afghanistan's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because they do not apply to workers in the informal sector, and the prohibition of forced labor because Afghan law does not sufficiently criminalize practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Article 13 of the Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 13 and 120 of the Labor Law; Article 613 of the Penal Code; Article 63 of the Law on Protection of Child Rights
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		List of Prohibited Jobs for Child Laborers; Article 613 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 4 of the Labor Law; Articles 510–512 of the Penal Code; Article 37 of the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 510–512 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 18 of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women; Articles 510–512, 650, and 652–667 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		List of Prohibited Jobs for Child Laborers; Articles 1, 7, and 23 of the Counter Narcotics Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Articles 605–608 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 510–512 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 17 of the Education Law; Article 609 of the Penal Code
Free Public Education		Article 17 of the Education Law

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The Taliban have not made a clear pronouncement on whether they are following modified versions of either Afghanistan’s 1964 or 2004 constitution, or whether they will produce a new constitution, making it unclear the degree to which they view relevant protections in the 1964 and 2004 constitutions as remaining in effect. Simultaneously, the Taliban have conveyed that the laws that predate the Taliban takeover of August 2021 remain in effect unless they violate the Taliban interpretation of Sharia, as determined by Taliban religious leaders or Taliban-led courts. Reporting indicates that the Taliban have verbally announced the abolition of chapters 10 and 11 of the penal code, which deal with child trafficking crimes and the recruitment and use of children in armed groups, and have further instructed lawyers not to cite the penal code in court.

The Afghan Labor Law’s minimum age provision prohibits those who have not completed age 18 from being “recruited as a worker.” However, the law defines “worker” as a person who is “recruited based on a definite contract,” meaning that the minimum age provision does not apply to those in informal employment. Afghan law does not sufficiently criminalize practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage. The Penal Code criminalizes the use of male or transgender children in *bacha bazi*, criminalizes forcing children to dance, and criminalizes the forced use of girls in prostitution. However, the legal framework does not criminalize the use of boys or non-forced use of girls in prostitution.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor law enforcement agencies in Afghanistan took actions to address child labor. However, the extent to which criminal law enforcement agencies are carrying out the enforcement activities mandated by the pre-August 15, 2021, government—or whether these agencies continue to function—is unknown.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA): Responds to complaints of child labor, child trafficking, and child sexual exploitation. Formerly referred cases to the Attorney General’s Office (AGO), operated a shelter for human trafficking victims in Kabul, and had a special prosecutor for crimes against children; however, the Taliban closed the AGO in 2023 and replaced it with the so-called “General Directorate for Monitoring and Follow-up of Decrees and Directives.” Research indicates this new directorate lacks the investigative role of the AGO. Research was unable to determine whether the Kabul shelter remained in operation.

Ministry of Interior: Enforces laws related to child trafficking, the use of children in illicit activities, and child sexual exploitation. Research was unable to determine if any enforcement activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Unknown
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

The Taliban reported that the Labor Audit Department within MoLSA inspected **259** manufacturing facilities in 2023, finding **42** children under the age of 18 who were working more than 10 hours per day. It is **unknown** whether the children were removed from these workplaces or provided with appropriate services. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

**COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS****Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Afghanistan established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including lack of utilization of previously established coordinating bodies.

National Commission on Protection of Child Rights: Monitors and protects children’s rights established under the Law on Protection of Child Rights and strengthens national coordination on child protection. Prior to the Taliban takeover in August 2021, participants included representatives from the AGO, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Education, and other bodies. Also included was an inter-ministerial technical committee, chaired by the MoLSA Minister, to ensure that the Child Act is operational at the provincial and district levels. The Taliban closed the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in May 2022. Research was unable to determine whether this committee continued to function or carried out activities during the reporting period.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Afghanistan established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all the worst forms of child labor, including lack of implementation of previously established policies and strategies.

Labor Policies: The National Labor Policy includes objectives to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, such as those involving hazardous activities, the enactment of laws prohibiting child labor, and the effective enforcement of child labor laws. The National Child Labor Strategy and Action Plan aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2025 and all child labor by 2030. It also recommends improving social protections and oversight. Research was unable to determine whether this policy is still in force, or whether activities were undertaken to implement it during the reporting period.

National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Action Plan: Organizes Afghanistan’s response to human trafficking, including *bacha bazi*, with a three-pronged approach: mandates the National Child Protection Committee to find and respond to *bacha bazi* cases among Afghan civil servants; encourages the implementation of laws, the prevention of child recruitment into armed conflict, and the reporting of corruption by the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Interior, and the National Directorate of Security; and oversees the production of annual or semiannual interagency progress reports on addressing trafficking in persons. Research was unable to determine whether this policy was still in force, or whether activities were undertaken to implement it during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>Protection Strategies Related to Child Labor: The National Strategy for Children at Risk creates a framework to provide social services to at-risk children and their families, and guides donors in contributing toward a comprehensive child protection system. Focuses specifically on working children, victims of child trafficking, child soldiers, and other children affected by conflict. The Policy for the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict protects children from recruitment and sexual exploitation in the armed forces and provides services to children rescued from engagement in armed conflict. Assigns the Ministry of Defense and the Afghan National Police with monitoring that children’s rights are safeguarded, and coordinates with Child Protection Action Network chapters and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. Research was unable to determine whether these policies were still in force, or whether activities were undertaken to implement them during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Afghanistan may have funded and participated in programs that include the goal of preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because of a lack of implementation of previously established programs.</p> <p><i>† Program funded by the Government of Afghanistan prior to the Taliban takeover.</i></p>	<p>Child Protection Units (CPUs) of the Afghan National Police (ANP):† Units located within ANP recruitment centers to ensure that children are not recruited to join armed conflict. Operated in all provinces. Prior to the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan did not have sufficient CPU reporting channels to identify children, prevent them from joining the security forces, or provide shelter, services, and family reintegration. Research was unable to determine whether CPUs have continued to function after the Taliban takeover.</p> <p>Asia Regional Child Labor Program (2019–2023): Funded by ILO and implemented with UNICEF and the Institute for Development Studies, worked with the Afghan government to ensure that policies on child labor align with ILO conventions while strengthening local and national Plans of Action. Contained a special focus on internally displaced persons and returnee migrants, along with other groups vulnerable to child labor and human trafficking. The ILO stated that activities under this program within Afghanistan were suspended in 2022.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ALBANIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Albania made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government published its first Victims' Protection Strategy 2024–2030 to strengthen protection mechanisms and social services for survivors of worst forms of child labor, thereby fulfilling one of its obligations as a European Union candidate country. The State Agency for the Protections and Rights of Children also continued to provide child protection workers, government social services providers, and other stakeholders with regular trainings and case management plans for the most vulnerable populations of children. Additionally, the Ministry of Economy, Culture, and Innovation collaborated with the United Nations Development Program and the United Nations Children's Fund to adapt the National Youth Guarantee Scheme in three major municipalities to provide vocational training and additional education for economically vulnerable children and youth. The National Youth Agency also provided support for new youth centers, which provide educational resources and digital skills training for at-risk youth. However, Albania's legal framework does not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children for illicit activities. In addition, children from Roma and Balkan Egyptian minority communities, children with disabilities, and refugees and displaced migrant children face significant barriers to education access in the country.

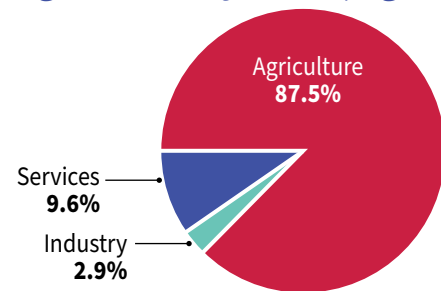


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	4.6% (23,665)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	92.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	5.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Albania are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including use in illicit activities and forced begging, and in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in scavenging, including scavenging for chromium near mines.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming.



Industry

Scavenging near mining sites,[†] construction, and working in the textile, garment, and footwear sectors.



Services

Begging, street work, including vending and washing vehicles, collecting recyclable materials on the street and in landfills, working in hotels and restaurants, and working in call centers.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Use in illicit activities, including burglary and drug trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Albania's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminally prohibit the use, procurement, and offering of children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in prostitution.

Enforcement

Permit labor inspectors to inspect the informal sector in which child labor is known to occur, including private homes, private farms, or unregistered businesses.

Coordination

Increase coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services and the Albanian State Police.

Social Programs

Collect and publish comprehensive data on the extent and nature of child labor in Albania. In particular, gather data on the prevalence and conditions of child labor in sectors of heightened concern, such as the agriculture and construction sectors, to support the development of social programs.

Provide adequate transportation resources for all children who face transportation-related barriers to school attendance, in particular Roma and Balkan Egyptian children and those who live in communities far from schools.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children from Roma and Balkan Egyptian minority communities, children with disabilities, and children from Syria, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and elsewhere living in Albania as refugees or displaced migrants, by removing all school-related fees and ensuring that children without documentation do not face obstacles to enrolling in school.

Provide translation services for all children, especially those from migrant or refugee families, who are facing language-related barriers to education.

Increase the number of shelters for victims of the worst forms of child labor, in particular for unhoused children living and working in forced begging rings on the streets.

Institute programs to assist children who are victims of human trafficking.

Increase funding and human resource for social programs for child labor and appropriately allocate centralized social funds to municipalities to adequately carry out programs.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Some Roma and Balkan Egyptian children in Albania collect recyclables or are forced to engage in street begging. In addition, economically vulnerable children informally scavenge chromium ore around hazardous mines where debris from mine tunnels is found, and sometimes carry these heavy rocks for miles. Some migrant children in Albania are also at risk for economic exploitation and trafficking.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Albania face a number of barriers to accessing education, which increases their vulnerability to child labor. Although Albania allows children without a birth certificate to enroll in public schools, some children from Roma and Balkan Egyptian families and refugees without proper birth documentation may still face obstacles in obtaining access to social services and education. Roma and Balkan Egyptian children also experience discrimination in schools when placed in separate classrooms, and face other hurdles to accessing education, such as a lack of access to reliable transportation. In addition, some migrant and refugee children from Syria, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh face difficulties accessing education due to language barriers. Children with disabilities also continue to experience discrimination and other hurdles to accessing inclusive education.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Albania has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Albania’s laws do not meet international standards on children’s involvement in illicit activities.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 98 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 98–101 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 99–101 of the Code of Labor; Decree of the Council of Ministers on Defining Hazardous and Hard Works; Article 34 of the Law on Occupational Safety and Health at Work; Regulation on Protection of Children at Work
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 8 and 202 of the Code of Labor; Articles 124b and 128b of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 128/b of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 114, 117, and 128/b of the Criminal Code; Article 26 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 129 of the Criminal Code; Articles 24 and 25 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 9 of the Law on Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 9 of the Law on Military Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 28 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 22 of the Law on Pre-University Education System
Free Public Education		Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania; Article 5 of the Law on Pre-University Education System

*Country has no conscription

Albania does not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. Article 129 of the Criminal Code only prohibits inducing or encouraging children under age 14 to participate in criminality. Additionally, Article 25 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child provides for protection of children against the use of alcohol and drugs, as well as the illicit production and trafficking of these substances, but does not criminalize inducing a child to participate in these acts. The law also does not criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution.

 **ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR**

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Albania took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of inspections in the informal sector hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services: Enforces laws related to child labor and receives and responds to child labor complaints through the State Social Services Agency. The 241 Child Protection Units (CPUs) located throughout the country at the municipal level identify at-risk children, conduct initial evaluations of each case, and refer children to appropriate social services.

Ministry of Interior: Enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor through protection officers. Coordinates operations of the Border Police and each of the Illicit Human Trafficking sections in the country's 12 Regional Police Directorates through the General Directorate of State Police. Establishes the government's policy on addressing human trafficking through the State Committee Against Trafficking in Persons, chaired by the Interior Minister.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **118** labor inspectors conducted **8,048** worksite inspections, finding **9** child labor violations. The government also conducted **103** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **32** prosecutions, and convicted **25** perpetrators.

 **COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Albania established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, limited coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services and the Albanian State Police hindered efforts.

State Agency for the Rights and Protection of Children: Oversees implementation of the government's child rights protection policies, including monitoring the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child. Manages cases of at-risk children and refers them to appropriate social services. During the reporting period, the Agency collaborated with UNICEF to develop a set of criteria aimed at improving the government's ability to monitor the performance of child protection workers across Albania and delivered multiple trainings to child welfare stakeholders throughout 2023.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Albania established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons (2021–2023): Called for the identification and referral of child victims and those at risk of human trafficking to social protection services in accordance with standard operating procedures. Increased the utilization of CPUs, police, and border control personnel to identify victims, including children involved in street work. In 2023, the government modified the original memorandum which outlines agency responsibility under this plan to include roles for the General Directorate of Taxation along with the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, the State Police, and the Labor Inspectorate.

National Agenda for the Rights of the Child (2021–2026): Aims to protect and promote children’s rights by supporting physical and psychosocial development, and the social inclusion of children. Other goals include eliminating all forms of violence against children and creating child-friendly systems and services in education, justice, health, and social protection. During the reporting period, the National Youth Agency worked with local government units to provide support for new youth centers throughout the country.

National Youth Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2029): Aims to improve the social, physical, and psychological wellbeing of youth. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Economy, Culture, and Innovation worked with the UN Development Program and UNICEF to begin implementation of the National Youth Guarantee Scheme with the goal of providing youth in the municipalities of Tirana, Vlore, and Shkoder with more opportunities to continue their formal education and/or participate in job training and apprenticeship programs.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

In 2023, Albania funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including in agriculture and construction.

† Program is funded by the Government of Albania.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

Program of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (2022–2026): UN program that aims to increase access to education for vulnerable children and improve protections for child survivors of human trafficking. In 2023, the government continued to conduct activities in conjunction with the UN Country Team, including providing assistance and life skills training for children with disabilities.

Cash Transfer Program (Ndihma Ekonomike):† Government-funded cash transfer program that provides an allowance for families receiving economic aid through the Law on Social Assistance and Services. During the reporting period, the government continued to provide regular cash payments to qualifying families.

World Vision Albania Centers (Children’s City Program):† The municipalities of Durrës, Maliq, and Korçë collaborated with World Vision Albania to construct centers for children in high-risk situations, including violence, abuse, and various forms of exploitation. During the reporting period, World Vision Albania continued to assist children who were previously in abusive situations.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ALGERIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Algeria made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The National Authority for the Protection and Promotion of Children launched a mobile phone application to enhance reporting on children in abusive situations, including child labor. The government added eight new schools in rural areas to improve education access. Additionally, in May 2023, a new law was enacted that provides increased penalties for using children to obtain narcotics and psychotropics and criminalizes the exploitation of children in the promotion of narcotics or psychotropics. Despite this endeavor, the law still does not criminalize the production and trafficking of drugs. Gaps remain as the involvement of children in either the production or trafficking of drugs is not criminalized. In addition, the government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of work that are hazardous for children. Moreover, while the labor inspectorate is authorized to conduct inspections in all workplaces, inspectors do not investigate some workplaces, such as informal construction sites, in the absence of a complaint, resulting in instances of child labor going undetected.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	3.6% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	94.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	3.9%

Children in Algeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging. Children also engage in construction and street vending.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, fishing, and forestry.



Industry

Construction.



Services

Street work, including vending and begging. Working in small businesses, including mechanics’ shops and restaurants.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Algeria’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

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.

Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18, in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)**Enforcement**

Publish information on the labor inspectorate's enforcement of labor laws, including the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed and collected.

Publish information on the criminal enforcement of child labor laws, including the number of prosecutions, convictions, and penalties collected for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor.

Conduct labor inspections in all types of workplaces, including informal workplaces, such as construction sites.

Ensure that the number of labor inspections conducted is commensurate to the size of the labor inspectorate to maintain adequate quality and scope of inspections.

Government Policies

Adopt a national policy that includes all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as forced begging and street work.

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.

Expand existing social programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including street work and forced begging, particularly among working migrant children.

Take measures to remove barriers to education for migrant children, including language barriers and education documentation, while expanding social programs to address school dropout rates in the southern region of the country.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**













Sub-Saharan migrant children, including unaccompanied children, are sometimes exploited through commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging. Refugees and migrants who lack legal documentation, including child migrants from sub-Saharan African countries and those fleeing unrest in neighboring countries, are vulnerable to labor exploitation because Black migrants face widespread social discrimination and barriers to formal employment. As a result, migrants and refugees generally work under informal arrangements, which often allow children to work in exploitive conditions.

**BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**

The Algerian public education system is free and compulsory for all children ages 6 to 16, regardless of ethnicity and nationality. Despite universal access to education, schools in the southern regions of Algeria face attendance problems, with some children as young as age 13 or 14 dropping out of school. Non-Algerian children face other barriers to education, such as required documentation of grade level or testing to determine their level. In addition, migrants who do not speak Arabic, the language of instruction, face challenges in the Algerian education system, and some migrant families may also not be familiar with Algerian law granting free education to all children. Despite assistance from international organizations to address documentation barriers, these informal restrictions to education access result in absence from school and contribute to increased vulnerability to child labor.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Algeria has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor. However, gaps exist in Algeria's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of prohibitions related to the use of children in illicit activities.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		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
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		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
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 303 <i>bis</i> 4 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 303 <i>bis</i> 4 and 319 <i>bis</i> of the Penal Code; Article 1 and 2(1) of Law No. 23-04 on Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 2, 319, 333 <i>bis</i> 1, 343, and 344 of the Penal Code; Article 2(1) of Law No. 23-04 on Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 10 and 16 <i>bis</i> of Law No. 23-05 on Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances.
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 17 Years		Article 14 of Presidential Decree No. 08-134 on the National People's Army
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 3 of Law No. 14-06 on National Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 12 of Law No. 08-04 on National Education
Free Public Education		Article 13 of Law No. 08-04 on National Education

In 2023, Algeria passed a law penalizing the use of children to acquire or attempt to acquire narcotics or psychotropics, with a fine of approximately \$7,420 to \$14,840 (1,000,000 to 2,000,000 *dinar*). The law also criminalizes the exploitation of minors in the promotion “by any means whatsoever” of narcotics or psychotropics. However, gaps remain as the involvement of children in either the production or trafficking of drugs is not criminalized. Additionally, the Labor Code prohibits anyone under age 19 from working at night and anyone under age 18 from performing work that is harmful to their health, safety, or morals. However, 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 2023.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Algeria took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of authority for labor law enforcement to inspect informal workplaces without a complaint and limited information provided by the government regarding its enforcement efforts make the scope and effectiveness of these efforts difficult to determine.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security: Enforces labor laws, including laws related to child labor, through its labor inspectorate. Issues citations and refers violations to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. Also refers children found in child labor to the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women to ensure follow-up with social services. Chairs the Interministerial

Committee Against Child Labor involving 12 other government ministries and prioritized child labor inspections according to the ministry’s 2023 action plan. However, labor inspectors are not inspecting parts of the informal economy, including informal construction sites, unless a complaint is received. In 2023, labor inspections were conducted in all 58 *wilayas* (states).

Ministry of Justice: Prosecutes child exploitation cases through its Office of Criminal Affairs and Amnesty Procedures, the lead enforcement agency for human trafficking issues. During legal proceedings, appoints a special judge familiar with the needs of minors if a child does not have a parent. Also directs the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women to conduct investigations into issues related to children and families. The ministry can also assign investigations to the Directorate General for National Security or the National Gendarmerie, who are responsible for criminal investigations.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **725** labor inspectors conducted **241,625** worksite inspections, finding **53** child labor violations. The government also conducted **26** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, although the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted is **unknown**.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Algeria established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Commission for the Prevention of and Fight Against Child Labor: Under the direction of the 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. As of 2023, their online platform contained 175 organizations working on child protection issues. ONPPE representatives work with 16 ministry departments who meet at least monthly and run a national hotline and website to field questions and complaints about the mistreatment of children. In 2023, created a new mobile application to complement the work of the hotline.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Algeria established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all forms of child labor that exist within the country, such as street vending and forced begging.</p>	<p>National Action Plan for Children: Plan entered into effect in 2021. ONPPE-led effort to protect children from physical and moral dangers, including child labor. This includes awareness-raising programs and trainings for ONPPE staff, judges, lawyers, and journalists. Planning began in November 2023 for the 2024–2029 plan, which includes attempting to establish by law a monitoring unit to protect children from potentially harmful information technologies.</p> <p>National Action Plan for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (2022–2024): Aims to prevent and reduce human trafficking by raising awareness, strengthening legislation, prosecuting human trafficking crimes, improving the provision of protective services to survivors, and increasing collaboration with national and international civil society organizations. This includes a series of awareness activities. This plan continues activities of the 2019–2021 plan that have not been completed.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Algeria funded and participated in programs that included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, existing social programs do not adequately address all forms of child labor that exist within the country, such as street vending and forced begging.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Algeria.</i></p>	<p>Educational Assistance Programs: Several ministerial departments and national institutions implemented a social action plan to provide free services, such as textbooks, transportation, school meals, and health coverage. The government also provides a 3,000 dinar schooling bonus (\$22 USD) per child. In 2023, the Algerian government also increased the number of boarding schools in rural areas by adding eight new schools.</p> <p>Children Assistance 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. During the reporting period, 103 facilities operated across the country.</p>
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For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Algeria imposes significant barriers to freedom of association, including stringent registration requirements, restrictions on union activities, and limits on the ability to join international unions. These restrictions can hinder workers' ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ANGOLA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Angola made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Human Rights Provincial Committees of 7 of the country's 18 provinces conducted several awareness-raising events on human trafficking, including lectures, conferences, radio programs, fairs, and forums for law enforcement officials, students, teachers, journalists, and health services staff. Moreover, awareness-raising campaigns aimed at parents, farmers, and construction companies in Bengo province significantly decreased the number of child labor cases in the region. The government also increased the labor inspectorate budget by almost \$1.4 million. However, despite these efforts, Angola's laws on child trafficking for forced labor exploitation do not meet international standards since the use of threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse need to be established for the crime of child trafficking. Additionally, laws prohibiting the commercial sexual exploitation of children do not sufficiently meet international standards since they do not criminalize the use, procuring and offering of a child for pornographic performances. The number of labor inspectors is also likely insufficient for the size of Angola's workforce, and social programs do not target children subjected to certain worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	15.1% (1,246,354)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	69.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	13.6%

Children in Angola are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in construction.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including plowing, harvesting, watering crops, and picking fruits and vegetables. Herding and grazing animals. Fishing, including artisanal fishing.†



Industry

Artisanal diamond mining. Construction,† including breaking† and loading stones onto trucks, carpentry,† building gravel roads, and transporting bricks. Working in animal slaughterhouses.†



Services

Street work, including vending,† working in shops and markets, washing cars and assisting with the parking of cars, shining shoes, begging, recycling metals and plastics, scavenging,† collecting garbage and scrap iron, and transporting heavy loads.† Domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in agriculture, factories, construction, fisheries, artisanal diamond mining, and domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including transporting of illicit goods across the border of Angola and Namibia, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and drug trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Angola’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that minimum age protections are extended to children working outside of formal employment relationships.

Ensure that laws prohibiting forced labor criminalize practices similar to slavery and allow for the prosecution of debt bondage.

Ensure that laws do not require the use of threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse to establish the crime of child trafficking for forced labor exploitation.

Ensure that the use, procuring, and offering of a child for pornographic performances is criminalized.

Ensure that the law prohibits hazardous occupations or activities for children in all relevant sectors in Angola, including diamond mining.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 257 to 369 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 14.75 million workers.

Ensure that the Ministry of Public Administration, Labor and Social Security receives adequate resources to conduct inspections in sectors in which child labor is known to occur, including in the informal sector.

Ensure rural areas have adequate access to social services, including social services centers and housing shelters.

Coordination

Increase the government’s capacity to aggregate and synthesize data on human trafficking cases.

Social Programs

Develop and expand existing social programs to ensure that all children have access to education and are not restricted by informal fees, lack of birth certificates, lack of teachers and classrooms, or poor school infrastructure.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children from the LGBTQIA+ community, specifically trans children.

Institute programs to support children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor and expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem.

Ensure that refugee children are not hindered from continuing their education beyond age 11 by creating a process for them to obtain the requisite identity documents.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Undocumented Congolese migrant children enter Angola for work in diamond-mining districts, and some are subjected to forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation in mining camps. Girls as young as age 12 are subjected to human trafficking from Kasai Occidental in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Angola for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Moreover, Angolan boys are taken to neighboring countries and forced to herd cattle or work as couriers to transport illicit goods.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Refugee children face difficulties in continuing their education beyond age 11 since their status is directly connected to their parents’ refugee cards, which are not accepted by secondary schools. Reports further indicate that children associated with the LGBTQIA+

community, specifically trans children, are less likely to finish their compulsory education due to discrimination from classmates, teachers, and school administrators. In addition, although education is free up to the ninth grade, families often face difficulty in paying informal school fees, such as for textbooks, and at times, bribes are requested by some education officials for new admissions or passing grades. Reports further indicate that over 2 million school-age children in the country do not currently attend school due to a lack of classrooms and teachers. Additionally, poor infrastructure, including the lack of sanitation facilities, disproportionately affects girls' attendance, especially at the secondary school level. Lack of birth registration and proper identification documents is yet another barrier to children accessing education in Angola since they are only permitted to attend school up to the sixth grade without either of these documents. Although the government issued over 5 million birth registration cards and 2.6 million identification cards during their "Massive Registration Campaign," the project ended at the end of 2023.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Angola has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Angola's laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work since minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside formal employment relationships, and on prohibition of slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor since laws prohibiting forced labor do not sufficiently criminalize practices similar to slavery or allow for the prosecution of debt bondage.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Articles 1, 10, 36, 37, 42, 43 and 318 of the Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 3 (w) and 39 of the Labor Law
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 39 of the Labor Law; Hazardous Work List
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 71(j-l), 175, 177, 178, 180, and 383 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 71(j-l), 175, 177, 178, 180 and 196 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 71(j-l) and 195-198 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 4 and 7 of the Drug Trafficking Law; Article 168 (1b and 1d) of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 11 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 2 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 385(1c) of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 14 Years		Articles 12, 27, and 31 of the Basic Law of the Education System
Free Public Education		Article 11 of the Basic Law of the Education System

The law's minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside formal employment relationships, which is not in compliance with international standards that require all children to be protected by the law. Laws prohibiting forced labor are not sufficient as they do not criminalize practices similar to slavery or allow for the prosecution of debt bondage. Furthermore, the use of

threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse are required to establish the crime of child trafficking for forced labor, and prohibitions against the commercial sexual exploitation of children fail to criminalize the use, procuring, or offering of a child for pornographic performances. Therefore, the laws prohibiting child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children do not meet international standards.

Although the list of hazardous activities and occupations identifies 52 activities prohibited for children, it does not include diamond mining, a sector in which there is evidence of work conducted underground.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Angola took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial and human resource allocation hindered law enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Administration, Labor and Social Security (MAPTSS): Enforces laws against child labor and coordinates the Multisectoral Commission on the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor. Fines employers or sends cases to the Ministry of Interior, through the Criminal Investigation Service, for further investigation, and to the Attorney General’s Office for prosecution. Employs labor inspectors in all 18 provinces to carry out inspections and joint operations with social services providers.

Ministry of Interior: Investigates and prosecutes cases of the worst forms of child labor through its Attorney General’s Office. Enforces criminal laws and conducts operations and investigations related to the worst forms of child labor through its National Police, while its Criminal Investigations Services collaborates with the Juvenile Court on child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and illicit recruitment investigations.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **257** inspectors conducted **8,027** worksite inspections, finding **2** child labor violations. There were also **5** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes with **3** prosecutions initiated and **3** perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Angola established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the government faces challenges with aggregating and synthesizing data on human trafficking cases.

Multisectoral Commission on the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor: Addresses all issues related to the worst forms of child labor and leads the drafting, implementation, and monitoring of national plans for the elimination of child labor, including the National Action Plan to Eradicate Child Labor. Led by the Minister of Public Administration, Labor and Social Security, and includes representatives from the National Children’s Institute (INAC), the Ministry of Social Action, Family and the Advancement of Women (MASFAMU), and six other government agencies. During the reporting period, the Commission met once, its Technical Support Group met twice, and its Technical Working Group met monthly.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Angola established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Eradicate Child Labor (2021–2025): Prioritizes effective, immediate, and integrated measures toward the promotion of children’s rights, including through the prevention and eradication of child labor and its worst forms, by 2025. Focuses on seven principal areas: child development; social assistance; education; advocacy, accountability, and enforcement; raising children’s voices; communication; and monitoring and evaluation. Each area provides specific objectives, including increasing access to education and vocational training, raising awareness of the problem at all levels of the community, strengthening relevant legal framework, and increasing the capacity of children’s participation. In 2023, MAPTSS conducted trainings on topics related to child development, education, and social protection with a focus on child labor. Training participants included MAPTSS, INAC, Inspectorate General of Labor, prosecutors, and members of government and institutions that are at the forefront of defending children’s rights.</p> <p>National Action Plan on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons (2020–2025): Outlines Angola’s strategy to address human trafficking, including domestic human trafficking, in a 5-year plan with the option of extension. Commits to specific activities designed to improve the prevention, protection and assistance, and prosecution components involved in addressing human trafficking. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights conducted an awareness-raising and training workshop on human trafficking for media professionals, with support from the UN Organization on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration in Angola. The workshop aimed to train and sensitize media professionals on making the public aware of the consequences and dangers of human trafficking, as well as on reporting cases of trafficking in a sensitive and responsible manner.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Angola funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.</p>	<p>Social Protection Programs: † National network of child support centers implemented by the government in coordination with NGOs, offering meals, shelter, basic education, and family reunification services to victims of crime, including child trafficking victims. MASFAMU and the Organization of Angolan Women operate 52 children’s shelters that assist victims of child trafficking. In 2023, center employees received training on family reunification protocols.</p> <p>Birth Registration and Justice for Children: † Government-run program making birth registration free for all Angolan citizens. Although the program came to a close toward the end of the reporting period, reports indicate that some municipalities continued to benefit from the program allowing hundreds to receive their first identification card.</p> <p>Mobile Schools and Free Meals for Children: † Ministry of Education program that provides education in mobile schools to migrant children who work with their parents in cattle herding. Specifically supports children at the highest risk of involvement in child labor in southern Angola. Supports some mobile schools with kitchens, facilitating the free school meals program. During the reporting period, the government, in partnership with a private company, announced the daily distribution of 250,000 school meals to 500 schools across 10 of the country’s provinces through 2027. The end goal is to increase the number of daily meal distribution to 500,000.</p>

† Program is funded by the Government of Angola.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ANGUILLA

NO ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Anguilla, in 2023, the government made no advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. Anguilla’s laws do not prohibit the involvement of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs. In addition, the minimum age of 12 for work and 14 for hazardous work does not meet international standards, and Anguilla lacks a list of prohibited hazardous occupations and activities for children.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Anguilla.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Anguilla’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age.

Ratify ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Establish a minimum age for work of at least 15 years, and preferably up to the compulsory education age of 17.

Establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work and determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.











Criminally prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution.

Ensure all children are entitled to free basic public education.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Each United Kingdom (UK) overseas territory has its own constitution, which sets out its system of government and its relationship with the UK, and provides for a governor or commissioner, an elected legislature, and ministers that are responsible for domestic affairs, such as internal security (police), immigration, education, and healthcare. They are self-governing, except in the areas of foreign affairs and defense. Domestic UK law does not generally apply unless explicitly extended to Anguilla. Under Article 35(4) of the ILO Constitution, when the UK ratifies a Convention, the Territory must consider if it will accept the Convention. If the Convention is accepted, it is considered applicable to that Territory. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been extended to and accepted by Anguilla. The Government of Anguilla has established laws and regulations related to child labor. However, the use of children in illicit activities is not criminalized.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 12 Years		Articles 1, 3, and 4 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act; Articles 1 and 2 of the Employment of Children (Restriction) Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 14 Years		Articles 1, 3, and 4 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act; Articles 1 and 2 of the Employment of Children (Restriction) Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 6 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 242-244 of the Criminal Code; Chapter 1, Section 4 of the Constitution Order
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 242, 243, 247, and 248 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 244 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years		Article 117 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 106 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

† Country has no standing military

The minimum age of 12 for work does not meet international standards. The minimum age of 14 for hazardous work also does not meet international standards as it is below 18, nor does it contain the additional protections that would allow the standards to be met at the age of 16 or 17. This minimum age applies only to industrial undertakings, transportation of passengers or goods by roads or rail, and work on ships. Anguilla lacks a list of prohibited hazardous occupations and activities for children. However, there is a prohibition of night work for children under age 16 in the manufacturing of raw sugar and a prohibition of night work in other industrial undertakings for children under age 18. Commercial sexual exploitation of children is not prohibited because the definition of sexual exploitation does not include prostitution. In addition, Anguilla’s laws do not criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. As the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Finally, free public education standards are not met because the government may impose public school tuition fees on those “who are not belongers of Anguilla.”



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Anguilla has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, Investments, and Tourism: Through the Employment of Children (Restriction) Act, the Labor Commissioner has the authority to enforce all labor laws pertaining to child labor and may freely enter and inspect any premises in which violations of child labor laws may be occurring. The Labor Commissioner is also the head of the Department of Labor. Inspections occur based on planned needs assessments.

Royal Anguilla Police Force Safeguarding Investigation Unit: Investigates child protection cases through interviews and forensic assessments.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

As there is no evidence of a child labor problem, there appears to be no need for policies, programs, or a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ARGENTINA

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Argentina made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The province of Misiones approved a bill to create a certification program for agricultural producers to prevent child labor and increase traceability. In addition, the Government of Argentina; the International Labor Organization; and representatives from unions, employers, and civil society developed and started implementation of the 2023–2025 National Roadmap to achieve the 8.7 Alliance goals toward the eradication of child labor. Furthermore, in partnership with local unions, the province of Chubut launched a mobile application and distributed tablets to inspectors to better detect and record child labor incidences. The government also approved the Fourth National Plan for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Labor, which includes efforts to strengthen the labor inspectorate. Finally, the Good Harvest Program, providing childcare services to rural and migrant families, was expanded into three additional provinces. Despite these efforts, Argentina’s legal minimum age for work of 16 years is lower than the compulsory education age of 18 years, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Lastly, Argentina lacks social programs that address child labor in street work and begging.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	5.3% (371,771)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	98.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	6.2%

Children in Argentina are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Harvesting[†] cotton, grapes, olives, strawberries, tomatoes, tobacco, *yerba mate* (stimulant plant), harvesting[†] and shelling garlic, and fishing.



Industry

Production of garments and bricks; construction.[†]



Services

Street begging.[†] Refuse collection, recycling, and garbage scavenging.[†] Domestic work, including cleaning, doing laundry, and ironing. Selling produce in grocery stores.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, and street vending and in the production of garments. Use in illicit activities, including trafficking drugs.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Argentina's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from 16 to 18 years to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 368 to about 921 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 13.8 million workers.

Publish information on the labor inspectorate budget.

Enhance coordination and information-sharing with provincial governments in order to publish information on the number of child labor penalties that were imposed and collected.

Provide law enforcement bodies with adequate funding and resources to carry out their operations.

Ensure the number of labor inspections conducted is commensurate to the size of the labor inspectorate to maintain adequate quality and scope of inspections.

Social Programs

Develop programs to address sectors in which child labor is prevalent, including street work and begging.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from the northern provinces, as well as Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru, are at risk of forced labor in numerous sectors, including garment production, agriculture, street vending, domestic work, and in small businesses. Girls from Argentina's northern provinces are also victims of sex trafficking.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the school attendance rate is high in Argentina nationally, it is lower in northern provinces for secondary education. In addition, migrant children attend school at lower rates than other students.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Argentina has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Argentina's laws do not meet international standards, including a gap between the minimum age for work and the compulsory education age.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 2, 7, and 17 of the Prohibition of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Work Law; Article 9 of the Special Code on Contracting Domestic Workers; Article 25 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law; Articles 54 and 55 of the Law on Agrarian Work; Article 189 of the Employment Contract Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 10 of the Prohibition of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Work Law; Articles 176, 189, and 191 of the Law on Labor Contracts; Article 62 of the Law on Agrarian Work
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 1 of Executive Decree 1117/2016 on Dangerous Work
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 15 of the Constitution; Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 140, 145 bis, and 145 ter of the Penal Code; Article 9 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 145 bis and 145 ter of the Penal Code; Article 9 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 125–128 of the Penal Code; Aisemberg, Aaron s/ recurso de casación (2018)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 11 of the Possession and Trafficking of Drugs Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 8 of the Voluntary Military Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	 *	Article 19 of the Voluntary Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 10 of Law No. 26.200
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years		Articles 16 and 29 of the National Education Law; Article 2 of the Law on Early Education
Free Public Education		Articles 15 and 16 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law

* Country has no conscription

As Argentina's minimum age for work of 16 years is lower than the compulsory education age of 18 years, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Argentina took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security: Conducts labor law enforcement efforts in cooperation with labor officials and authorities at the provincial level and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, and operates a national hotline to receive reports of labor violations. Through its Inspection Directorate of Child Labor, the Protection of Adolescent Work, and Indicators of Labor Exploitation, it enforces child labor laws and collaborates with the National Registry of Rural Workers and Employers to enforce child labor laws in the agricultural sector. Formerly known as the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security, but it was incorporated into the new Ministry of Human Capital as a secretariat on December 10, 2023.

Public Prosecutor’s Office: Detects, investigates, and prosecutes cases of human trafficking and labor exploitation through its Special Prosecutor’s Office for Human Trafficking and Exploitation. Receives public reports of suspected human trafficking cases through an anonymous national hotline, Line 145. In 2023, the Trafficking in Persons Executive Committee, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) and NGO *Red Solidaria* promoted Argentina’s Trafficking in Persons hotline in a campaign that reached over 12 million people.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **368** labor inspectors conducted **125,025** worksite inspections, finding **26** child labor violations. There were also **9** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes with **28** prosecutions initiated and **4** perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Argentina established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor (CONAETI): Coordinates federal efforts to prevent and eradicate child labor. Led by the Labor Ministry’s Under Secretariat of Policies of Inclusion in the Labor World and includes representatives from 25 government agencies, workers’ representatives from unions, and business representatives, in addition to benefiting from the advice of the ILO and UNICEF. There are also 24 Provincial Committees for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (COPRETI), which coordinate activities at the provincial level between government, business, unions, and civil society stakeholders. During the reporting period, CONAETI started the third phase of the Federal Strengthening Program for the Eradication of Child Labor that trained 308 individuals as “promoters of childhoods free of child labor” and kicked off the 2023 Action Plan of the Network of Companies against Child Labor. Held four plenary sessions during 2023 and approved the Fourth National Plan for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Labor (2024–2028), which it implements.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Argentina established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>Fourth National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Regulation of Adolescent Work (2024–2028):[†] Aims to prevent and eliminate child labor, including its worst forms, and to regulate adolescent work. Promotes the dissemination of information on child labor, efforts to strengthen the labor inspectorate, civil society engagement on child labor issues, inclusive education, and institutional and legislative reform. Fourth iteration approved during the reporting period.</p> <p>Federal Strengthening Program for the Eradication of Child Labor: Supports leaders at the sub-national level to improve strategies to prevent and detect child labor and irregular adolescent work. Aims to coordinate efforts among COPRETI, civil society organizations, labor unions, and companies in common geographic areas and sectors that show high risks of child labor. In 2023, the Program launched the Third Cohort to train 500 people across the country.</p> <p>National Plan Against Human Trafficking and Exploitation, and for Protection and Assistance of Victims (TIP Action Plan 2022–2024): Managed by the Federal Council to Fight Human Trafficking and to Protect and Assist Victims, this program focuses on the prevention, assistance, prosecution, and institutional strengthening. The plan sets forth 19 measures and 68 actions that seek to further public policies to fight human trafficking and to secure victims’ full enjoyment of rights and guarantees. By October 2023, 82 percent of the actions had been implemented. Under the plan, the Ministry of Health implemented specific policies to strengthen victims’ access to therapeutic care, expanded its policy on housing assistance for victims and their families, and outlined stages of development for building new shelters in the northwest, northeast, central, and southern regions of the country.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Argentina funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not address the problem in all sectors.</p> <p>[†] Program is funded by the Government of Argentina. [‡] The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Universal Child Allowance Program (Asignación Universal Por Hijo):[†] Government program funded in part by the World Bank that provides a conditional cash transfer to unemployed parents and workers in the informal economy, contingent upon parents’ fulfillment of health and education requirements for their children. In April 2023, the government announced an increase in the amount, impacting 4 million children.</p> <p>National Registry of Rural Workers and Employers Awareness-Raising Campaigns:[†] During the reporting period, continued implementing awareness-raising campaigns and the CRECER (Grow) Program to provide care and services for children during the harvest season.</p> <p>Good Harvest Program: Provides childcare facilities and services for migrant and rural families involved in seasonal harvests. Around 148 centers provide services to more than 6,600 children. In 2023, extended to the provinces of Misiones, Catamarca, and Cordoba, totaling 13 of the 24 Argentine provinces. Along with national and provincial cooperation to fund and staff the childcare centers under this program, this initiative also promoted public-private partnerships with the Argentine Chamber of Tobacco in Salta province and the Argentine Blueberry Chamber in Tucuman province.</p>

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For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

ARMENIA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Armenia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted an amended Labor Code to include child labor provisions that now fully covers and protects all children, including those working in the informal sector, and aligns the minimum age for work law with international standards. Further, enforcement agencies, such as the National Police, Investigative Committee, and Prosecutor General’s Office, adopted and started implementing a set of guidelines on ensuring trauma awareness and victim-centric approaches in working with all victims of human trafficking or exploitation, including children. In addition, the government adopted the 2023–2025 Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons, which includes a chapter on preventing child trafficking and child exploitation. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Armenia is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because labor inspectors lack full legal authority to conduct unannounced inspections, which may leave potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected in workplaces. In addition, as the minimum age for work at age 16 is lower than the compulsory education age of 18, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. The government also does not routinely collect or maintain official data on the prevalence of child labor. Furthermore, the government does not have coordinating mechanisms and policies to address all worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture, services, and other forms of informal work.

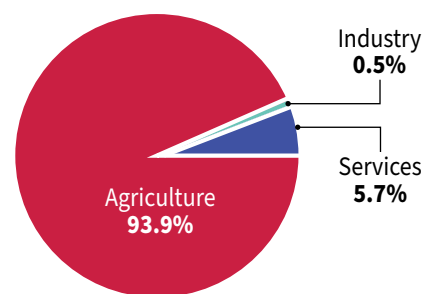


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	7.0% (24,602)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	8.6%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Armenia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, as well as forced begging and forced labor in agriculture and in stores.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, raising livestock, forestry, and fishing.



Industry

Construction.



Services

Vehicle maintenance. Street work, including vending; gathering scrap metal; selling food, flowers, napkins, and icons; and begging. Working in shops, cafés, and supermarkets.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging and forced labor in stores. Forced labor in agriculture.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Armenia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from 16 to 18 to align with the compulsory education age.

Ensure that Armenian law specifies the types of light work acceptable for children ages 14 to 15.

Enforcement

Strengthen the inspection system by permitting unannounced inspections.

Give labor inspectors the authority to conduct worksite inspections, including full access to worksites after working hours and when the business director or acting director is not present.

Protect children by providing law enforcement officials with specialized training on interviewing survivors of child trafficking.

Implement existing witness protection mechanisms to protect victims and survivors of child trafficking who cooperate with law enforcement.

Ensure that law enforcement officials understand their mandated duties and that the Investigative Committee is adequately trained on trafficking victim identification and investigations.

Coordination

Establish coordinating mechanisms to prevent and eliminate all worst forms of child labor in all sectors, including in street work, services, and agriculture.

Government Policies

Adopt policies to address all relevant worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture, services, and other forms of informal work.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor, including in agriculture and construction, to inform policies and programs.

Ensure that all children, including girls, children in remote areas, those from low-income families and from families that travel for seasonal labor, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have equal access to education.

Continue existing efforts to ensure ongoing access to all social protection systems to refugee children from Nagorno-Karabakh to mitigate their vulnerability to human trafficking and labor exploitation.

Ensure that there are a sufficient number of qualified teachers of minority languages that can address the educational needs of all children from ethnic minority groups.

Ensure that mainstream education is accessible to children with special education needs and children with disabilities by improving the accessibility of the physical infrastructure and increasing the availability of special education teachers and other specialists for students with mental disabilities.

Strengthen measures in the educational system to identify, track, and prevent truant children from leaving school, and enforce mandatory school attendance requirements to ensure that children are not engaged in child labor.

Ensure the availability of out-of-care services for deinstitutionalized children and continue with prevention efforts and increased support for the children currently residing in government institutions so they are not engaged in child labor.

Institute programs to address child labor in street work and in agriculture.

Allocate sufficient personnel and resources to publicize and provide social services throughout the country, offer sufficient training to services providers, and assign reasonable caseloads.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children who live in remote rural areas and children of families who travel for seasonal labor are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor in agriculture. Authorities note that less-educated, socially vulnerable girls are at higher risk of being

trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, while children living in economic hardship or children deinstitutionalized from orphanages are more likely to be coerced into forced begging, farm work, and forced labor in the service sector. Furthermore, children staying in childcare institutions are vulnerable to exploitation in child labor and are at a higher risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. In addition, some refugee children who entered Armenia in 2023 from Nagorno-Karabakh may be vulnerable to trafficking and labor exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The government has made progress in improving access to education in remote communities and implemented a program to provide supplemental stipends for students from national minorities. However, children of families that travel for seasonal labor and children from ethnic minority and low-income families, including those in remote areas, continue to have education access issues. In addition, there is an insufficient number of teachers who speak minority languages, which impedes access to education for children from ethnic minority groups. Reports also indicate that in some rural areas, girls' education is not prioritized due to traditional cultural norms. Furthermore, the Law on Education requires all schools to be inclusive for children with disabilities by 2025. However, children with disabilities—including hearing, visual, and mental disabilities—face difficulties with education access due to non-accessible school buildings, a lack of accessible learning materials, and a shortage of special education teachers and other specialists. While addressing school dropouts is a government priority, there is no enforcement of the mandatory school attendance requirement, nor are there programs to identify, assess, and address the reasons for truancy or dropping out.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Armenia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, gaps remain in Armenia's legal framework, including the minimum age for work at age 16 is lower than the compulsory education age of 18, and children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 15, 17, 18, and 102 of the Labor Code; Article 57 of the Constitution; Article 41.6 of the Administrative Violations Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 17.1 and 257 of the Labor Code; Article 41.6 of the Administrative Violations Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Decree on Approval of the List of Occupations and Work That Are Likely to be Heavy and Hazardous for Persons Under the Age of 18 Years, Pregnant Women, and Women Taking Care of a Child Under the Age of 1 Year; Articles 140, 144(3), 148, 149, 153, 155, 209, 249, and 257 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 57 of the Constitution; Articles 3 and 3.2 of the Labor Code; Articles 188 and 189 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 188 and 189 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 188–190, 239, and 298–300 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 71, 238, 393, and 394 of the Criminal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years†		Article 29 of the Law on the Rights of the Child; Law on Military Service and Status of the Military Servant; Government Decree No. 525-N of April 26, 2012
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 19 of the Law on Military Service and the Status of the Military Servant
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 29 of the Law on the Rights of the Child; Articles 137, 147, 238, and 320 of the Criminal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years		Article 18 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Article 38 of the Constitution; Article 6 of the Law on Education

‡ Age calculated based on available information

During the reporting period, the government adopted an amended Labor Code to include child labor provisions that now fully covers and protects all children, including those working in the informal sector, and aligns the minimum age for work law with international standards.

As the minimum age for work at age 16 is lower than the compulsory education age of 18, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. In addition, the Labor Code allows children ages 14 and 15 to work restricted hours with the permission of a parent or guardian but does not identify specific activities that constitute light work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Armenia took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of full authority to conduct unannounced inspections in Armenia hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Health and Labor Inspection Body (HLIB): Ensures compliance with legal requirements in the fields of healthcare and labor law. Carries out on-site inspections based on a pre-determined list of companies compiled based on risk assessment methodology, and an annual work plan, as well as in response to complaints, including child labor complaints, and administrative proceedings. Authorized to issue penalties for any administrative violations uncovered and to refer cases to criminal law enforcement when appropriate. In 2023, HLIB did not receive any complaints related to child labor through its labor rights violations complaint hotline or through the government’s online platform for submitting complaints.

Prosecutor General’s Office: Through the Department for Combating Crimes against Humans within the Prosecutor General’s Office, oversees the legality of Police operations and Investigative Committee investigations, and prosecutes criminal cases involving child trafficking. Prosecutors receive regular training on human trafficking and other worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	No	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **51** labor inspectors conducted **446** worksite inspections, finding **2** child labor violations. The government also conducted **4** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor and convicted **2** perpetrators.

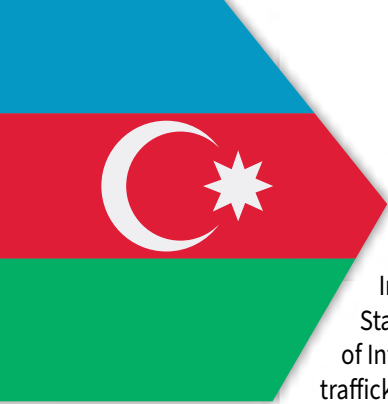
However, HLIB lacks legal mechanisms to fully enforce compliance with labor legislation, including conducting unannounced inspections. HLIB can carry out unannounced inspections only when detecting unregistered employment cases. Even for routine inspections, HLIB must inform employers of an upcoming inspection 3 business days in advance. HLIB has broader authority when responding to a complaint, in which case HLIB may issue notification to the employer via e-mail and immediately conduct a site visit; however, if the business director or acting director is not present and does not receive the notification, inspectors are not allowed to start. In addition, HLIB does not have authority to conduct inspections after working hours.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Armenia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of coordinating mechanism with sufficient scope to address all forms of child labor, including in agriculture, services, and other forms of informal work, sectors in which child labor is known to occur.</p>	<p>Interagency Working Group Against Trafficking in Persons: Operates under the Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking and ensures operational coordination. Multidisciplinary group of government representatives and national and international NGOs, chaired by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA). MoLSA also chairs the Trafficking Victims Identification Commission comprising representatives from MoLSA, the Prosecutor’s Office, the Police, and two NGOs, tasked with identifying individuals as victims of trafficking and referring them for required assistance and support. The group met twice during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Armenia established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all forms of child labor, including in agriculture, services, and other forms of informal work, sectors in which child labor is known to occur.</p>	<p>National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2023–2025): Revised and renewed during the reporting period, supports the development of policy and the implementation of activities to address human trafficking and includes a chapter on the prevention of child trafficking and child exploitation. Commits the government to continue to train specialists in multiple spheres, including law enforcement, the courts, educators, and the media. This plan, compared to the previous one, has a more targeted approach, measurable activities, clear outcomes, and mechanisms for accountability. Supports MoLSA in establishing standard trafficking in persons data collection tools for use by NGO implementers and a reporting format for state agencies that share data with MoLSA. In 2023, the government conducted a 5-month anti-trafficking awareness-raising campaign in six regions of Armenia and conducted numerous trainings on trafficking victims’ identification, referral mechanisms, and services provided by the state to various government entities.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Armenia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in street work and agriculture.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Armenia.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Family Benefits Program:† Seeks to mitigate poverty for families with children by giving families a monthly payment based on their financial situation, the number of children in the family, and the geographical location of their home. The program was active throughout the reporting period, and as of mid-2023, 48,344 families with children were recipients of benefits under this program.</p> <p>UNICEF Country Program (2021–2025): Improves child protection systems, including through expanding programs for children in extreme poverty, improving social integration of children with disabilities, and developing a victim witness protection system. In 2023, continued to support the government’s child protection systems and services through humanitarian and technical assistance, operationalization of policies, and strengthening of systems at central and local levels to ensure more integrated delivery of services for children and families in various social sectors.</p> <p>Shelter for Victims of Human Trafficking:‡ Operates in partnership with NGOs to provide medical, psychological, social, and legal services to victims of human trafficking and access to education for children. In 2023, provided services to victims and survivors throughout the year.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



AZERBAIJAN

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Azerbaijan made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The State Labor Inspection Service increased the number of labor inspectors to 240, from 182 in 2022. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also trained over 850 employees from 78 law enforcement entities on child labor and human trafficking laws. In addition, the State Committee on Family, Children and Women’s Affairs published an informational booklet on prevention of child labor and sexual exploitation of children and held a series of educational activities for over 1,000 participants on this topic. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Azerbaijan is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it has a law that continues a moratorium on all worksite labor inspections. While inspectors can conduct desk reviews in response to complaints, this lack of proactive or onsite inspection mechanisms may leave potential violations of child labor laws undetected in workplaces. In addition, the government’s priority crop production system in Azerbaijan creates a risk that farmers and local officials may turn to exploitative labor practices, including child labor, and in some cases, regional and local government officials are held responsible for mobilizing sufficient labor to meet established production targets for one or more of these priority crops. Furthermore, in some instances, police treat children forced to beg or engage in street work as a family issue, leading to child labor cases not being properly referred for criminal investigation and prosecution.

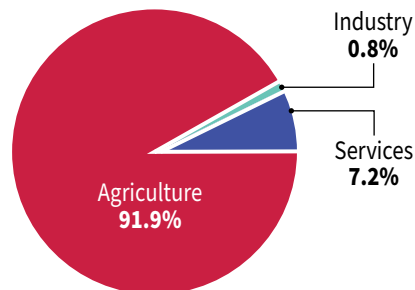


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	4.5% (70,034)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	6 to 14	94.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	4.9%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Azerbaijan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in harvesting and production of cotton.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in farming, including harvesting and production of cotton.



Services

Street work, including begging and vending. Washing and repairing cars. Working in catering.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Azerbaijan’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution and the use and offering of children for the production of pornography and pornographic performances.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Azerbaijan, including non-citizens.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Enforcement

Ensure children are not used in production of priority crops and ensure that local government officials are not engaged in child recruitment to assist with priority crop production.

Resume routine, targeted, and unannounced labor inspections, including in response to complaints, to ensure that child labor laws are enforced.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 240 to 265 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 5.3 million workers.

Publish information on the labor inspectorate's operations, including funding levels.

Ensure that all children identified by law enforcement as engaged in child labor, including children engaged in forced begging, are referred to social services centers or other services, as appropriate, so that they do not return to child labor.

Increase law enforcement investigations related to child labor outside Baku.

Screen for forced labor indicators in child begging situations, including those referred by NGOs, and, as appropriate, investigate and prosecute forcing children to beg as a criminal offense.

Ensure consistent use of human trafficking indicators by law enforcement, immigration, and social services when identifying potential victims of human trafficking among vulnerable populations, including children.

Coordination

Increase the coordination and referral of potential child labor crimes between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population and the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

Ensure that all regulative and coordinating bodies, including the State Committee for Family, Women, and Children Affairs and the national and local Commissions on Juvenile Issues and Protection of Minors' Rights, have the capacity to carry out their intended mandates, including across different agencies and levels of government.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, including hazardous work in agriculture.

Revise policies on priority crops that mandate production targets to help prevent child labor in agriculture.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Ensure that children with disabilities have access to education by increasing the availability of special education teachers, training the teachers on inclusive education, improving the accessibility of the physical infrastructure, and providing teaching materials adapted to the needs of the children with disabilities.

Ensure that all children, including children in rural areas and Roma children, have equal access to education.

Provide documents to undocumented children so they are able to access education.

Ensure that the government provides sufficient and consistent funding to NGO-run shelters for victims of human trafficking to enable shelters to provide adequate services to victims.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Street children, children placed in or living in childcare institutions, refugee and displaced children, and children from marginalized communities, including Roma children, are vulnerable to labor exploitation and human trafficking within Azerbaijan. Reports indicate that poverty increases the risk of child labor in rural areas. In addition, the government's priority crop production system in Azerbaijan creates a risk that farmers and local officials may turn to exploitative labor practices, including child labor and forced labor, to ensure they are able to meet production targets for designated crops. In some cases, regional and local government officials are held responsible for mobilizing

sufficient labor to meet established production targets for one or more of these priority crops. This system conditions agricultural subsidies, services, and access to public resources, such as irrigation water, on whether farmers produce one or more crops that the government has designated as high priority.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although Article 5 of the Education Law guarantees free universal education for Azerbaijani citizens, undocumented children and children with disabilities face difficulty accessing education. The court proceedings required to secure identification documents can take up to two or more years, during which time children without identification documents are ineligible to enroll and attend school or to access health services. Some children with disabilities are not in school or are facing barriers to education caused by inaccessible infrastructure, lack of specialized training for teachers on inclusive education, and discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Children in some rural areas have lower rates of school attendance because they must travel to neighboring villages to continue their education beyond the elementary level that is available in their village. In addition, children from the Roma ethnic community have low rates of school attendance, in part due to social stigma. During 2023, access to education was disrupted for several months for 30,000 children from Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan due to the escalation of years-long conflict in the region. These children have left Azerbaijan and have refugee status in Armenia.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Azerbaijan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Azerbaijan's laws do not meet international standards on the commercial sexual exploitation of children because they do not criminalize the purchase of commercial sex with a child and do not clearly criminalize the use or offering of a child for the production of pornography or pornographic performances.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 42 and 249 of the Labor Code; Article 192 of the Code of Administrative Offenses
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 250 of the Labor Code; Article 192 of the Code of Administrative Offenses
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 98, 250–252, and 254 of the Labor Code; Decree 58 of the Cabinet of Ministers in 2000; Article 9 of the Law on the Rights of the Child
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 35 of the Constitution; Article 106, 144-1, and 144-2 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 1 and 30 of the Law on Trafficking in Persons; Article 144-1 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 1 and 30 of the Law on Trafficking in Persons; Articles 144-1 and 171 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 28 of the Law on the Rights of the Child; Article 170 of the Criminal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 19 Years		Article 36 of the Law on Military Obligation and Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 2, 3, and 12 of the Law on Military Obligation and Military Service

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 116 of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 19 of the Law on Education; Article 13 of the Law on General Education
Free Public Education		Articles 5 and 19 of the Law on Education; Article 13 of the Law on General Education; Article 22 of the Law on the Rights of the Child; Article 42 of the Constitution

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The laws criminalizing commercial sexual exploitation of children are insufficient because they do not criminalize the purchase of commercial sex involving children. Similarly, the criminalization of involvement of a child in “immoral actions” does not clearly criminalize the use, procuring, and offering of a child for pornographic performances. In addition, the laws providing for free basic education do not meet international standards because they do not extend to all children, particularly non-citizens.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Azerbaijan took actions to address child labor. However, the absence of worksite inspections conducted at the national level in Azerbaijan hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population (MLSPP): Enforces labor laws related to the worst forms of child labor through the State Labor Inspection Service (SLIS). All SLIS inspectors are trained to detect and respond to child labor and received training on child labor issues in 2023. Due to the ongoing moratorium on all worksite labor inspections, passed in 2015, SLIS is only able to receive and respond to complaints through desk reviews. Based on information received, inspectors are empowered to identify violations and impose appropriate penalties. Although SLIS can impose penalties directly against individuals, it must refer cases to the courts to levy penalties against corporate entities. In addition, SLIS does not maintain confidentiality for individuals who file complaints, which could expose workers who file complaints about worst forms of child labor to retaliation by their employers. SLIS is able to identify potential minimum age violations by monitoring an electronic database of labor contracts and has the authority to impose penalties for violations. In 2023, SLIS increased the number of labor inspectors to 240, from 182 in 2022.

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA): Central executive agency responsible for public security and the prevention of criminal offenses, including child trafficking and begging. Through the Anti-Trafficking Department (ATD), enforces human trafficking laws; investigates human trafficking violations, including child trafficking; and enforces criminal laws related to the use of children in illicit activities. Refers children who are victims of human trafficking to social services for assistance and also operates a 24-hour hotline for the public to report suspected child trafficking and instances of child begging. In 2023, approximately 850 employees from 78 law enforcement entities participated in training sessions on child labor, human trafficking, and forced labor laws, including initial training for new and refresher courses for existing employees.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	No	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

From January to November 2023, **240** labor inspectors conducted **0** worksite inspections, finding **2** child labor violations. The government conducted **10** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor and initiated **9** prosecutions.

The government suspended all routine and unannounced labor inspections in 2015 in an effort to revamp the inspection process, stimulate business growth, and address a broader anti-corruption drive. Since 2015, the government continued to extend the moratorium on a yearly basis and the ongoing suspension remains effective until January 1, 2025. In addition, there have been no indicators as to when the government anticipates a resumption of onsite inspections. Although the State Labor Inspection Service (SLIS) is still able to receive and respond to complaints related to child labor and impose penalties in cases of violations, this response cannot include onsite inspections, and inspectors are limited to conducting desk reviews.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Azerbaijan has established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of efficacy in accomplishing mandates.</p>	<p>Commission on Juvenile Issues and Protection of Minors' Rights: Coordinates policies at the national level to protect children from the worst forms of child labor. Located within the Cabinet of Ministers and acts as a national-level version of district-level Commissions on Juvenile Issues and Protection of Minors' Rights, which are located in individual district Executive Commissions. Although Commissions on Juvenile Issues and Protection of Minors' Rights exist at both the national and local levels, research was unable to determine the relationship between these respective national and local coordinating bodies.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Azerbaijan established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor, including hazardous work in agriculture and other sectors in which child labor is known to occur.</p>	<p>National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2020–2024): Aims to address human trafficking through enhanced coordination between relevant government agencies and improved protection for human trafficking victims, including child victims or potential child victims of trafficking. Includes action items to improve services for child trafficking victims, address forced child begging, and research and monitor forced labor and child trafficking risks. A working group under the authority of MoIA's Trafficking in Persons National Coordinator is coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the National Action Plan. The working group was active in 2023.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>Strategy on Children of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2020–2030): Aims to improve child protection mechanisms and legislation. Through the associated National Action Plan, includes action items on implementing international commitments under ILO Convention 182 and enhancing coordination to detect and prevent child labor and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The National Early Childhood Development (ECD) program was launched as part of the Strategy. Jointly organized by the State Committee for Family, Women, and Children Affairs, the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan, the Regional Development Public Union, and UNICEF Azerbaijan, the program aims, in part, to increase the capacity of children’s services professionals and raise awareness around the health and education of children in four target regions—Ganja, Shirvan, Aghjabadi, and Absheron. In 2023, the entitles working on the ECD program discussed the next steps for implementation of the ECD road map and action plan.</p> <p>State Program for the Development of Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities (2018–2024): Aims to create inclusive education for children with disabilities. In 2023, the government continued efforts to integrate children with disabilities into mainstream education by training over 500 teachers and school administrators on the importance of inclusive education and inclusive teaching methodology.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Azerbaijan funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, gaps exist in these social programs, including insufficient funding.</p> <p>† Program is funded by the Government of Azerbaijan.</p> <p>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Government-run Assistance Centers:† Includes Social Shelter and Rehabilitation Center for Minors,† MLSP-run shelter in Baku for vulnerable children, including street children. Children are able to stay in these shelters until they turn 18. Additionally, Victims Assistance Centers,† funded by MLSP, and MoIA-run Shelter for Temporary Residence for Victims of Human Trafficking† provide direct social services and social services referrals, education on administrative and legal procedures, and medical assistance to survivors of human trafficking, including children. Children can stay in these shelters for 60 days and after this period, asylum can be extended upon assessment and request of the police, guardianship authority, or the Commission on Juvenile Issues and Protection of Minor’s Rights. All shelters were active in 2023.</p> <p>Targeted Social Assistance Program:† MLSP-run ongoing program that provides cash transfers to vulnerable families, including families with children with disabilities and low-income families.</p> <p>Ministry of Internal Affairs Identification Document Program:† Provides identification documents to undocumented minors who may be street children or victims of human trafficking. In 2023, 17 children of 9 victims of human trafficking were provided with birth certificates.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Azerbaijan places limitations on workers’ ability to freely exercise their right to form, join, and operate organizations of their own choosing. Opaque and cumbersome registration requirements prevent workers from forming unions that can meet legal thresholds for engaging in collective bargaining. Laws protecting workers from retaliation for union activity are rarely enforced. The government has also arrested independent union leaders. Since unions play a pivotal role in identifying and combating child labor, these restrictions may allow violations, including in the informal sectors, to go unreported.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

BANGLADESH

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Bangladesh made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Bangladesh Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments identified 3,459 child labor violations and border guards prevented 75 individuals, including children, from being trafficked into neighboring countries. Moreover, the government supported a project that supported the rehabilitation of children living and working on the street from the Dalit and Bihari minority groups. The government also continued to support UNICEF’s Myanmar Curriculum Pilot, which enrolled 300,000 Rohingya children for the 2023–2024 academic year. The Myanmar Curriculum provides Rohingya students with formal, standardized education based on Burma’s national education system. However, Bangladesh is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it continues to obstruct unannounced inspections in the Export Processing Zones. Under the Export Processing Zone Labor Rules, the Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments is required to indirectly provide notice to the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority, which may result in employers being notified of inspections in advance. The lack of routine unannounced inspections may leave potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected in the Export Processing Zones. Moreover, the Bangladesh Labor Act does not apply to children working in all sectors in which child labor occurs. The government also did not publicly release information on its criminal law enforcement efforts related to child labor in 2023. In addition, penalties for child labor violations can only be imposed after a lengthy legal process and, when courts do impose them, the fines are too low to deter child labor law violations.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	9.2% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	7 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	88.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	8.2%

Children in Bangladesh are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of garments. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the production of garments and leather goods, as well as breaking stones.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Harvesting and processing crops, including salt;† and raising poultry. Fishing, including drying and processing fish,† including shrimp.†



Industry

Producing textiles, including jute, and garments, including tailoring and working in the informal garment sector.† Producing leather† and leather goods,† including footwear. Manufacturing aluminum,† bricks,† glass,† hand-rolled cigarettes (*bidis*),† matches,† plastic,† soap,† and furniture (steel).† Shipbreaking,† battery recycling,† construction,† and breaking bricks† and stones.†



Services

Domestic work. Garbage collecting, sorting, and recycling.† Working in transportation, including ticket taking,† welding,† pulling rickshaws, driving, working as crew members on fishing boats, and repairing automobiles.† Working in retail shops, including grocery stores, restaurants, weaving, and tailoring shops.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Use in illicit activities, including smuggling and selling drugs. Forced begging, forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of garments. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic work.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Bangladesh's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Extend minimum age for work protections to all children, including those engaged in domestic work and working on vessels and small farms.

Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive and include domestic service.

Criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution; the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production of drugs; and the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Legally establish a compulsory education age to align with the minimum age of work of 14.

Enforcement

Empower labor inspectors to recommend or assess penalties for all labor violations, including those that are initial offenses, and increase the penalties for child labor violations to sufficiently deter future violations.

Conduct investigations and prosecutions of public officials who are complicit in the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, including those who accept bribes.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 446 to 1,861 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 74.5 million workers.

Permit and conduct unannounced labor inspections, including inspections for child labor, in Export Processing Zones.

Prosecute all criminal child labor violations, as opposed to using mediation and settlement.

Provide adequate training for inspectors and investigators on worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children, to ensure that such cases are consistently investigated and prosecuted.

Collect and publish national-level data on the enforcement of criminal laws relevant to child labor, including information on training for investigators, and the number of prosecutions initiated, convictions attained, and penalties imposed.

Investigate and hold accountable local government officials who hire children for government-funded job programs.

Coordination

Establish a robust referral mechanism between civil and criminal enforcement agencies to promote coordination and cooperation to address child labor and its root causes.

Government Policies

Ensure agencies responsible for implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor are effectively coordinating their efforts and strategies.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to make education accessible for all children by improving bathroom sanitation and resources, ensuring a well-developed distance-learning mechanism, increasing the number of schools, offsetting costs for transportation and school materials, and permitting all children to enroll in school regardless of whether they have a permanent address or identity documents.

Expand programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, including in the informal garment, leather, and fish-drying industries.

 **CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Most child laborers in Bangladesh work in the informal sector. Children living in coastal areas are likely to engage in child labor in the fishing sector, including drying and selling fish. Children from the minority Bihari community are forced into work at a young age, and in jobs considered less desirable. Children experiencing homelessness are forced to beg, pickpocket, and sell drugs. In border areas, traffickers force children to produce and transport drugs. Children displaced by natural disasters are also at a higher risk for human trafficking and forced commercial sexual exploitation. Finally, there are reports of Bangladeshi officials taking bribes to provide human traffickers access to refugee camps and facilitate the trafficking of Rohingya children. NGOs allege that some officials allow traffickers to operate at the India-Bangladesh border and checkpoints.

 **BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**







More than 40 percent of schools lack basic sanitation facilities and hygiene services, and one in five schools lack safe drinking water. Many schools in Bangladesh are overcrowded and over 80 percent run double shifts of students. The country does not have an adequate number of teachers for an education system of its size. The Primary Teacher Training Institutes cannot keep up with the demand for teachers, particularly in rural areas. Other barriers to education include the high costs for transportation, uniforms, and school supplies. The Urdu-speaking Bihari minority children face education barriers due to having temporary addresses associated with residing in long-term camps. The Dalit and lower-caste Hindu children have lagged behind other groups in accessing education. According to reports, 60 percent of children with disabilities from ages 5 to 17 are not enrolled in formal education. Additionally, children born to mothers who are engaged in commercial sex face barriers in accessing education since they are not permitted to obtain legal birth certificates. Many children from this community do not know their father’s name, which is a legal requirement to gain national identity cards or birth certificates needed for school enrollment. Although previous reporting indicated that the Bangladesh government closed Rohingya-operated schools and threatened to confiscate UN Refugee Agency-issued identity cards from Rohingya teachers and move them to the flood-prone island of Bhasan Char, this did not occur in 2023. Over 300,000 Rohingya students were enrolled for the 2023–2024 school year, setting a new record and marking the first time Rohingya refugee children of all ages will have access to education under the UNICEF Myanmar Curriculum Pilot.

 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Bangladesh has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. Although the government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, gaps exist in Bangladesh’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of criminal provisions comprehensively criminalizing the use of children in prostitution.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Sections 1–2, 34, and 284 of the Bangladesh Labor Act; Sections 159, 161, and 175 of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Labor Act, 2019
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 39–42 of the Bangladesh Labor Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Sections 39–42 of the Bangladesh Labor Act; Statutory Regulatory Order Number 65, List of Worst Forms of Work for Children
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 370, 371, and 374 of the Penal Code; Sections 2, 3, 6, and 9 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2, 3, and 6 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act; Sections 2 and 6 of the Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 372 and 373 of the Penal Code; Sections 78 and 80 of the Children’s Act; Sections 2, 3, 6, and 11 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act; Sections 2 and 8 of the Pornography Control Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Section 79 of the Children’s Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years		Army, Air Force, and Navy Regulations (titles unknown)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 79 of the Children’s Act; Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009
Compulsory Education Age		
Free Public Education		Article 17 of the Constitution

*Country has no conscription

Although the Bangladesh government maintains a list of hazardous work prohibited for children, the list does not cover domestic work, in which children are known to work long hours and are exposed to violence and sexual assault. Additionally, the Bangladesh Labor Act does not meet international standards for minimum age for work because a number of sectors are excluded from its application, including seamen, ocean-going vessels, agriculture farms with fewer than 10 workers, and domestic work. Bangladesh does not criminalize the use of children for prostitution unless the child is under guardianship or a third-party has involved them in prostitution. Bangladesh criminalizes the use of children in the transport of drugs but does not criminalize the use of children in the production of drugs. The Bangladesh Constitution also does not criminally prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. The government’s Primary Education Act stipulates a separate compulsory education age at 10, but this law is not binding as it has not been published in the national gazette. Even if the law were in effect, children between the ages of 10 and 14 would still remain particularly vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school and are not able to legally work without restriction.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, criminal and labor law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of unannounced inspections in Export Processing Zones and the lack of publicly released enforcement information hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE): Located within the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE). Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor and hazardous work. During the reporting period, DIFE implemented a 2022–2023 action plan for the Elimination of Child Labor from the Keraniganj sub-district in Dhaka and extended the program to 2025. According to DIFE, the agency removed 12,400 children through project intervention. Furthermore, DIFE organized awareness-building programs and meetings with Dhaka’s District Child Labor Welfare Committee and District Child Labor Monitoring Committee.

Bangladesh Police: Enforce Penal Code provisions by protecting children from forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Through its Trafficking in Persons Monitoring Cell, the Bangladesh Police investigate cases of human trafficking and enforce the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act’s anti-trafficking provisions. Operate victim support centers for trafficked women and children through partnership with 11 NGOs.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

Between June 2022 and July 2023, **446** labor inspectors conducted **47,826** worksite inspections, finding **3,459** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) is the official body of the government to promote, attract, and facilitate foreign investment in the Export Processing Zones, and is also responsible for ensuring business compliance with social, environmental, safety, and security regulations in these zones. Although the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) has authority to conduct inspections in the Export Processing Zones, it is required to notify the BEPZA’s chairman in advance. Since some employers receive notification ahead of labor inspections, child labor violations may go undetected in the Export Processing Zones.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Bangladesh established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it lacks a referral mechanism to coordinate efforts among government agencies and civil society stakeholders.</p>	<p>National Child Labor Welfare Council (NCLWC): Coordinates government efforts to guide and monitor the implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor. Chaired by the MOLE and comprises officials representing relevant government ministries, international organizations, child advocacy groups, and employer and worker organizations. During the reporting period, NCLWC conducted 11 national coordination meetings, 67 divisional child labor welfare council meetings, and 177 district child rights monitoring committee meetings. In October, the labor secretary met with all the divisional commissioners to intensify child labor monitoring activities by the divisional committees.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Bangladesh established policies related to child labor. However, lack of coordination of government ministries responsible for implementing the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor hindered the policy from fulfilling its mandates.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor (2021–2025): Identifies strategies for developing institutional capacity, increasing access to education and health services, raising social awareness, strengthening law enforcement, and creating prevention and reintegration programs. In 2023, the MOLE monitored activities of the divisional councils and district- and sub-district level coordination committees to ensure coordinated work to eliminate child labor. The MOLE also conducted a feasibility study on the elimination of child labor and disseminated findings in a workshop. Based on the study, the MOLE initiated an “Elimination and Rehabilitation of Child Labor” project.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>National Plan of Action for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking (2018–2025): Establishes a plan to build government capacity to address trafficking in persons and provide economic and social safety nets for victims and vulnerable populations, particularly children. Led by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). The national plan has been extended to 2025 due to the slow progress made during 2020 and 2021 pandemic lockdowns. During the reporting period, the government continued to focus anti-trafficking funding on prevention efforts. Additionally, in 2023, the Bangladesh government identified opportunities for improving data collection and analysis on trafficking in persons after the launch of the 2022 First National Study on Trafficking in Persons in Bangladesh.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Bangladesh funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all regions and sectors where child labor has been identified, including in the informal garment, leather, and fish-drying industries.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Bangladesh.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Elimination of Hazardous Child Labor–Phase IV (2021–2023):† \$33 million, 3-year project implemented by the MOLE. Removed 90,000 children from hazardous labor in Phases I through III by providing informal and technical education, stipends, and awareness raising for employers and families. The MOLE has signed agreements with 112 selected NGOs to remove 100,000 children from hazardous work in Phase IV. In 2023, the project supported non-formal education and rehabilitation of working children, children from Dalit and Bihari minority groups, and those experiencing homelessness or working in the streets. However, the project was insufficient to cover all geographical locations and all sectors involved in child labor, and irregularities in project implementation and identification of vulnerable children were found.</p> <p>School Programs:‡ Second Chance Education is funded by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee and provides informal schooling for children ages 8 to 14 who have dropped out of formal schools. The government has expressed a commitment to restart the school meal program with its own funding in 2024. During the reporting period, the World Food Program (WFP) used \$19 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to continue school feeding programs at 170 schools in the Cox’s Bazar District to benefit 49,162 students.</p> <p>Child Protection Programs:‡ Child protection programs in Bangladesh include Child Sensitive Social Protection in Bangladesh (CSPB) II, which will end in 2024. The CSPB Project is implemented by the Ministry of Social Welfare’s Department of Social Services, with support from UNICEF, and aims to reduce violence, abuse, and neglect against children. The project offers case management services to identify vulnerable children and provides psychological counseling through the Child Friendly Services hub and conditional cash support to reduce child labor. The government also operates a 24-hour emergency hotline called Child Helpline 1098. In fiscal year 2022–2023, the Helpline received over 10,000 reports related to child abuse. Of the reported cases, over 5,000 children received legal support through the helpline and the program helped stop over 2,000 cases of child marriage through counseling, legal, and financial assistance to parents.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Although the Bangladesh Labor Act (BLA) allows formal sector workers to form and join trade unions, it excludes some informal workers including laborers, agricultural workers on farms with fewer than 10 workers, and domestic workers, in which large number of children work. The Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Labor Act prohibits trade unions in the export processing zones, which employ more than 502,000 workers. The government does not adequately enforce laws protecting freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, and labor leaders and organizers face violence, dismissal, blacklisting, and arrest. Since unions play a pivotal role in identifying and combating child labor, these restrictions may allow violations, including in the informal sectors, to go unreported.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



BELIZE

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Belize made moderate advancement in its efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Belize joined the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor and became the 31st member state in the initiative, which has the goal of eradicating and preventing the worst forms of child labor. Belize also extended free high school education to 1,600 students from economically vulnerable communities located in the poorest and the most gang and crime-affected areas. In addition, the government assisted nearly 8,000 adults and children from underserved communities in obtaining their birth certificates, which are necessary for accessing education and social services. The government also conducted an outreach campaign to raise awareness and sensitivity to child labor, signing several memoranda of understanding with associations of sugarcane producers and citrus growers. However, despite these efforts, Belize does not meet international standards on the prohibition of hazardous work because children over age 14 are permitted to work in dangerous activities. In addition, Belize has not adequately prohibited the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.

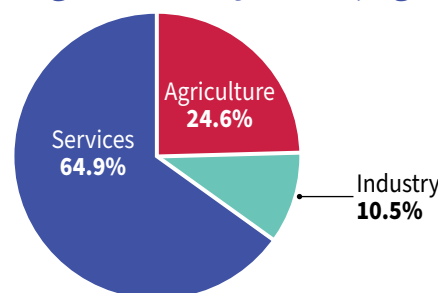


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	1.6% (1,405)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	94.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	1.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Belize are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities, such as the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and contraband goods. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in agriculture, construction, and the fishing industry.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including sowing, planting, weeding, maintaining farmland, harvesting, and clearing for bananas, citrus fruits, and sugarcane; fumigating with herbicides and insecticides; and operating machinery, including tractors, vehicles, and small planes. Butchering and raising livestock. Fishing, diving to clear snagged nets, and using sharp tools.



Industry

Construction, forestry, and lumber, including carrying heavy loads, carpentry, masonry, wood carving, and working in sawmills. Operating power tools without proper training and supervision, and working at dangerous heights without safety harnesses. Quarrying, including operating machinery. Building and repairing fishing vessels, utilizing dangerous chemicals and other substances.



Services

Street, wholesale, and retail vending. Yard work, including using lawnmowers, weed eaters, and machetes. Domestic work, including cleaning and providing childcare services. Food services, including cooking, using large mixers, and grilling. Working in the tourist sector, including in food and alcohol services and hospitality, and as tour guides, maintenance personnel, and security guards. Working in auto repair, including as workshop mechanics and repairing tires. Welding. Transportation, including working as bus attendants, collecting fares, carrying heavy loads, and pumping gas.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in food services. Use in illicit activities, such as the trafficking of drugs, weapons, contraband goods, and engagement in theft, burglary, and assault.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Belize’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law’s light work provisions specify the activities in which light work may be undertaken by children.

Adopt a list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children and ensure that all children under age 18 are prohibited from engaging in hazardous work.

Criminally prohibit giving or promising remuneration or other benefits to children aged 16 or 17 for the purpose of carrying out a sexual activity with that child, regardless of whether the person is in a relationship with the child.

Ensure that laws prohibit the use of children in specific illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Publish complete information on enforcement efforts to address child labor, including labor inspectorate funding.

Ensure that law enforcement agencies have sufficient resources, including vehicles, fuel, and inspectors to conduct labor inspections and criminal investigations, including in rural areas and in close cooperation with the Anti-Trafficking Police Unit.

Ensure that inspections are conducted in all sectors most at risk for child labor, including mining, quarrying, and domestic work.

Conduct inspections and provide social welfare in at-risk communities, including Mennonite communities.

Ensure that courts have sufficient personnel, including judges, to hear and try human trafficking cases in a timely manner.

Prosecute and impose criminal penalties for the worst forms of child labor, including for government officials.

Improve transparency regarding the status of child labor complaints that are being investigated.

Social Programs

Conduct a comprehensive national survey on children’s work activities to determine whether children are engaged in or at risk of involvement in the worst forms of child labor, to inform policies and programs.

Plan and deliver awareness sessions to youth that LGBTQIA+ children are more vulnerable to trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation, highlighting how to report these events and search for help and support. Provide targeted social programs to help and support to LGBTQIA+ youth.

Increase access to education by eliminating fees, improving educational facilities, hiring additional qualified teachers, and providing textbooks, uniforms, and meals.

Plan and deliver educational and awareness-raising campaigns in Mennonite communities on the harm hazardous tasks cause to children, and reasons these tasks should not be fulfilled by children in the future.

Implement programs to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and programs to assist children working in agriculture, fisheries, and construction.

Provide special targeted support to undocumented migrant children and asylum-seekers to prevent child labor exploitation. Provide temporary work authorization documents for asylum-seekers until their case hearings.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In Belize girls, migrant children from Central America, and LGBTQIA+ persons are most at risk for the worst forms of child labor. Girls and LGBTQIA+ youth are at risk of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Undocumented migrant children and asylum seekers are vulnerable to forced child labor as a result of not having identification documents and work authorizations. Mennonite children are involved in hazardous tasks, such as operating machinery, tractors and small planes, and fumigating with herbicides and insecticides. Minors, especially boys between the ages of 10 and 15, are engaged in illicit activities such as trafficking and selling drugs throughout the country, and weapons in the Belize City area. Gangs also coerce male minors into theft, burglary, assault, and the assassination of members from rival gangs.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Belize lacks an adequate number of qualified teachers, properly equipped facilities, and sufficient supplies. In particular, schools are not furnished with chalk boards, pens, paper, or internet access. Access to education in Belize is also hindered by the cost of school fees, textbooks, uniforms, and meals. Government subsidies toward educational expenses are used by 60 percent of high school students, but subsidies do not fully cover the mentioned fees. For children outside of Belize City, Toledo, and Stann Creek, access to subsidies is not automatic and is conditioned by an application process. As a result of local administrative interference, funds do not always reach all qualifying students. Access to education also may get delayed if children are lacking or missing identification documents.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Belize has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Belize’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for hazardous work and the identification of hazardous occupations or activities for children, prohibitions related to the use of children in illicit activities, and the prohibition of military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Articles 2, 54, 164, 169, and 172 of the Labor Act; Articles 2 and 3 of the Shops Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 14 Years		Articles 2 and 7 of the Families and Children Act; Articles 2, 54, 169 and 172 of the Labor Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 8 of the Constitution; Articles 157–158 and 199 of the Labor Act; Articles 2 and 11 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2–3 and 11 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act; Article 9 of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 2, 11, 13, and 14 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act; Articles 2–9 of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act; Articles 49–51 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 16 of the Defense Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 14 Years		Articles 2 and 59 of the Education and Training Act; Articles 2 and 34 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 70 of the Education and Training Act; Article 45 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

While Belizean law sets the minimum legal age for work in wholesale and retail trade or business at age 14, the law is inconsistent with international standards on light work. There is no formal definition of such work, and types of light work permissible for children ages 12 to 14 have not yet been identified. Belizean law is also inconsistent with international standards on hazardous work as children over age 14 may work in industrial undertakings—including activities such as mining, manufacturing, and construction. In addition, although Belizean law indicates that children under age 18 are prohibited from being employed or engaged in any activity that may be detrimental to their health, education, or mental, physical, or moral development, the law does not specify which employment activities are detrimental to children. A list of hazardous work prohibited for all children has not been adopted as law. The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act and the Criminal Code prohibit all forms of child sexual exploitation, with the former explicitly prohibiting child pornography and pornographic performances. However, a person in a consensual relationship with a child over 16 is permitted to give or promise remuneration, goods, food, or other benefits in exchange for the sexual act. This provision leaves children vulnerable to use in prostitution. Belizean law does not contain a prohibition on the use of children in specific illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs and firearms.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Belize took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient resources to conduct inspections hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labor, and Local Government: Enforces child labor laws through its Department of Labor. Coordinates with other agencies on child labor reporting, monitoring, and enforcement activities. In 2023, the Department of Labor conducted a campaign to raise awareness of child labor throughout the country. This campaign reached students, local council members, teachers, farmers, and parents. The campaign was accompanied by a school poster competition on the theme of “Eliminating Child Labor in Belize.” The winner’s poster was produced and installed on a billboard on the George Price Highway. The Department continued conducting labor awareness trainings in 2023. In March, a training workshop gathered stakeholders from the public and private sectors, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Human Development, the Belize Agricultural Health Authority, the Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment, the Belize Tourism Industry Association, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council, the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the National Trade Union Congress of Belize, and ILO. Labor Department technical staff and enforcement officers from various agencies completed a special workplace child labor inspection training. In addition, 465 persons from the private sector attended 35 education workshops organized by the Department that were dedicated to child labor. The Department also signed a memorandum of understanding with associations of sugarcane producers and citrus growers, uniting the efforts in inspections, trainings and increasing sensitivity to the problem.

Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People’s Affairs: Enforces criminal laws through its Department of Human Services and Department of Child Protection regarding forced child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, recruitment and use of child soldiers, and use of children in illicit activities. Has a case management system, using special software.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

In 2023, 24 labor inspectors conducted 845 worksite inspections and found 0 violations. There were also 11 investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes with 0 prosecutions initiated and 0 perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Belize established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Child Labor Committee (NCLC): Coordinates efforts among ministries to prevent and eliminate child labor and implement the National Child Labor Policy. Led by the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labor, and Local Government and 14 government and civil society members. It includes the Child Labor Secretariat and Inspectorate, which identifies, coordinates, and reports on all child labor activities. Held three meetings in 2023 to discuss the implementation of inspections and educational initiatives. NCLC also met several times to design National Child Labor Campaign activities in the public and private sectors. In 2023, the Child Labor Secretariat and Inspectorate held a meeting with ILO on access to knowledge exchange and technical support through the ILO Brazil South-South Cooperation Project and met with the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration to discuss multilateral cooperation regarding child labor policies and programs.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Belize established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><small>† Policy was approved during the reporting period. ‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</small></p>	<p>National Child Labor Policy and Strategy (2022–2025): Aims to reduce incidence of child labor in Belize and take significant steps to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2025. Prioritizes addressing legislative and information gaps, increasing child labor law compliance, reducing barriers to education, and preventing child labor by ensuring adequate support. Includes feedback from 25 entities on the effectiveness of existing policies on child labor for potential improvements, and is funded by ILO, UNICEF, and the Government of Belize. Quarterly meetings on the status of policy implementation will be organized under the National Child Labor Committee, with detailed output and outcome-based reports to be issued at the end of each meeting. Recommends raising both the minimum age for work and the compulsory school age to age 16. In January 2023, a national validation workshop for feedback on the new policy was held, and the final version was published in July, but the report largely relies on data from a 2013 child labor survey, limiting its insights. While the policy contains a detailed list of hazardous work activities and conditions and a light work list, they are not legally enforceable.</p> <p>Care Model: Coordinates the protection, care, and monitoring of sexually exploited and trafficked children. Outlines the role of the Department of Human Services and the Belize Police Department in receiving allegations of commercial sexual exploitation of children and referring children to services. Began in 2020 and was active during the reporting period.</p> <p>Amnesty Program: Offers a path to regularization of their legal status for qualifying undocumented migrants, including children. In February 2023, the government offered an extension to the program through March 31, 2023, for qualified applicants. Nearly 13,500 persons, including dependent children and at least 4 victims of human trafficking, have applied and are waiting for adjudication. Between January and March 2023, 1,803 applications were submitted.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Belize funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address the full scope of the problem.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Belize.</i></p>	<p>National Healthy Start Feeding Program: The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology through its Student Welfare Unit funds and coordinates school feeding programs in under-resourced communities. In 2023, 40 primary schools and 9 high schools from across the country participated in the program, which benefited 4,713 primary school students and 2,920 high school students. The participating schools provided one meal daily 5 days per week. Schools received \$1.50 per child per meal to procure food supplies and compensate kitchen staff. The program was funded with assistance from the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan).</p> <p>Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation:† A co-responsibility cash subsidy program for the most vulnerable groups of people meeting several conditions. The conditions include a minimum yearly school attendance rate of 85 percent and immunization and pre-natal screenings for pregnant women. Qualifying applicants receive \$44 cash stipends. The program was suspended in 2020 and temporarily replaced with the ‘grocery-bag’ program. However, the government confirmed its commitment to reimplement the program with some revisions, starting in April 2024.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

BENIN

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Benin made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes to train judges, police officers, and social workers on technical and legal frameworks and tools for detecting, investigating, and prosecuting cases related to child trafficking. It also cooperated with the Governments of Gabon, Togo, the Republic of Congo, and the International Criminal Police Organization in the repatriation of child survivors across international borders. Several policies were also under development to address child labor in 2023, including a roadmap for Benin's integration into the International Labor Organization's Alliance 8.7, sector-specific action plans to combat child labor in mining and quarrying and in child domestic labor. However, the government does not meet its international agreements on education, as it does not provide universal free basic education for a minimum of nine years. In addition, inadequate funding for the labor inspectorate may impede government efforts to protect children from the worst forms of child labor. Finally, due to the lack of a unified digitized data collection system, cases are recorded on paper and researched in person, creating challenges in compiling and sharing law enforcement information.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	25.7% (Unavailable)
Boys		27.9%
Girls		23.3%
Urban		17.3%
Rural		31.3%

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	44.8% (Unavailable)
Boys		49.5%
Girls		40.4%
Urban		32.2%
Rural		55.1%
Attending School	5 to 14	70.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	18.5%

Children in Benin are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor in the production of cotton. Children also perform dangerous tasks in domestic work, street vending, and the production of crushed granite.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of cotton, including exposure to pesticides.†



Industry

Quarrying granite; including lifting heavy objects; collecting,† crushing,† and sieving† stones and gravel; working at elevated heights without protection. Washing† and sieving† in mining.



Services

Domestic work† and work in the transportation industry.† Street work, including vending and begging. Working in restaurants and bars.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, handicraft activities, and street work including vending and begging. Forced labor in agriculture, including in the production of cotton. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, selling smuggled gasoline on roadsides, and illegally selling alcohol, cigarettes, and pharmaceutical products on the street. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Benin's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish by law 9 years of free, compulsory education, including lower secondary education.

Increase the compulsory education age from 11 years to 14 years to align with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 72 to 120 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 4.8 million workers.

Increase funding for the labor inspectorate to conduct comprehensive nationwide investigations, including in sectors with a high prevalence of child labor, such as mining, quarrying, fishing, and domestic work.

Allow the labor inspectorate to freely conduct inspections in the agriculture sector.

Ensure that labor inspections are not impeded by requirement to conduct them by committee of labor inspectors, policy officers, and social workers.

Establish a unified electronic data collection system to compile and share law enforcement information on all worst forms of child labor between the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security's Office for the Protection of Minors, Families, and the Prevention of Human Trafficking.

Publish data on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of perpetrators convicted and whether penalties were imposed for worst forms of child labor crimes.

Extend the Central Office for the Protection of Minors, Families, and the Prevention of Human Trafficking's child protection services to police stations in all 12 departments in Benin and provide legal assistance to victims of trafficking.

Coordination

Ensure effective coordination among agencies, including by clarifying institutional mandates and improving communication regarding the collection and sharing of data.

Ensure the National Executive Committee to Combat Child Labor is active and publish efforts undertaken on an annual basis.

Government Policies

Dedicate adequate resources to support the implementation of all policies related to the worst forms of child labor, including the National Action Plan to Fight Trafficking in Persons.

Social Programs

Increase the number of teachers and the number of schools. Ensure the safety and well-being of children at school, especially girls, and provide adequate sanitation facilities and menstrual accommodations. Provide accessible infrastructure and increase transportation options; alleviate financial burdens associated with schooling. Remove barriers to education by providing birth registration to all children.

Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK













Children from low-income families, those without birth documents, children from parents who are illiterate and from single-parent households are especially at risk for child labor. Under a traditional practice called *vidomègon*, children—the majority of which are girls—from northern rural areas are trafficked to the urban southern corridor where community members and relatives use the promise of education or employment to exploit them in domestic servitude, markets, farming, in various trades in the production of handicrafts, and in commercial sexual exploitation.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Evidence suggests that incidences of abuse in school, including corporal punishment, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse by teachers in exchange for better grades continues to hamper educational access, especially for girls. Early and forced marriage, unplanned pregnancy, inadequate toilets and sanitation facilities, as well as cultural taboos and lack of access to menstruation education and products further impede girls' education. Other barriers include traveling long distances to attend class, not enough school buildings, and an insufficient number of teachers. The government runs 20 specialty schools for students with disabilities, but access is limited in rural areas. Children from rural and poor families also often lack identity documents due to the cost as well as to parents' limited understanding of birth registration procedures. Children without documentation may be denied education, leaving them more vulnerable to child labor.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Benin has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Benin's laws do not meet international standards on free public education as basic education through the lower secondary level is not guaranteed by law.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Articles 166 and 301 of the Labor Code; Article 210 of the Child Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 210 and 353 of the Child Code; Article 1 of the Hazardous Occupations List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Hazardous Occupations List
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 3 and 303 of the Labor Code; Articles 212 and 353 of the Child Code; Article 4 of the Law Relating to the Transportation and Trafficking of Minors
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2–4, 16, and 21–25 of the Law Relating to the Transportation and Trafficking of Minors; Articles 201, 212, 352, and 353 of the Child Code; Articles 499–501 and 504 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 4 of the Law Relating to the Transportation and Trafficking of Minors; Articles 212 and 378 of the Child Code; Article 504 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 212 and 353 of the Child Code; Article 4 of the Law Relating to the Transportation and Trafficking of Minors
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 6 of Law 2005-43
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 6 of Law 2005-43; Title II, Article 32 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 2 and 4 of the Law Relating to the Transportation and Trafficking of Minors
Compulsory Education Age, 11 Years		Article 24 of Act N° 2003-17; Article 113 of the Child Code
Free Public Education		Article 13 of the Constitution; Article 114 of the Child Code; Article 24 of Act N° 2003-17

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Children in Benin are required to attend primary school, which lasts 6 years and typically ends at age 11. This standard makes children ages 11 through 14 vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work. In addition, while the law provides free primary education to all children, basic education through the lower secondary level is not guaranteed by law, which may increase the risk of children's vulnerability to child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal enforcement agencies in Benin took actions to address child labor. However, funding constraints and lack of investigators dedicated to enforcing laws against the worst forms of child labor hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Civil Service (Ministère du Travail et du Fonction Publique [MTFP]): Enforces child labor laws and investigates labor code infractions. Oversees the National Executive Committee to Combat Child Labor (*Comité Directeur National de Lutte Contre le Travail des Enfants*). In 2023, a total of 5,664 children were identified in child labor as a result of labor inspections and 900 children, including 349 girls and 467 boys, were subsequently withdrawn from child labor. In 2023, child labor inspections took place at the departmental level, but were limited at the national level due to funding constraints. Not all inspectors working at the departmental level had sufficient transportation, fuel, and other material necessities to carry out labor inspections.

Ministry of the Interior and Public Security (Ministère de l’Intérieur et de la Sécurité Publique [MISP]): Enforces criminal laws related to the protection of minors, including the worst forms of child labor, through the Central Office for the Protection of Minors, Families, and the Prevention of Human Trafficking (OCPM). In rural areas, the police have this responsibility. The OCPM’s child protection services exist in police stations in 3 of the 12 departments in Benin (Alibori, Borgou, and Zou) and OCPM maintains a child trafficking database—Benin’s Children (*Enfants du Benin*)—to track and process child trafficking cases. Coordinates with the Ministry of Labor and Civil Service to inspect labor code infractions related to child labor, and coordinates with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance to provide assistance to survivors. Human trafficking for sexual exploitation, including child sexual exploitation, is overseen by the OCPM Vice Squad (*Brigade des Moeurs*).

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **72** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. The government also conducted **136** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated **35** prosecutions, and secured an **unknown** number of convictions.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Benin established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unclear whether it carried out any activities during the reporting period.

National Executive Committee to Combat Child Labor: Coordinates efforts to address child labor. Falls under the jurisdiction of MTFP and includes delegates from UNICEF, trade unions, local NGOs, and other government ministries. The MTFP indicated that this committee did not carry out activities during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Benin established policies related to child labor. However, resources dedicated to the implementation of the National Action Plan to Fight Trafficking in Persons were inadequate.</p>	<p>National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2019–2023): Aimed to reduce the worst forms of child labor in Benin by 70 percent by the end of 2023. The National Policy to Combat Child Labor is implemented through this action plan, and addresses legislative and institutional frameworks, develops awareness campaigns, offers education and training, provides survivor care, establishes prevention strategies, and develops institutional mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the plan. Included a vocational education program focused on formalizing and regulating apprenticeships for children. The government continued to implement this policy throughout 2023 and planned to update the National Action Plan in 2024.</p> <p>Cooperative Agreement to Combat Cross-Border Trafficking: Outlines a tripartite cooperative agreement among the Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso, and Togo committing to cooperate and assist each other in the investigation of human trafficking offenses, including child trafficking. Benin has an established track record of cooperating with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and neighboring governments, including Gabon, Togo, Niger, Nigeria, and the Republic of the Congo. In 2023, this cooperation yielded positive results with the repatriation of Beninese child survivors of forced labor from these countries.</p> <p>National Action Plan to Fight Trafficking in Persons (2020–2024): Aims to eradicate trafficking in persons, including child trafficking, by strengthening governmental systems and institutional frameworks. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Technical Commission coordinates data collection on trafficking across various government ministries and agencies and is planning a Trafficking in Persons National Information System. During the reporting period, the government stated that it had provided resources for the implementation of the National Action Plan, but research indicates the amount of resources was inadequate.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Benin funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, existing social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Benin.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Government-Funded Shelters and Retraining Centers:[†] Shelters and centers provide social services to survivors of child labor and child trafficking. Among these, OCPM operates an interim care facility for children rescued from child trafficking or labor exploitation, which has capacity for 160 children and provides housing, medical, legal, and psychological services. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance operates 85 Social Promotion Centers (<i>Centre de Promotion Sociale</i> [CPS]), which provide social services to child trafficking survivors in all of Benin’s 77 municipalities. There is also a MTFP-run vocational school program that, with the assistance of UNICEF, provides training in trades to survivors of child trafficking. In 2023, OCPM’s interim care facility and the CPSs continued to provide services to child survivors, and a new advanced CPS was inaugurated in Partago, in the Djougou commune. The Central Office for the Protection of Minors also operated a temporary shelter for child trafficking survivors in Cotonou that served 160 children on short-term stays while officials worked to settle them in long-term shelters.</p> <p>National Integrated School Feeding Program (2022–2026):[†] \$31.7 million program funded by the Government of Benin and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. Implemented by the World Food Program and Catholic Relief Services. Covers 75 percent of schools in Benin and aims to improve school retention and reduce hunger. In 2023, the program provided 16,400 metric tons of food during the first quarter of the 2023–2024 academic year.</p> <p>Administrative Census for Population Identification:[†] Program to identify and register citizens lacking identity documents; collect personal data on Beninese citizens, including newborns; and issue national biometric identification cards that can be used for civil and administrative purposes. In 2023, the government continued all program activities and consolidated information to create a national digital database of citizens.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



BHUTAN

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Bhutan made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government published data about its labor inspectorate funding and began to offer vocational training to boys upon their release from juvenile detention centers, reducing their vulnerability to child labor. However, Bhutan's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work as the Labor and Employment Act allows children aged 13 to enter the labor force; the prohibition of forced labor as the law does not criminalize slavery; and the prohibition of child trafficking as the Penal Code (Amendment) Act of Bhutan 2021 still includes the necessity of force, fraud, or coercion in child trafficking cases. In addition, the government has not adopted a national policy to address child labor and the government did not publicly release information on its criminal law enforcement efforts.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	3.8% (6,338)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	84.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	3.3%

Children in Bhutan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in forced domestic work, including forced caregiving. Children also perform dangerous tasks in construction.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming.



Industry

Construction.†



Services

Domestic work. Working in hospitality services, including restaurants. Working in automobile workshops.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic work, including forced caregiving.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Bhutan's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Increase the minimum age for work from age 13 to age 15 to meet international standards.

Ensure that laws prohibiting forced labor criminalize slavery.

Make primary education compulsory and establish a compulsory age for education that is the same as the minimum age for work.

Criminally prohibit child trafficking without needing proof of the use of force, fraud, or coercion.

Make publicly available the legal statute that prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into Bhutan's military.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Enforcement

Provide adequate training and refresher courses to inspectors.

Ensure inspectors carry out routine and targeted inspections based on analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents, including in private farms and homes even if child labor is not suspected.

Publish criminal law enforcement information, including training for criminal investigators and the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed and collected.

Publish labor law enforcement information, including the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed and collected and number of penalties imposed for worst forms of child labor crimes. Ensure investigations are conducted of suspected or reported child labor crimes.

Coordination

Publish information on the activities undertaken by the Child Labor Task Force.

Government Policies

Adopt a comprehensive policy or national action plan that addresses the worst forms of child labor and includes child labor prevention strategies.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Implement programs to make education more accessible for stateless children, children living in remote locations, children from nomadic communities and migrant populations, and children with disabilities, by improving transportation to schools and ensuring that children have access to identity documents for school enrollment.

Ensure that the National Commission for Women and Children receives enough funding to effectively implement its programs, including providing shelter homes and officers to oversee child protection, probation, and welfare services.

Create social programs that contribute to eliminating or preventing child labor, including in agriculture, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Bhutanese girls have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation and sex and labor trafficking, including for forced domestic work and caregiving. Some were also trafficked into debt bondage and faced threats of physical abuse. Some girls who dropped out of school in rural Bhutan were trafficked to urban centers to work as domestic help.














BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children living in remote villages, from nomadic communities or migrant populations, and those with disabilities face significant difficulties in accessing public schools due to lack of transportation. However, the government has made efforts in recent years to improve road infrastructure, which has improved access to education for children in remote communities. Although they have access to primary and secondary education, a small number of children who are stateless also lack access to the documentation necessary to enroll in higher education, making them more vulnerable to child labor and human trafficking.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

As Bhutan is not a member of the ILO, it has not ratified ILO Convention 138 Minimum Age for Work and ILO Convention 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor. However, it has ratified all other key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Bhutan's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the Labor and Employment Act allows children aged 13 to enter the labor force.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 13 Years		Sections 170 and 171 of the Labor and Employment Act; Regulation on Working Conditions 2012: Acceptable Forms of Child Labor
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 9(e), 170, and 171 of the Labor and Employment Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Section 9(e) of the Labor and Employment Act; Section 9 of the Regulation on Working Conditions 2012: Acceptable Forms of Child Labor
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Amendment 9 of Penal Code (Amendment) Act of Bhutan 2021; Sections 6–8, 9(a), and 10 of the Labor and Employment Act; Sections 154 and 155 of the Penal Code; Preamble and Sections 221 and 224 of the Child Care and Protection Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Section 9(a) and 10 of the Labor and Employment Act; Sections 221 and 224 of the Child Care and Protection Act; Amendment 9 of Penal Code (Amendment) Act of Bhutan 2021; Sections 154, 155, 379, and 380 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Section 9(b) and 10 of the Labor and Employment Act; Sections 222–224 of the Child Care and Protection Act; Sections 225 and 375–380 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Section 9(c) and 10 of the Labor and Employment Act; Section 220 of the Child Care and Protection Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Defense Service Rules and Regulations
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Section 9(a) and 10 of the Labor and Employment Act
Compulsory Education Age		
Free Public Education		Article 9.16 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan

*Country has no conscription

Bhutan's minimum age for work is not compliant with international standards because the Labor and Employment Act allows children aged 13 to enter the labor force. Although Bhutan provides free education through grade 10, attendance is not compulsory, which may increase the risk of children's involvement in child labor. Laws prohibiting forced labor are also not sufficient as they do not criminalize slavery. In addition, while the Bhutanese Parliament passed the Penal Code (Amendment) Act of Bhutan 2021, which amended the legal definition of human trafficking to make the legislation consistent with international standards for adults, it still includes the necessity of force, fraud, or coercion in child trafficking cases. Moreover, although the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) reports that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into Bhutan's military is age 18, the relevant Defense Service Rules and Regulations were not available for public review.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Bhutan took actions to address child labor. However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies, including a lack of adequate training provided to enforcement officials, that may have hindered adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE): On December 30, 2022, the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources was merged with relevant departments of the former MoICE. The Department of Labor (DOL) under MoICE investigates child labor complaints and ensures that employers comply with child labor laws. In addition, DOL refers cases involving the worst forms of child labor to the police and regularly inspects companies for compliance with the Labor and Employment Act. Regulations on working conditions cover issues related to child labor, hours of work, and penalties.

Royal Bhutan Police: Investigate and enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Include 3 dedicated Women and Child Protection Units and 10 Women and Child Protection Desks tasked with enforcing laws protecting women and children. Refer survivors of child abuse and exploitation to child welfare officers and the National Commission for Women and Children. Criminal and civil cases involving child labor are adjudicated by the Child Justice Court.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, 25 labor inspectors conducted 5,251 worksite inspections, finding 0 child labor violations. It is unknown whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Bhutan established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unclear whether that coordinating mechanism carried out any activities during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Child Labor Task Force: Coordinates government efforts on child labor across multiple government agencies and ministries. Led by MoICE, and comprises representatives from government, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector. Although the Child Labor Task Force was active during the reporting period, research could not determine what activities were undertaken.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>Research found no evidence that Bhutan established policies to address child labor.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Bhutan funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in agriculture, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>Women and Children Hotlines: Respond to issues related to women and children, including human trafficking cases, and provide emergency assistance and referral services. The hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and is staffed by trained counselors. The PEMA Secretariat, established in 2022 as the lead national organization promoting mental health and well-being, has assumed responsibility for many of the services previously handled by the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), including the operation of a hotline to report child protection issues and to oversee referrals to related services. MoICE, through the NCWC, also has a hotline that can receive anonymous complaints about child labor abuses. MoICE’s online system is for employers and employees to report complaints and accidents. The hotline was active during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)**Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

† Program is funded by the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Shelters for Vulnerable Women and Children:[†] Include Respect, Educate, Nurture, and Empower Women (RENEW), a Thimphu-based civil society organization (CSO) that receives government funding, and provides shelter, counseling, and survivor services for women and children who have been victims of human trafficking. During the reporting period, RENEW operated the Gawaling Happy Home (GHH), which is a shelter that provides services to women and girls, and boys up to the age of 14, who are survivors of domestic violence, gender-based violence, and human trafficking. GHH provides counseling, legal aid, emergency medical aid, crisis intervention, meditation practice, education for children, and livelihood training. The CSO, Nazhoen Lamtoen Children Halfway Home, also provides shelter, counseling, and support services to children, including children in conflict with the law, such as vocational training to boys upon their release from juvenile detention centers, in part through government funding.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



BOLIVIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Bolivia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. As part of the Regional Platform Against Human Trafficking and Smuggling, Bolivia and Argentina signed an agreement that included 35 coordinated actions to combat human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and related crimes.

In addition, the government, in collaboration with a civil society organization, Munasim Kullakita Foundation, and the police, released Alerta Juliana, a mobile application to help locate missing children, including some who could be vulnerable to human trafficking crimes, and refer them to authorities and protection services. In September, Ministerial Resolution No. 1444/23 which allows labor inspectors to conduct unannounced inspections at any time, was passed into law. However, despite these efforts, Bolivia's laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition against child trafficking because they require the use of threats, force, or coercion be proven for a crime of child trafficking to have occurred. Bolivian law also does not set a minimum age for participation in apprenticeships, and the government did not publicly release information on its labor and criminal law enforcement efforts in 2023.

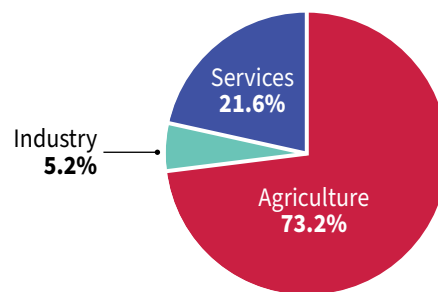


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	8.3% (162,834)
Boys		8.2%
Girls		8.4%
Urban		2.1%
Rural		20.8%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	25.5% (171,369)
Boys		25.1%
Girls		25.9%
Urban		12.6%
Rural		54.4%
Attending School	5 to 14	98.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.7%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Bolivia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, including in the harvesting of Brazil nuts, and mining.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Harvesting Brazil nuts/chestnuts,† sugarcane,† and coca; planting and harvesting corn; and raising cattle.



Industry

Mining† of gold, silver, tin, lead, and zinc; construction, including heavy lifting and shoveling; and production of bricks.†



Services

Street vending, shoe shining, assisting transportation operators, working in small stores, and cleaning cemeteries (grave sites).



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, mining, ranching, in the production and harvesting of Brazil nuts and sugarcane, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including robbery and producing, transporting, or sale of drugs.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Bolivia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from age 14 to age 17 to align with the compulsory education age.

Remove the requirement of the use of threats, force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred.

Prohibit children under the age of 14 from participating in apprenticeships.

Establish age 18 as the minimum age for compulsory recruitment by the state military, and criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Publish information on child labor law enforcement, including labor inspectorate funding, training, penalties imposed and collected, and whether routine and unannounced inspections were conducted.

Employ at least 443 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 6.6 million people.

Provide sufficient funding to increase the Ministry of Labor's capacity to adequately enforce child labor laws, including in the informal economy.

Maintain systematized records or a consolidated database on the number of violations found related to child labor.

Establish and maintain a Child Advocate Office in every municipality, allocating sufficient resources from municipal-level budgets to ensure that legal protections are extended to all children who are permitted to work and that parents are assisted in registering their children for work.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement, including training for criminal investigators and disaggregated numbers on investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, and sentences imposed for child labor crimes.

Address issues of high rotation among police, prosecutors, and judges, as well as the existing judicial case backlog, to ensure adequate prosecution of child labor crimes.

Direct sufficient resources to rural areas to address trafficking in persons crimes.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Commission for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor is active and able to carry out its intended mandate.

Government Policies

Establish and implement a new national policy or national action plan to address child labor, including its worst forms.

Social Programs

Increase availability of schools, teachers, and supplies to rural and indigenous areas to increase participation in secondary education, and facilitate access of migrant children to the requisite documents to enroll in school and to become eligible to receive academic credit and diplomas.

Establish programs for children displaced by droughts and floods to support their continued access to education.

Increase funding for social programs throughout the country for child labor victims, including for shelters for male victims of human trafficking, and ensure that victims are not cast prematurely out of shelters.

Implement programs to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from indigenous communities, Venezuelan migrant children, and children with disabilities have increased vulnerabilities to child labor exploitation and human trafficking. In rural gold mining areas, girls are trapped in commercial sexual trafficking and prevented from leaving by private security in brothels, and research indicates that children are at risk of labor trafficking in mines if their families are in debt bondage. Additionally, children in rural indigenous communities in the north of La Paz Department and around the city of Rurrenabaque are vulnerable to child sex trafficking in the tourism sector.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Attendance rates for secondary education remain low in rural areas. Additionally, the lack of teachers, schools, and textbooks in rural areas, especially in indigenous communities, create barriers to education. Venezuelan migrant families that have irregular status in Bolivia often face complications in obtaining proper documentation to enroll in the public school system, and some migrant children attending school do not receive credit and are prevented from receiving diplomas. Over two million children in Bolivia live in areas at high-risk of flooding, while an additional 600,000 live in areas at risk of droughts, disrupting their access to education and increasing their vulnerability to child labor. In 2023, 300 education systems in 21 municipalities were affected by droughts, causing temporary migration for work, with some areas reporting absence rates of 25 percent as a result.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Bolivia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Bolivia’s laws do not meet international standards on prohibitions against child trafficking, as they require that the use of threats, force, or coercion be proven for a crime to have taken place.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years	✓	Articles 8 and 58 of the General Labor Law; Article 129 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Sentence 0025/2017 of the Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal; Article 3 of Law No. 1139
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 58 and 59 of the General Labor Law; Articles 5 and 136 of the Child and Adolescent Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 136 of the Child and Adolescent Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 15, 46, and 61 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Article 34 of the Comprehensive Law against Human Trafficking and Smuggling
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	Article 15 of the Constitution; Articles 6, 34, and 35 of the Comprehensive Law against Human Trafficking and Smuggling
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 34 and 35 of the Comprehensive Law against Human Trafficking and Smuggling; Articles 281 <i>bis</i> , 321, 321 <i>bis</i> , and 323 <i>bis</i> of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 47, 48, and 56 of the Law on Coca and Controlled Substances
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years ‡	✓	Article 2 of the General Directive of Pre-Military Recruitment; Articles 2 and 7 of the Law of National Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✗	Articles 108 and 249 of the Constitution; Article 1 of Supreme Decree No. 1875; Article 1 of Supreme Decree No. 21479

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years [‡]		Article 81 of the Constitution; Articles 1, 8, 9, and 11–14 of the Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez Education Law
Free Public Education		Articles 17 and 81 of the Constitution; Article 1 of the Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez Education Law; Article 115 of the Child and Adolescent Code

* The minimum age for combat is 18 per Article 36 of the Law of National Military Service.

‡ Age calculated based on available information.

As the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Furthermore, although Bolivian law specifies that education is compulsory through secondary school, it does not specify a start or end age. Bolivian law requires employers to allow apprentices time to attend school. However, it does not set a minimum age of at least 14 for participation in apprenticeships. In addition, prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require that the use of threats, force, or coercion be proven in order for a crime to have taken place. Articles 108 and 249 of the Constitution require Bolivian males to perform compulsory military service in accordance with national law. Article 1 of Supreme Decree No. 1875, passed in 2014, lowered the minimum age at which compulsory military service may begin, from age 18, as previously established, to age 17, which does not comply with international standards.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Bolivia took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resource allocation, including for prosecutors and judges, hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Enforces child labor laws by conducting routine labor inspections and responding to complaints from the public. Also refers cases to the Labor Courts for adjudication of penalties and unpaid wages. If a child is discovered working in hazardous or illegal conditions during an investigation, the case is referred to the municipal Child Advocate Office. Carries out child labor specific inspections through its Special Unit for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor. However, MOL did not provide any official data in 2023 to show evidence that routine inspections occurred.

Prosecutor's Office: Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor at the departmental level, in coordination with the Attorney General's Office. Together with the municipal Child Advocate Office, provides legal support and lawyers to child labor victims. The Attorney General's Office oversees investigations and prosecutions at the national level, while regional prosecutors, in collaboration with the Bolivian National Police, pursue cases of human trafficking and maintain a database of these cases. However, research indicates that prosecutors and judges do not have adequate funding to carry out their work.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Bolivia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, a lack of public reporting on activities hinders the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Commission for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor: Coordinates national efforts on child labor issues. Led by MOL, and includes the Ministries of Justice, Education, and Planning, and several NGOs. Research was unable to determine whether the coordinating body carried out activities during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Bolivia established policies related to child labor. However, Bolivia does not have a national action plan to address all worst forms of child labor in the country.</p>	<p>Plurinational Policy Against Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants and Related Crimes (2021–2025):† Developed with support from the International Organization for Migration, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, and civil society, and aims to educate the population about human trafficking and smuggling, reintegrate survivors, train law enforcement officials, provide prompt and effective justice, promote mechanisms for international coordination, and build an institutional environment able to address human trafficking and smuggling. In December 2023, the Bolivian government organized the Eighth National Meeting of Departmental Councils Against Human Trafficking to coordinate national policy against trafficking with the nine departmental councils.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Bolivia funded and participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states in which child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>Juancito Pinto Subsidy Program:† Government program that provides a conditional cash transfer to all primary and some secondary school students to increase school attendance and reduce the dropout rate. In 2023, the program provided more than 2.3 million students with \$29 annually upon proving regular attendance in school.</p> <p>Market Spaces: Program introduced by the Santa Cruz municipal government that trains over 300 university volunteers and reaches over 500 children between the ages of 3 and 12 in the 8 Santa Cruz markets. Children who previously worked with their parents in the market now receive mentorship and food, and abuse is monitored and reported. The concept was initially supported by the Government of Santa Cruz and UNICEF and costs about \$5,000 per year to maintain but is now self-sustaining through a small tax collected from each market vendor or parent.</p> <p>Bolivian Foreign Trade Institute’s Triple Seal Initiative: Initiative of the Department of Santa Cruz’s MOL, in collaboration with the Bolivian Institute of Standardization and Quality, UNICEF, and ILO, to develop a voluntary certification program that recognizes companies that comply with Bolivian law and ILO conventions on child labor and forced labor issues. Active during the reporting period.</p>

† Program is funded by the Government of Bolivia.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Bosnia and Herzegovina made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Law enforcement officers participated in workshops to further their knowledge of labor exploitation issues. The State Coordinator's Office also provided four non-governmental organizations with financial support (totaling approximately \$73,000) to operate assistance programs and shelters for victims of human trafficking. However, social programs dedicated to assisting children involved in forced begging do not have adequate resources, and representatives from both entities' Ministries of Labor are not included in the National Anti-Trafficking Strike Force, which limits coordination efforts. Furthermore, most child labor is in the informal sector, and laws on the minimum age for work do not meet international standards because they do not apply to children who are self-employed or those working outside of formal employment relationships. Finally, the government does not have an official mechanism to refer children found in child labor to social services providers.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	8.9% (44,017)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	83.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	10.6%

Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Services

Street work, including vending and washing car windows.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced begging and forced domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Illicit activity, including pickpocketing.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Bosnia and Herzegovina's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the minimum age for work applies to all children, including those who are self-employed or working outside of formal employment relationships.

Criminalize forced labor, debt bondage, and slavery separately from human trafficking in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brčko District.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the use, procurement, and offering of a child for the production and trafficking of drugs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include sectors in which child labor is known to occur, including street begging.

Criminally prohibit using children for prostitution, production of pornography, and pornographic performances in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Enforcement

Collect and publish information on labor and criminal law enforcement efforts, including labor inspectorate funding and whether criminal investigators receive training.

Create an official mechanism for referring children identified during labor inspections to social services providers.

Ensure that children are not penalized for being victims of the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that law enforcement, judiciary officials, and social services providers are trained on indicators of child trafficking—including trafficking of migrant children—and are able to properly identify victims, classify violations, use referral mechanisms, and prosecute offenders.

Ensure that labor inspectors receive training on all sectors in which child labor is known to occur, including hazardous work in agriculture.

Government Policies

Ensure that the government publishes information on activities conducted under policies that address child labor, including the Protocol on Cooperation and Treatment in Cases of Unlawful Behavior to the Detriment of Children in Canton Sarajevo.

Social Programs

Provide inclusive education initiatives with adequate funding to support the needs of vulnerable children.

Ensure that all children have access to education by accommodating children with disabilities and preventing discrimination against minority students.

Ensure that all children have access to birth registration or identity documentation required to enroll in school.

Allow Bosniak children in Republika Srpska to access education in the Bosnian language and end the “Two Schools Under One Roof” practice to eliminate discrimination in schools based on ethnicity in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Provide programs such as Daily Centers and Centers for Social Welfare with adequate financial and technical resources to assist vulnerable families and survivors of child labor.

Provide sufficient funding for social services to assist survivors of domestic or international human trafficking, including unaccompanied minors.

Establish programs to support street children living outside of Sarajevo.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

In BiH, Roma children are the most vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor due to barriers to accessing education. Some Roma students face linguistic and cultural discrimination from teachers, peers, and school administrators, resulting in a disproportionate number of Roma children being enrolled in schools for children with intellectual disabilities despite no prior medical evaluation that would indicate a need to be enrolled in a special education program. In addition, some Roma children lack birth registration documents, which are required to attend school in BiH. Reports from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees indicate that some children in BiH were still designated as being at risk of statelessness in 2023. Children who are classified as stateless are at higher risk for labor exploitation. Additionally, migrants—particularly unaccompanied children—from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and other countries who travel through BiH are potential targets for human traffickers.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Schools in the Republika Srpska (RS) entity deny the right of some Bosniak children to receive instruction in the Bosnian language; as a result, these children sometimes travel long distances to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) entity to receive education in their language. In addition, discrimination persists under the “Two Schools Under One Roof” practice between Bosniaks and Croats in FBiH. Under this system, Bosniak and Croat children are in segregated classes following separate curricula in the same school building. This creates obstacles for students who wish to attend schools other than those that match their ethnic identity and enables ethnic discrimination in schools, which can lead to absenteeism. Children with disabilities also face barriers to accessing education, which may make them vulnerable to child labor. Sources indicated that the government has not allocated enough financial resources for adequate implementation of inclusive education initiatives, particularly for students with disabilities.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, BiH’s laws do not meet the international standard for child trafficking because BiH’s Criminal Code fails to specifically outlaw forced labor, debt bondage, and slavery separately from trafficking in persons.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 20 and 171 of the Labor Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 57 of the Labor Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 42, 57, and 171 of the Labor Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 185, 186, and 186a of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Article II of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 185, 186, and 186a of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 186 and 187 of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 195 of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 9 of the Law on the Service in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 9 of the Law on the Service in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 173(e) of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 16 of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Free Public Education		Article 16 of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The labor laws of FBiH, RS, and Brčko District (BD) do not conform to international standards that require all children to be protected by the minimum age to work because the labor laws do not apply to children who are self-employed or working outside of formal employment relationships. In addition, FBiH, RS, and BD do not include street begging in their lists of hazardous occupations prohibited for children. Although the Criminal Code of BiH criminalizes human trafficking for forced labor, it fails to specifically outlaw forced labor, debt bondage, and slavery separately from trafficking in persons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brčko District. Laws related to illicit activities in BiH are also not sufficient because using, procuring, and offering children for the production and trafficking of drugs are not criminally prohibited. Moreover, the laws of BiH and FBiH do not meet international standards for the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children, and legislation in BiH, FBiH, RS, and BD does not meet international standards for the recruitment of minors by non-state armed groups, as their criminal codes fail to explicitly prohibit this offense.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in BiH took actions to address child labor. However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministries of Labor and Social Policy: Enforce labor laws, including those on child labor. The Cantonal-Level Labor Inspectorates (FBiH), the Ministry of Labor and Veterans’ Labor Inspectorate (RS), and the Administrative Support Department (BD) enforce labor laws at the canton, entity, and district levels, respectively.

State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) and Border Police (SBP): SIPA investigates human trafficking crimes and enforces anti-trafficking laws across the entire country. SBP identifies victims of human trafficking at the border.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **179** labor inspectors conducted **196,039** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, however it is **unknown** whether prosecutions were initiated or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Bosnia and Herzegovina established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

Department of the State Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Persons (State Coordinator) within the Ministry of Security (MOS): In conjunction with the Anti-Trafficking Strike Force, coordinates human trafficking survivor protection and rehabilitation efforts involving both relevant ministries and NGOs. Oversees the human trafficking database, which includes data from NGOs, SIPA, SBP, and police agencies and prosecutors’ offices at all levels. During the reporting period, the State Coordinator’s Office provided four NGOs with financial support (totaling approximately \$73,000) to operate assistance programs and shelters for victims of trafficking.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor Bosnia and Herzegovina established policies related to child labor. However, there is insufficient funding for the regional monitoring teams.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Strategy to Suppress Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2020–2023): Included activities to prevent forced labor, including hazardous child labor as a result of trafficking in persons. During the reporting period, the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to support mobile identification teams in eight major cities to locate children in need of social assistance, particularly children involved in forced begging. The mobile teams identified a total of 243 children involved in forced begging in 2023; 33 of these children were further designated as potential victims of trafficking and were referred to social welfare centers.</p> <p>Guidelines for Work of Regional Monitoring Teams: Enhance the cooperation of monitoring team members and the National Referral Mechanism. During the reporting period, the regional monitoring teams were active but continued to face budgetary challenges which impacted their ability to follow the Guidelines and ensure the continuity of their work.</p> <p>Protocol on Cooperation and Treatment in Cases of Unlawful Behavior to the Detriment of Children in Sarajevo Canton: Prevents begging, exploitation of children, and abuse of children in Canton Sarajevo. Sets rules on state cooperation for victim protection and mandates the provision of physical, psychological, health, and social protection for children. Research was unable to determine whether the Protocol was active during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Bosnia and Herzegovina funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs do not have adequate funding.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of BiH.</i></p>	<p>Daily Centers:‡ Centers for Social Welfare-supported and NGO-operated drop-in centers in seven locations across the country, designed to assist vulnerable street children. Provide direct assistance to children, including educational activities, counseling, food, and hygiene. Sarajevo’s Center for Social Welfare Mobile Team also engages in daily outreach to children on the streets and to families in vulnerable communities throughout the capital region. However, Sarajevo’s Mobile Team staff continue to lack sufficient resources for their work, especially reliable transportation. Daily Centers also lack consistent financial and technical support, which may limit the ability of these centers to identify and assist children working on the streets. In addition, support for street children outside Sarajevo varies significantly. Although the government provides some social services for low-income families through the Centers for Social Welfare, many families do not receive enough assistance to reduce their reliance on child labor, especially begging.</p> <p>Assistance for Trafficking Victims:‡ Government program that allocates small grants to local NGOs for the provision of shelter and social services to survivors of human trafficking, including counseling, educational assistance, and job training for domestic survivors, and visa and legal services for foreign survivors of human trafficking. During the reporting period, anti-trafficking NGOs continued to provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking.</p> <p>Prevention and Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Joint project by the EU and the Council of Europe with \$790,720 in funding over 3 years to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in its efforts to better identify victims of human trafficking and heighten public awareness of human trafficking. Activities include training for labor inspectors, police officers, healthcare providers, and education professionals.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

During the reporting period, the government continued to allocate funds to the Roma community under the 2021–2025 Action Plan for Social Inclusion of Roma. The funding totaled approximately \$772,000 and was allocated towards housing, employment, healthcare, and educational support.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

BOTSWANA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Botswana made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. After several years of non-reporting on the matter, the government reported that labor inspectors were trained on the elimination of child labor through a month-long training program. Additionally, through a program offered with the International Labor Organization, the government trained officers from several civil society partners on the elimination of child labor. Botswana also renewed its anti-human trafficking national action plan and began using a model which allows for enhanced targeting of labor inspections towards problematic sectors, including those in regular non-compliance with child labor laws. Despite these efforts, gaps remain in the country's legal framework, including the lack of a minimum age for compulsory education and a list of hazardous work activities for children. The government also did not provide information on its criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. In addition, the design and implementation of social programs to address child labor are insufficient to fully address the scope of the problem, especially in commercial sexual exploitation, cattle herding, and domestic work.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Botswana are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture and services.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Herding, spraying, and rearing of livestock. Farming activities, including mending fences.



Services

Domestic work and street work, including vending.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in herding and in domestic service.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Botswana's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Specify in the law's light work provisions the activities and conditions in which light work may be undertaken by children aged 14 and above.

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

Criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution.

Establish by law an age up to which education is compulsory that extends to the age of 15, the minimum age for employment.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 50 to 69 to provide adequate coverage of approximately 1 million workers.

Provide the labor inspectorate with sufficient human and financial resources to adequately enforce labor laws, including on farms and cattle posts.

Publish information on labor law enforcement, including the labor inspectorate's funding.

Institutionalize training for all labor inspectors, including training on laws related to child labor.

Authorize labor inspectors to access worksite premises and conduct inspections at farms and in domestic households.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Publish information about criminal law enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, including information regarding the training for criminal investigators, number of investigations related to child labor, number of prosecutions and convictions related to child labor, and penalties imposed in criminal cases related to child labor.

Provide criminal law enforcement bodies with sufficient resources, personnel, and training to address the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure that the Advisory Committee on Child Labor is active and able to carry out its intended mandate of overseeing government policies and efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as commercial sexual exploitation and forced child labor in cattle herding and in domestic service.

Implement key policies related to child labor and child well-being, like the National Youth Policy, and publish results from activities implemented during the reporting period.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Remove educational barriers and make education accessible for all children by taking measures to reduce travel distances to reach schools, preventing abuse in schools, increasing resources for students with disabilities, and expanding birth registration and national identification for migrants and children born outside of health facilities.

Publish activities undertaken to implement key social programs related to child labor, including the shelters for victims of human trafficking and the National School Feeding Program.

Establish official government-run shelters to assist child survivors of the worst forms of child labor, while ensuring that shelters have sufficient resources to attend to the care of older children.

Develop and implement programs to fully address the scope of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, in domestic work, and in cattle herding, and ensure that the designs of these programs pay careful consideration to children in groups at a higher risk of child labor, including children of the San community and children living in rural areas.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Children of the indigenous San community are particularly vulnerable to child labor, especially on private cattle farms, as they often lack identity documents and are therefore unable to attend school in Botswana. San parents frequently encourage their children to work to support their families. Some parents in poor rural communities also send their children to engage in domestic work in cities, or at farms or cattle posts, increasing their vulnerability to labor exploitation.

**BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**

Insufficient transportation to schools in remote regions of Botswana creates educational barriers for children from minority ethnic groups. In addition, secondary school enrollment may require an identity document, such as a birth certificate or national identity card. Although students without these documents – such as migrant children, children born outside of health care facilities, or children whose parents did not register them at birth – may enroll in primary school, they may not be able to enroll in secondary schools or register for national exams, making them more vulnerable to child labor. Access to education for students with disabilities is also insufficient. Moreover, children of the San ethnic minority live far from schools and thus many attend boarding schools in Ghanzi. Poor conditions and abuse of children at the Ghanzi boarding schools lead many San students to drop out at an early age, rendering them vulnerable to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Botswana has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Botswana’s laws do not meet the international standards due to the absence of a compulsory education age and hazardous work list.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Articles 2 and 107 of the Employment Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 2 and 110 of the Employment Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✗	
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 2 and 71 of the Employment Act; Section 114 of the Children’s Act; Articles 9 and 10 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act; Section 262 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Section 114 of the Children’s Act; Article 175 of the Penal Code; Articles 9 and 10 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Sections 25 and 57–59 of the Children’s Act; Sections 9 and 10 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Section 60 of the Children’s Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Section 17 of the Botswana Defense Force Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Section 26 of the Children’s Act
Compulsory Education Age	✗	
Free Public Education	✓	Section 18 of the Children’s Act

* Country has no conscription

The Employment Act allows children to conduct light work activities at age 14, with restrictions on the number of hours a child can work during a single day and in a week and includes a requirement that the Labor Commissioner approve any form of work outside of domestic service; however, the government has yet to determine the conditions or types of light work activities permitted for children. Additionally, while the Employment Act prohibits night work and underground work for children, the government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. Moreover, legal protections for children from commercial sexual exploitation do not meet international standards because the use of children for prostitution is not criminally prohibited. Despite the provision of free basic education, there is not a compulsory education age, which may increase children’s vulnerability to child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Botswana took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resources hindered law enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Home Affairs: Enforces child labor laws and conducts inspections under the Employment Act. Facilitates coordination with local leaders and law enforcement officers. Posts labor inspectors to District Council offices to carry out their duties. Coordinates with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), and MLGRD’s District and Municipal Council Child Welfare Divisions, to respond to cases of child labor and place children in safe environments. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Labor was active and conducted labor inspections. Reports indicate that the labor inspectorate lacks the human and financial capacity to maintain pace with industry growth.

Botswana Police Service (BPS): Responds to cases of labor law violation, including child labor violations, based on referrals from the Ministry of Labor. Investigates cases of the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking. During the reporting period, BPS opened three child-friendly police stations, in which officers trained to handle cases related to children are stationed.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **50** labor inspectors performed **1,141** worksite inspections, finding **1** child labor violation. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Botswana established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of information on steps the coordination mechanism took to address child labor during the reporting year.

Advisory Committee on Child Labor: Oversees government policies and efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor. Reports to the government three to four times a year. Led by the Ministry of Labor, with participation from MLGRD, Ministry of Finance, Office of the President, various NGOs, worker federations, and employer organizations. Research could not determine whether the Advisory Committee on Child Labor was active during the reporting period.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Botswana established policies related to child labor. However, the government does not have a policy specifically intended to address the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor in cattle herding and in domestic service.

National Youth Policy (2010): Implemented by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture. Outlines groups of children that may need extra support, development, and aid—including youth involved in child labor. Research was unable to determine whether actions were taken to implement the policy during the reporting period.

Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan (2023–2028): Provides a clear framework to guide, facilitate and enhance the national anti-human trafficking agenda. Outlines strategic interventions for the protection and support of victims of trafficking in persons, the investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons, and effective cooperation on trafficking in persons interventions nationally and internationally. The newly enacted policy calls for the inclusion of human trafficking issues in schools and for a survey on human trafficking, inclusive of children trafficked for labor. The government allocated \$15.6 million to the plan for its 5-year duration.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Botswana funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not cover the full scope of the problem.</p>	<p>Government-Funded Programs to Prevent and Eliminate Child Labor:[†] Government-funded programs that aim to prevent child labor and increase protections for vulnerable children. These include: NGO-run shelters that cater to human trafficking survivors, including children; the National School Feeding Program, which provides meals to children (grades one through seven) in all public primary schools in the country; the Remote Area Development Program, which provides a second meal to school children living in remote areas and children from marginalized communities; the Orphan Care Program, which provides orphans with meals and subsidizes the cost of school fees and transportation costs; and the Needy Children and Needy Students program, managed by MLGRD, which provides families with free meals, tuition exemptions, and school uniforms. Research indicates that these programs were active during the reporting period, but the government did not publish specific activities undertaken to implement them.</p> <p>Addressing Child Labor in Botswana: U.S. Embassy-Gaborone-funded project, implemented by Humana People to People, a local NGO operating in Botswana that aims to raise local awareness and increase community engagement on child labor concerns, in coordination with Botswana’s Minister of Labor. Targets Gantsi and Tsabong, areas with high levels of poverty and close proximity to farms. During the reporting period, the project identified at least 10 children under the age of 15 who were probable victims of child labor. The cases were referred to the District Labor Office for validation and investigations.</p>
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[†] Program is funded by the Government of Botswana.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



BRAZIL

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Brazil made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government published two updates to the national “Dirty List” in April and October with the total addition of 336 new employers. The “Dirty List” contains data on employers that the Ministry of Labor and Employment finds to be using slave labor, including that of children. The Ministry of Labor and Employment also developed a manual on child labor and the protection of adolescent workers that includes information about national and international standards on child labor, types of work permitted for adolescents, and how to identify child labor and its risks. In addition, the government conducted a preliminary assessment of the third National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and presented the results to the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Lastly, in March 2023, it relaunched the *Bolsa Família* cash program, which included the highest increase in the amount paid to participating families in the program’s history. The new monthly amount provided to participating families increased to a minimum of \$121, with families of children under age 18 or younger receiving an additional supplement of \$10 to \$30 per child. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, its laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of child trafficking because they require the use of threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse be established for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred. Furthermore, the reported number of labor inspectors is likely not sufficient to provide adequate coverage of the workforce, and local governments lack the capacity to fully implement and monitor the National Program to Eradicate Child Labor and other social protection programs.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	2.1% (619,654)
Boys		2.7%
Girls		1.5%
Urban		1.2%
Rural		7.2%

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	16.3% (1,484,274)
Boys		20.2%
Girls		12.3%
Urban		14.3%
Rural		27.2%
Attending School	5 to 14	98.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	2.5%

Children in Brazil are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture, including in the production of coffee.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of bananas, cocoa, coffee, corn, cotton,† manioc, pineapples,† rice, sisal,† sugarcane,† tobacco,† and the harvesting of açaí. Fishing. Raising cattle and livestock, including poultry, hogs, and sheep. Working in forestry, including logging, and producing charcoal.



Industry

Slaughtering animals,† including for beef production. Processing manioc flour† and cashews.† In the production of ceramics,† bricks,† and footwear. Construction† and work in stone quarries.†



Services

Street work,† as vendors,† beggars, car washers,† recycling† collectors, garbage scavengers.† Working in

supermarkets, markets, and fairs, including hauling fruits and vegetables and transporting heavy loads. Working in restaurants and other food and drink establishments, including as food deliverers by bicycle and selling alcoholic beverages. Working in cultural work, including artistic and sports-related activities. Domestic work,† including childcare, housekeeping, and eldercare. Maintaining and repairing automobiles.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, begging, and domestic work. Use by gangs to perform illicit activities, including drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Brazil’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that laws do not require the use of threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse to establish the crime of child trafficking.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Raise the minimum age for work from 16 to 17 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Significantly increase the number of labor inspectors from 1,951 to 7,192 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 108 million workers.

Publish information related to criminal law enforcement efforts, such as the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions obtained, and whether penalties were imposed for child labor crimes.

Ensure that relevant enforcement agencies coordinate their efforts to collect and share data on cases of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and ensure that the data are disaggregated by victims’ ages.

Hold perpetrators of child labor crimes accountable in accordance with the law.

Government Policies

Implement the Federal Pact for the Eradication of Forced Labor and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Remove barriers to education, including by ensuring an adequate number of trained teachers, building a sufficient number of schools, improving school infrastructure, and taking steps to enroll children in rural areas.

Provide funding to local governments so they can implement and monitor the National Program to Eradicate Child Labor.

Provide adequate resources to state governments to ensure that child trafficking victims receive appropriate social services and ensure the availability of specialized shelters for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Publish the results of the National Forced Labor Survey conducted in 2019.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Afro-descendant children and children from rural communities are particularly vulnerable to child labor. In remote rural areas, particularly in the north and northeast, children begin working in agriculture from an early age, including performing dangerous tasks. The high rate of poverty and extreme poverty in these regions makes children increasingly vulnerable to child labor. In addition, children in the states of Espírito Santo, Ceará, Pará, Mato Grosso, and the Federal District are at higher risk for being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. Child sex tourism is particularly common in tourist and coastal areas, but reports indicate that child trafficking for sexual exploitation occurs throughout the country.















BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Some schools, particularly those in rural areas, are overcrowded, have poor infrastructure, and lack basic resources and teachers. These barriers to education access may leave children vulnerable to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Brazil has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Brazil’s laws prohibiting child trafficking do not meet international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 403 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 2 of the Hazardous Work List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Hazardous Work List
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 149 and 149-A of the Penal Code; Article 13 of Law 13.344 amending Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 149-A of the Penal Code; Article 244-A of the Child and Adolescent Statute
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 218-A, 218-B, 227, and 228 of the Penal Code; Articles 240, 241, and 244-A of the Child and Adolescent Statute
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 33 and 40 of the National System of Public Policies on Drugs; Article 244-B of the Child and Adolescent Statute
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 17 Years		Article 127 of the Military Service Regulation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 5 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years		Article 4 of the National Education Law
Free Public Education		Article 4 of the National Education Law

The national “Dirty List” containing information on employers found to be using slave labor, including that of children, was updated in April 2023 with 132 new names and again in October 2023 with a record number of 204 new names. Employers and companies added to the List pay fines and unpaid labor taxes, are prevented from receiving any credit from government or private banks, and are kept on the list until they prove that they are making concerted efforts to clean up their supply chains. However, Brazil’s laws prohibiting child trafficking do not meet international standards because they require the use of threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse to be established for the crime of child trafficking to have taken place. Furthermore, the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Brazil took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resources and impunity for violators of the law hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE): Oversees the Secretariat of Labor Inspection, which is responsible for organizing, evaluating, and monitoring labor inspection activities, including those related to child labor and forced labor. Labor inspectors carry out actions outlined in the Labor Prosecution Office’s Normative Instruction No. 02 of 2021, including by conducting unannounced inspections at sites where child labor is suspected, identifying and removing children from child labor situations, and issuing penalties. Its Special Mobile Group to Combat Child Labor carries out inspections of greater technical and operational complexity, including in isolated geographical areas and for cases classified as the worst forms of child labor according to Decree 6.481. In 2023, the MTE created a manual titled “Child

Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers,” which includes best practices from its Labor Inspectorate. The manual is structured in a Q&A format and includes information about how to identify child labor and its risks, international and national standards, descriptions of work activities permitted to adolescents, and past activities implemented by the Labor Inspectorate to address child labor in the country.

Labor Prosecution Office: Prosecutes child labor and forced labor violations by working with prosecutors from the National Committee to Combat Child and Adolescent Labor, an in-house body that coordinates efforts to address child labor, collects fines for forced labor violations, and allocates funds for initiatives that address child labor and forced labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **1,951** labor inspectors conducted **66,803** worksite inspections, finding **2,564** child labor violations. However, it is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Brazil established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor: Led by the MTE and responsible for the National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Working Adolescents, research on child labor, and awareness-raising campaigns. In 2023, the commission was restructured back to its original multipartite composition, including representatives from the federal government, workers’ and employers’ organizations, civil society, the justice system, and international organizations, such as the ILO and UNICEF. With the restructure, all representatives regained their voting rights. In addition, the commission held six meetings and established two working groups to carry out priority activities during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Brazil established policies related to child labor. However, it failed to implement some of these policies during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Working Adolescents III: Led by the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, prioritized the prevention and eradication of child labor and the protection of adolescent workers by raising awareness of child labor and its worst forms, strengthening enforcement efforts, providing families with employment opportunities, increasing access to quality education, and establishing health support systems for child labor victims. Although the Plan expired on paper in 2022, the government continued to implement the plan while it was drafting its next phase.</p> <p>National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking III: Outlined the government’s strategy to address human trafficking throughout 58 objectives based on 6 themes: policy management, information management, training, accountability, victim assistance and prevention, and public awareness raising. Although this plan expired in 2022, during the reporting period the government conducted a preliminary assessment and presented the results to the members of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons to be used in the drafting of a new plan.</p>
<p>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>Federal Pact for the Eradication of Forced Labor: Aims to establish a database and create state-level commissions to address forced labor and strengthen interagency coordination. Led by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security’s Special Secretariat for Human Rights, and currently signed by 23 of the 27 states. Research was unable to determine whether activities were taken to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

In 2023, Brazil funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation.

† Program is funded by the Government of Brazil.

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

National Program to Eradicate Child Labor (Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil [PETI]):† A nationwide social assistance program that addresses child labor through awareness-raising activities, victim identification and protection, and conditional cash transfers. To receive program benefits, family participants must ensure that children are not working and maintain at least 85 percent school attendance. During the reporting period, the National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Working Adolescents (FNPETI) Working Group developed a manual with 12 guidelines to help institutions, municipalities, and states to better design their child labor-awareness campaigns. The FNPETI, in partnership with the Labor Prosecutor’s Office, the MTE, the Labor Justice Program to Combat Child Labor, and the ILO conducted a national campaign titled, “Protecting childhood empowers the future of children and adolescents. Let’s come together to end child labor,” aimed at increasing public awareness of the child labor situation in the country and abroad, through social networks.

Bolsa Família:‡ A Ministry of Development and Social Assistance, Family and Fight against Hunger cash transfer program that assists families living in poverty and extreme poverty throughout the country. This program was re-launched in March 2023 and its average value increased to the highest amount in the program’s history. The new monthly amount provided to participating families is a minimum of \$121, with families of children under age 6 receiving an additional \$30 per child, and those with children aged 7 to 18 receiving an additional \$10 per child.

National Flow of Assistance to Victims of Slave Labor:‡ Creates an integrated network of social services providers and standardizes assistance to victims of slave labor, including child victims, across the country. Led by the Ministry for Women, Family, and Human Rights.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects



WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Brazil also places restrictions on certain bargaining rights. Specifically, bargaining agreements can be voided if the government believes that the agreement does not conform with its economic and financial policies, or if it conflicts with the current wage policy in place. In addition, collective bargaining agreements are only permitted to stand for 2 years before needing to be renegotiated. As freedom of association and collective bargaining rights play a crucial role in identifying, addressing, and preventing child labor, these restrictions may allow violations to go unreported.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

NO ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in the British Virgin Islands, in 2023, the government made no advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. In addition, there is no list of hazardous work prohibited for children, nor does the law criminalize the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. Further, as the minimum age for work of 16 years old is lower than the compulsory education age of 17 years old, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in the British Virgin Islands.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the British Virgin Islands' implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Raise the minimum age of work from age 16 to age 17 to align with the compulsory education age.

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

Criminally prohibit the use of girls ages 16–17 and boys for prostitution.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that tuition and other school fees are not imposed that would hinder free public education.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children by eliminating prohibitive school costs and violence in schools.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS











The Ministry of Education has employed truancy officers to ensure that children continue to attend school until the age of 17. While education in the British Virgin Islands is free, the cost of uniforms, books, and lunches prevents some children from attending school. In addition, violence in schools can deter children from attending. Children not in school may be vulnerable to engage in child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Each United Kingdom (UK) overseas territory has its own constitution, which sets out its system of government and its relationship with the UK, and provides for a governor or commissioner, an elected legislature, and ministers that are responsible for domestic affairs, such as internal security (police), immigration, education, and healthcare. They are self-governing, except in the areas of foreign affairs and defense. Domestic UK law does not generally apply unless explicitly extended to the British Virgin Islands. Under Article 35(4) of the ILO

Constitution, when the UK ratifies a Convention, the Territory must consider if it will accept the Convention. If the Convention is accepted, it is considered applicable to that Territory. While the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been extended to and accepted by the British Virgin Islands, it has not ratified other key international conventions concerning child labor, including ILO C. 182, ILO C. 138, UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, prohibitions related to the use of children in illicit activities, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and military recruitment by non-state armed groups are not sufficient to meet international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 3 and 128 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 3 and 130 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 130 and 146 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 3 and 130 of the Labor Code; Article 14 of the Constitution Order; Section 201A of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Section 201A of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 127, 201A, and 284A of the Criminal Code; Articles 3 and 130 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 3 and 130 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years		Section 2b of the Education Amendment Act of 2014; Part 2, Division 3, Section 28(1) of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 22 of the Constitution Order; Section 17 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

† Country has no standing military

In the British Virgin Islands, there is no criminal prohibition against using children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. In addition, the laws prohibiting the commercial sexual exploitation of children do not meet international standards by not covering girls ages 16–17 or boys for use of a child in prostitution. The Labor Code specifies that hazardous work be defined by the Minister of Labor, but the Minister of Labor has not defined hazardous work for children, including seafaring, or light work that may be engaged in by children who are at least age 14. Furthermore, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Additionally, free public education is not available up until the compulsory education age and public schools may charge tuition fees.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, the British Virgin Islands have established an institutional mechanism for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor: Enforces labor laws and collects data and statistics on violations of the Labor Code and plans and conducts labor inspections.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

As there is no evidence of a child labor problem, there appears to be no need for policies, programs, or a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports*



BURKINA FASO

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Burkina Faso made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted a list of light work authorized for children that meets international standards. The government also deployed a mobile app called *Kogl-Kamba* in a few locations to facilitate reporting and share information with social services providers on child labor issues. Lastly, the government carried out radio campaigns nationally in five local languages to inform the population, especially rural communities, on what is considered hazardous work for children. However, despite these efforts, the government lacked financial resources for the enforcement of child labor laws and did not release information on its labor law enforcement efforts. Finally, the government did not provide information on activities undertaken to implement the National Child Protection Strategy during the reporting period.

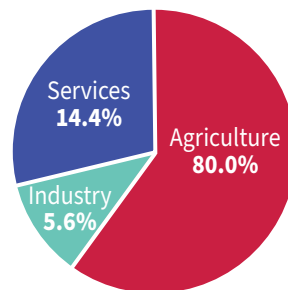


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	35.7% (849,922)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	Unavailable

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Burkina Faso are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in farming and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in artisanal gold mining, which is particularly arduous and often exposes children to dangerous chemicals such as cyanide and mercury, which are used in the gold extraction process.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture planting, weeding, and harvesting crops, including cotton. Also working in raising and herding† livestock.



Industry

Engaged in artisanal mining† of gold, including digging† and crushing† rock, working underground,† carrying heavy loads,† and using cyanide† and mercury.† Quarrying† and transporting heavy loads† while working to extract granite. Working in construction.



Services

Engaged in domestic work, and street work† as vendors.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced farming, including in the production of cotton, and livestock raising. Forced labor in domestic work, gold mining, quarrying, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging in Koranic schools. Use in illicit activities, including recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Burkina Faso’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement

Ensure that labor law enforcement receives sufficient human and financial resources to fulfill its mandates, including conducting an adequate number of inspections and following up after preliminary inspections to ensure the remediation of notices to comply with labor law obligations.

Publish statistics on labor law enforcement efforts, including the labor inspectorate’s funding, number of labor inspectors employed, number and type of labor inspections conducted, number of child labor violations found, number of penalties imposed and collected, number of inspections conducted at worksites, number of targeted and routine inspections, and whether unannounced inspections were conducted.

Establish and publish data on a mechanism to log all calls to the government child protection hotline and to track cases of child labor for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement authorities and frontline responders apply standard victim identification and referral procedures uniformly.

Publish statistics on criminal law enforcement efforts, including training for criminal investigators, number of investigations, violations found, and prosecutions initiated.

Take active measures, including ensuring that a mechanism is operational, to ensure that children are not inappropriately incarcerated, detained with adults, penalized, or physically harmed solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of their subjection to the worst forms of child labor, such as child soldiering.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Coordination Committee for the National Strategy Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor receives adequate resources, such as computers and electricity, to accomplish their mandates.

Enhance coordination and collaborative processes and procedures among ministries, law enforcement, and social services.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key policies related to child labor, including the National Child Protection Strategy, and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Establish a social program to ensure that internally displaced persons and other vulnerable children have access to education and thus reduce their risk of exposure to the worst forms of child labor.

Improve access to education by eliminating school-related fees and other costs, such as uniforms, by increasing the number of schools and teachers in rural areas, ensuring access to affordable transportation, and ending violence in schools.

Ensure that children are registered at birth and that internally displaced persons have access to the requisite documentation to gain access to social services, including education.

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key social programs to address child labor during the reporting period, including the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, Family, and Humanitarian Action Projects to Combat Human Trafficking and the Eliminating Child Labor and Forced Labor in the Cotton, Textile and Garment Value Chains project, and make information about implementation measures publicly available.

Expand existing programs to fully address child labor in cotton production and gold mining.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

A *coup d'état* in January 2022 and a subsequent military takeover in September 2022, as well as continued insecurity, has led to the mass displacement of more than 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the last 4 years, including a large number of vulnerable children. Displaced children are at higher risk of child labor and its worst forms, including forcible recruitment by non-state armed groups.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the Law Orienting the Education System mandates free education until age 16, many children face barriers to educational access. Due to a lack of infrastructure, some communities create makeshift structures to serve as schools, and in rural areas teacher shortages are common, especially for the post-primary levels. In addition, there are fees for all levels of public education, which sometimes pose heavy burdens on families. Moreover, school violence exists and is exacerbated by the current security crisis, and transportation costs restrict access to schooling in urban areas. Children in Burkina Faso must have birth documentation (e.g., a birth certificate or supplemental birth judgment) to register for school. A student may begin schooling without documentation; however, documentation must be provided before the end of the first quarter following the child’s registration. Because more than one in five children do not have a birth certificate, many children in Burkina Faso remain out of school and vulnerable to child labor. Refugees and IDPs face many educational challenges, mainly due to the sudden increase in educational needs in the communities hosting them. Less than 20 percent of displaced people manage to obtain school registration. In some localities where armed attacks on schools have intensified, especially in the East and Sahel regions, there is a preference of some communities for other types of education, such as Koranic schools. Ongoing insecurity in the country has resulted in more than 6,000 schools being closed, affecting more than 1,000,000 children. Transition government forces and non-state armed groups occupied and used seven schools in 2023.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Burkina Faso has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Burkina Faso’s laws are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 152 of the Labor Code; Order Deviating the Age of Admission to Employment
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 149 and 150 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of the Hazardous Work List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–6 of the Hazardous Work List; Article 77 of the Mining Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 5, 153, 422 and 424 of the Labor Code; Article 1-4 of the Law on Combating Trafficking of Persons and Similar Practices
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 153 and 424 of the Labor Code; Articles 1–5, 14, and 15 of the Law on Combating Trafficking of Persons and Similar Practices
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 153 and 424 of the Labor Code; Articles 3, 4, 7–10, and 20 of the Law Suppressing the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 153 and 424 of the Labor Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 20 Years	✓	Article 2 of the Decree Organizing Operations Related to Convoking the Contingent
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Articles 153 and 424 of the Labor Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years	✓	Article 4 of the Law Orienting the Education System
Free Public Education	✓	Article 6 of the Law Orienting the Education System

*Country has no conscription

In August 2023, Burkina Faso authorized a list for light work in which children aged 13 to 16 can engage.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Burkina Faso took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Security (MFPTSS): Enforces labor laws as the lead agency on child labor law enforcement and establishes policy to address child labor. The Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization, and Interior Security assists MFPTSS by participating in joint routine inspections for suspected child trafficking cases.

Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, Family, and Humanitarian Action (MFSNF): Removes children from exploitative child labor, provides reintegration services through a mobile unit, works with local village surveillance committees on awareness-raising efforts, and participates in joint routine inspections with MFPTSS. Also operates a free hotline to report child abuse and maintains civil registry offices in maternity wards to register newborn babies. It is unknown how many cases of child labor were identified as a result of complaints made to the MFSNF hotline.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. The government conducted **2** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated an **unknown** number of prosecutions, and convicted **5** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Burkina Faso established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of funding and insufficient coordination among ministries.</p>	<p>National Coordination Committee for the National Strategy Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CNC-SN/PFTE): Defines appropriate strategies for mobilizing the resources necessary to implement the SN/PFTE, and comprises representatives from other ministries, civil society organizations, NGOs, unions, and employers. MFPTSS serves as the Secretariat for CNC/SN/PFTE. It promotes consultation and synergy of action among the actors involved in SN/PFTE implementation, validates the annual activity programs of SN/PFTE, and monitors and evaluates implementation and proposes necessary readjustments. CNC/SN/PFTE reviews and adopts the reports submitted to it by the Technical Secretariat. During the reporting period, the Committee led the formulation and enactment of the regulation for authorized light work for children, as well as the deployment of the mobile app <i>Kogl-Kamba</i> to support labor inspectors working on child labor related inspections. The Committee also held two meetings that included other ministries, civil society organizations, the private sector, and ILO.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Burkina Faso established policies related to child labor. However, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement these policies during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Strategy to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2019–2023) (SN/PFTE): Aimed to prevent, monitor, and protect children against the worst forms of child labor in Burkina Faso, and reintegrate victims. Developed by law enforcement agencies focused on child labor and its worst forms; governmental and non-governmental bodies; technical, financial, and social partners; and civil society organizations, including children’s associations. During the reporting period, several activities were carried out under the SN/PFTE, including the enactment of a light work list, the launch of the mobile app <i>Kogl-Kamba</i>, as well as updates to the training of labor inspectors.</p> <p>National Child Protection Strategy (2020–2023): Aimed to strengthen the institutional, community, and family environment to ensure effective protection for children. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Child Protection Strategy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Burkina Faso funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address the problem in all sectors.</p> <p><small>† Program is funded by the Government of Burkina Faso.</small></p>	<p>Campaign to Remove Street Children: NGO MinWomen-funded program, led by MFSNF. Includes outreach missions in the streets to identify and refer vulnerable children, including victims of forced begging, and reintegrate them back into society or to one of the four youth shelters established in the Somgandé, Baskuy, Nongremassom, and Cissin districts of Ouagadougou. In 2023, this campaign removed over 500 women and their children from the street.</p> <p>MFSNF Projects to Combat Human Trafficking:† Aim to address human trafficking by operating transit centers that provide food, medical assistance, and counseling to child trafficking survivors and children vulnerable to human trafficking. Transit centers aim to reintegrate victims into their communities and facilitate the repatriation of foreign victims when possible. The National Parenting Program assists parents in providing access to education and raising awareness about child trafficking. Nationwide media campaigns to address human trafficking provide advocacy, raise awareness, and build capacity for key actors involved in child protection issues, including child trafficking. Watchdog and monitoring committees ensure that all cases of alleged trafficking of children are reported to the justice system by social workers. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement MFSNF Projects to Combat Human Trafficking Program during the reporting period.</p> <p>Eliminating Child Labor and Forced Labor in the Cotton, Textile and Garment Value Chains: An Integrated Approach (2018–2023): Was a \$9.75 million (9 million Euro) EU and ILO initiative of the UN-funded global project to combat child labor and forced labor in cotton and textile supply chains. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Eliminating Child Labor and Forced Labor in the Cotton, Textile and Garment Value Chains: An Integrated Approach program during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



BURMA

NO ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor

In 2023, Burma is receiving an assessment of no advancement. Despite initiatives to address child labor, Burma is assessed as having made no advancement because it demonstrated complicity in the use of forced child labor. Burma’s military continued to force civilians, including children, to work in non-combat roles as porters, cleaners, cooks, and agricultural laborers in conflict areas. Otherwise, Burma re-formed its National Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor, which aims to promote awareness of child labor, build capacity to address child labor, designate child labor-related responsibilities to agencies, and design and implement action plans to eliminate child labor. However, Burma’s policies and practices continued to limit children’s access to education, as schools do not provide classes in many ethnic languages, including Rohingya. Further, Rohingya children were denied national identity cards required to register for school, and state-imposed movement restrictions prevent Rohingya children from attending school. Burma also has not published a list of hazardous work activities prohibited for children, as required by the Child Rights Law. In addition, it is unknown whether labor or criminal law enforcement agencies took actions to address child labor during the reporting period.

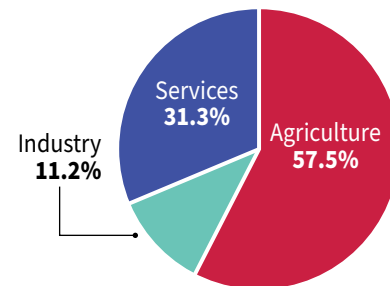


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	0.4% (39,370)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	0.1%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Burma are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict by armed groups, and in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Fishing and farming, including rubber, sugarcane, beans (green, soy, yellow), rice, and bamboo. Forestry, including on teak plantations.



Industry

Construction, brickmaking, producing garments, and quarrying and mining goods, including jade and rubies.



Services

Domestic work, collecting garbage and recyclables, repairing and washing cars, and vending, including selling fish and shrimp. Working in teashops, restaurants, karaoke bars, and massage parlors.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced recruitment of children by state and non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict. Forcible recruitment by the military for non-combat roles such as portering, cooking, farming, construction, and camp maintenance. Forced labor in agriculture, including in the farming of beans (green, soy, yellow), bamboo, rice, rubber, and sugarcane. Forced labor in brick manufacturing, in teashops, domestic work, construction, fishing, begging, and in forestry, including on teak plantations. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

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

In 2023, the national military’s continued self-reliance policy, which requires military forces to provide their own food and labor from local communities, led some units to force children and other civilians to work in non-combat roles, including portering, cooking, camp maintenance, farming, and other activities. During the reporting period, more than 1,000 children were recruited and used by armed forces including border guards, ethnic armed groups, and people’s defense forces. In addition, civilian brokers with military connections sometimes altered birthdates on identity documents to facilitate the entry of underage recruits into the military, and family members, including children of military personnel, have been forced to receive military training.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Burma's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children as required by the Child Rights Law.

Provide criminal penalties for the use, procuring, and offering of children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Increase the compulsory education age from age 10 to age 14 to align with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Provide adequate funding and equipment to the labor inspectorate and employ at least 565 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 22.6 million people.

Conduct labor inspections outside of the main urban centers and extend the labor inspectorate's mandate to all sectors in which child labor is known to occur, including in agriculture, mining, construction, and fishing.

Provide adequate training to labor inspectors and criminal investigators on child labor, including processes to refer survivors to the Department of Social Welfare for social services.

Cease the practice of giving factory owners prior notice of unannounced inspections, and interview workers during labor inspections.

Publish data related to labor law and criminal law enforcement.

Ensure that penalties for labor law violations are severe enough to deter violations, that regime officials complicit in the recruitment of children in armed conflict are held accountable for their actions, and that the penalties imposed for the recruitment and use of children in the military are commensurate with the seriousness of these crimes.

Cease the practice of arresting and detaining victims of the worst forms of child labor and ensure that they are referred to the appropriate social services.

Ensure that the National Complaints Mechanism for Forced Labor is active and able to receive reports of child soldiering, and improve military recruitment procedures to prevent the recruitment of children by the national military.

Provide the police with an adequate number of officers to investigate alleged child labor crimes, including in rural areas, and perform victim identification as required under the 2022 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law.

Coordination

Ensure frequent and regular coordination, including communication, across all government ministries that oversee issues related to the worst forms of child labor.

Remedy the backlog of child soldier cases in the Committee on Prevention of Recruitment of Child Soldiers.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Implement the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, the Five-Year National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and the Myanmar National Action Plan on Elimination of Child Labor, and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Implement a program to ensure the safe return of Rohingya refugees, including children, to Rakhine State, and remove barriers to education access for Rohingya children, such as citizenship requirements for them to attend schools.

Remove barriers to education access by withdrawing military regime personnel and members of non-state armed groups from occupied schools, building schools in rural areas, eliminating indirect school costs, and accommodating children who experience language barriers.

Develop and implement programs to address all worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Ensure that the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has sufficient resources and personnel to provide services to victims of the worst forms of child labor, including reintegration support at the Department of Rehabilitation.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Since the military perpetuated widespread ethnic cleansing of Rohingya people in northern Rakhine State in August 2017, over 742,000 Rohingya—half of whom are children—have fled from Burma to Bangladesh, making them vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Rohingya children residing in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are at an increased risk of the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor and sex trafficking, due to lack of schools, discriminatory policies and practices, and school closures as a consequence of ongoing violence, especially in Muslim villages. In addition, regime movement restrictions prohibit Rohingya children from leaving their villages, many of which do not have local schools, rendering them more vulnerable to child labor. Children, particularly girls, leave refugee camps to immigrate to countries such as Malaysia for marriages, but often find themselves in situations of forced labor, including domestic work—a sector for which the regime has yet to pass a law regulating child labor. Children of other ethnic groups who are also IDPs suffer many of the same problems.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

More than half of Burma’s children are out of school. During the reporting period, the military regime issued a new private education law requiring that teachers and schools register under a new body established under the State Administration Council; failure to do so will result in fines or imprisonment. The law will close schools found to be in violation of official policy, including those with curricula involving political matters, leaving children in these schools without access to education. Additionally, armed groups continue to occupy and attack schools, making students and teachers afraid to attend. Other barriers to education in the country include costs associated with travel to schools located long distances away, a lack of schools and teachers, and prohibitive expenses for uniforms, books, transportation, and extra fees charged by teachers and schools. Refugee children and children from ethnic communities who speak different languages also face barriers to education because ethnic languages are prohibited from being spoken in schools and the curriculum is only taught in Burmese. Moreover, although Burmese law guarantees education for all children, in practice, only children with national identification cards are allowed to attend school, and Rohingya are often denied nationality identity cards due to discriminatory regime policies.










LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Burma has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Burma’s laws do not meet international standards on the identification of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children, the prohibition of using children in illicit activities, and the compulsory education age.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Chapter XIV, Section 48(b) of the Child Rights Law; Section 75 of the Factories Act; Article 14 of the Shops and Establishments Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Chapter 1, Sections 3(b) and 3(t)(4), Chapter XIV, Section 48(a), and Chapter XXVII, Section 103(a)(3) of the Child Rights Law
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Sections 25 and 29 of the Factories Act; Article 14(d) of the Shops and Establishments Law; Rule 146 of the 2018 Mining Rules
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Chapter I, Section 3(t) and Chapter XXVII, Sections 103(a)(2) and 106 of the Child Rights Law; Sections 3(c) and 25 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law; Sections 370, 371, and 374 of the Penal Code; Section 27(a) of the Ward or Village Tracts Administrative Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Chapter I, Section 3(s)–(t) and Chapters XVII, Sections 103 and 106, and XVIII, Section 66 of the Child Rights Law; Sections 3, 25, 26, and 35 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law; Sections 372 and 366(a) of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 3, 66, and 105(b) of the Child Rights Law; Sections 372 and 373 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Chapter 1, Section 3(t)(3) and Chapter XIV, Section 48(a) of the Child Rights Law; Sections 20(a) and 22(c) of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Chapter XVII, Section 63(a–b) of the Child Rights Law; Part I of People’s Military Service Law; 1974 Regulation for Persons Subject to the Defense Services Act (War Office Council Instruction 13/73)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Chapter XVII, Section 63(a) of the Child Rights Law; Part 1, Section 2(b) of the People’s Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Chapter XVII, Section 64(a–b) and Chapter XXVII, Section 104(b) of the Child Rights Law
Compulsory Education Age, 10 Years ‡		Chapter XIV, Section 48(b) of the Child Rights Law; Section 4(j) of the National Education Law
Free Public Education		Chapter XIII, Section 46(b) of the Child Rights Law; Articles 14(a) and 16(a) of the National Education Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Although Burmese law prohibits persons under the age of 18 from joining the armed forces, reports indicate the regime does not take action to enforce this. In addition, Burma has penalties for perpetrators who use children in the production or trafficking of drugs; however, the law defines children as those under age 16, while international standards regarding illicit activities define children as those below the age of 18. Moreover, although Burma’s Child Rights Law mandates the creation of a hazardous work list, Burma has not published a hazardous work list. Additionally, school is only required for children through age 10; however, the minimum age for work is age 14. This does not meet international standards because the compulsory schooling age does not meet the minimum age for work of 14, rendering children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

Enforcement agencies in Burma took no documented actions to address child labor in 2023.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor – Factories and General Labor Laws Inspection Department (FGLLID): Only mandated to inspect for child labor in manufacturing establishments and factories as laid out in the Factories Law (1951) and the Shops and Establishment Law (2016). Certain sectors in which child labor is reported to occur—including agriculture, construction, mining, and fishing—are outside the purview of the FGLLID and are, therefore, not subject to inspections. The regime did not provide information on whether the Ministry or its inspectorate were active during the reporting period. Reports indicate that training for labor inspectors is insufficient, and there is a lack of funding to cover transportation and equipment for labor inspections. When labor inspections do occur, they are generally limited to Burma’s major urban centers, leaving children in remote rural areas unprotected.

Ministry of Home Affairs – Myanmar Police Force, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division (ATIPD): Investigates human trafficking crimes and engages in prevention efforts through its 32 regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force police units. Also oversees three specialized Child Protection Units in Rangoon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Daw to address child exploitation cases, including child trafficking, and uses formal written procedures to screen victims. ATIPD is mandated to operate nine 24/7 hotlines for reporting human trafficking cases. In 2023, the

ATIPD no longer performed trafficking in persons victim identification procedures as required under the 2022 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. Children identified in the worst forms of child labor were detained and arrested by police, rather than being referred to appropriate victim support services during the reporting period.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Unknown
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Burma established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of coordination across government agencies.</p>	<p>National Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor: Oversees 36 committees at the local level that work to address child labor issues. Chaired by the State Administration Council Member Union Minister for Home Affairs. After a period of inactivity, the Committee was re-formed and held a meeting during the reporting period, though the regime did not report any specific outcomes of the meeting. Despite this effort, research indicates that the regime continues to be hampered by limited interministerial coordination to address child labor issues.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Burma established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including child soldiering, forced child labor, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.</p>	<p>Myanmar National Action Plan on Elimination of Child Labor (2019–2023): Established in partnership with the ILO to eliminate child labor, including its worst forms. Reports indicate that the Action Plan ended with many tasks related to child labor ongoing, though specific activities were not reported.</p> <p>Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018–2030): Sets out a strategy to expand social protection services, including by keeping children enrolled in schools and out of child labor. In particular, Action Plan Item 4.3.6 specifically addresses eliminating child labor by preventing school dropouts. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the plan in 2023.</p> <p>5-Year National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2022–2027): Implemented by the Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and aims to eliminate internal and cross-border trafficking in persons and to prevent new forms of trafficking. The regime has not published this plan, and as a result, research was unable to determine its contents, scope, and objectives. Moreover, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the plan in 2023.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

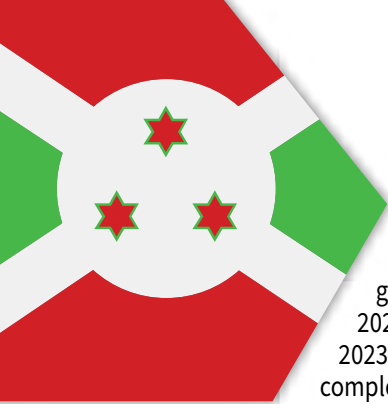
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Burma participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are insufficient to address forced child labor and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.</p>	<p>NGO-Operated Hotlines: United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and World Vision-operated hotlines for reporting suspected cases of child recruitment or use of children by Burma’s military. Although research found that the hotline was operational, it is unknown how many calls were received in 2023.</p> <p>National Complaints Mechanism for Forced Labor (NCM): Program established by the regime and the ILO which gives citizens a mechanism to lodge complaints and seek remedy. Includes the ability to report cases of child labor and child soldier recruitment. Research was unable to determine whether the NCM was active in 2023.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Burma places restrictions on freedom of association, such as requiring prior approval for union registration and limiting unions’ political activities. In addition, union leaders and members have faced retaliation, harassment, and violence for their activities, which can deter workers from reporting labor abuses, including child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



BURUNDI

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Policy that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Burundi made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government approved and began implementing its National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons for 2023–2027, taking actions including repatriating victims of child labor exploitation from Tanzania. In October 2023, it established the Permanent National Multisector Committee on Child Labor and its Worst Forms, which completed a draft action plan on child labor by the end of the year. The government also significantly increased its contribution to the National School Feeding Program, from \$2 million in previous years to \$6 million in 2023, encouraging school attendance and thereby helping address one of the root causes of child labor. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Burundi is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it maintained a Ministry of Education policy that calls for the expulsion of students for becoming pregnant and for causing a pregnancy. While boys expelled under this policy can return to the same school at the start of the next school year, girls expelled face much more punitive restrictions. Unless they miscarry or have a still birth, they may only return to school once their child is at least 12 months old, but not more 24 months old. In either case, they must enroll in a different school, which can be especially challenging in rural areas with few school options. The additional restrictions on girls' re-enrollment result in very few girls who deliver a child returning to school, thereby increasing their vulnerability to child labor. In addition, Burundi's laws do not guarantee free basic education or establish a compulsory education age. The government also failed to provide comprehensive criminal law enforcement data related to the worst forms of child labor and lacked resources to conduct labor inspections and criminal investigations. Lastly, Burundi has insufficient social programs to address child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	33.2% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	69.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	30.5%

Children in Burundi are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in quarrying.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including transplanting seedlings and scaring away birds from fields. Fishing, including managing heavy fishing nets and preparing meals for fishermen. Herding and feeding livestock. Working in forestry, including felling trees and serving as lookouts to prevent lumber theft. Working as shepherds for families.



Industry

Working in quarries† and construction sites. Working in manufacturing, including soldering, welding, processing plastics and metals, and carrying heavy loads. Helping in garages and workshops.



Services

Domestic work. Street vending, including selling food. Begging. Working in hotels and restaurants, including cooking, dishwashing, and waiting tables.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, construction, fishing, street vending, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking of marijuana and the smuggling of foodstuffs into Burundi from Tanzania.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Burundi's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish by law an age up to which education is compulsory that extends to age 16, the minimum age for employment.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Establish by law free basic public education.

Enforcement

Conduct targeted inspections in sectors and geographic areas in which child labor is known to be prevalent, including in agriculture and the informal sector.

Publish information on child labor law enforcement efforts, including the number of routine targeted inspections and penalties imposed and collected.

Ensure that children engaged in street work are not detained, and that they receive adequate social services and reintegration support.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 41 to 125 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 5 million workers.

Provide sufficient funding and resources to the General Inspectorate of Labor and Social Security to enable labor inspectors to fulfill their duties.

Publish disaggregated information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions obtained, and penalties imposed related to the criminal enforcement of child labor laws.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement officials receive adequate training on laws pertaining to the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies and other agencies responsible for responding to human trafficking have the resources, guidance, and capacity necessary to investigate cases and provide services to survivors.

Strengthen referral mechanisms among law enforcement agencies, social services, and civil society organizations to ensure that cases are properly investigated, and survivors receive services.

Coordination

Strengthen whole-of-government coordination on efforts to address the worst forms of child labor by ensuring relevant representatives from the Ministry of Justice take active part in the Permanent National Multisectoral Committee on Child Labor and its Worst Forms.

Government Policies

Adopt and implement policies that address all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as a national child labor action plan.

Ensure education policies do not prevent children from accessing education, regardless of pregnancy status, marital status, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Social Programs

Increase access to social protection for children on the move who may be vulnerable to labor exploitation.

Increase access to education by eliminating school-related fees; increasing the number of educators; expanding infrastructure to accommodate the needs of female and disabled students; and increasing birth registration rates for populations such as the Batwa ethnic group.

Institute new programs and expand existing ones in sectors in which child labor is prevalent, including in agriculture.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In Burundi, children on the move face increased risks of child labor and forced labor. Whether they are returning refugees, displaced by climate or conflict events, or trafficking victims recently repatriated, their lack of support networks and livelihood options make them vulnerable to exploitation. Children living in border provinces also face a heightened risk of labor trafficking in neighboring countries, especially Tanzania and Kenya. Finally, street children in Burundi may be particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Burundi currently maintains a policy that is significantly detrimental to its advancement in eliminating child labor. In 2020, Burundi's Ministry of Education issued a ministerial ordinance that calls for the expulsion of students for becoming pregnant and for causing a pregnancy, among other offenses. Girls expelled under this policy are not allowed to re-enroll in school until their child is 12 months old (but not more than 24 months old), and they must enroll in a different school than the one they left. Boys expelled under this policy are allowed to re-enroll at the same school beginning the following school year. The additional restrictions on girls' re-enrollment are discriminatory and, in combination with societal pressures, result in very few girls returning to school to complete their education after giving birth. While the intent of this education policy is to encourage children to stay in school, it has the effect of excluding girls from education opportunities and increasing their vulnerability to child labor.

The cost of education is a barrier to access for children across Burundi. While the government has maintained a policy of free public education since at least 2012, there is no legislation enacting that policy or laying out violation penalties. As a result, families are frequently asked to pay for supplies, secondary school fees, and school building maintenance costs, which has prevented many children from accessing public schooling. Poorly maintained buildings, lack of desks and chairs, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient hygiene facilities for girls, sexual exploitation or harassment by teachers, inadequate teacher capacity and training, and a lack of appropriate materials and supports for children with disabilities also present barriers to education. Lastly, since birth certificates are required to attend school, many unregistered children, in particular Batwa children and Burundian returnees, remain out of school and vulnerable to child labor.





LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Burundi has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Burundi's laws do not meet international standards on prohibitions against the use of children by non-state armed groups or on free, compulsory basic public education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 2, 10, and 618 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 270, 279, and 618 of the Labor Code; Article 13 of the Ministerial Ordinance to Regulate Child Labor
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 9–15 of the Ministerial Ordinance to Regulate Child Labor
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 4–6, 10, and 18–20 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 7, 12, and 617 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 4–6, 10, and 18–20 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 246, 255, and 256 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 542–544 and 546 of the Penal Code; Articles 4, 10, and 18–20 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 505–511 and 541 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Articles 2 and 6(c) of the National Defense Troops Law

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 45 of the Constitution; Article 12 of the Labor Code; Articles 200.2.27, 200.5.7, 200.6, and 202 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 35 of the Law on Basic and Secondary Education
Free Public Education		Article 53 of the Constitution; Articles 17, 35, and 47 of the Law on Basic and Secondary Education

*Country has no conscription

‡Age calculated based on available information

Although Burundi’s Constitution and Labor Code broadly prohibit the use of children in armed conflict, the Penal Code criminalizes only the use of children under age 15 in armed conflict, leaving children between the ages of 15 and 18 vulnerable to this worst form of child labor. In addition, it does not appear that there are any laws that establish compulsory education. Even though there is a policy that provides for compulsory education to age 15, that age is lower than the minimum age for work, leaving children between the ages of 15 and 16 vulnerable to labor exploitation. Lastly, the Law on Basic and Secondary Education states that free education will be guaranteed as established by decree, but research was unable to locate the relevant decree. Moreover, the Law on Basic and Secondary Education calls on parents to finance education, which suggests that educational officials or schools would be permitted to levy fees.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Burundi took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient resources and lack of interagency coordination hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Employment: Administers and enforces all labor laws, including those on child labor, through the General Inspectorate of Labor and Social Security. However, its human and financial resources were insufficient to adequately enforce child labor laws during the reporting period.

Ministry of Justice: Prosecutes criminal violations through its General Prosecutor’s Office. The General Prosecutor’s Office maintains 58 human trafficking point people across the country who initiate cases, oversee communication between agencies, and coordinate law enforcement procedures. In 2023, these officials met regularly with the national anti-trafficking commission and sent a monthly report to the commission on all cases. However, gaps in coordination with other agencies hindered the effective enforcement of child labor laws.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **41** labor inspectors conducted **1,100** worksite inspections, finding **57** child labor violations. It is **unknown** how many investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted because disaggregated criminal enforcement figures separating child and adult cases were not available.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Burundi established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the committee does not currently include a representative from the Ministry of Justice, which may impact its ability to effectively coordinate efforts on all worst forms of child labor.</p> <p><i>*Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Permanent National Multisectoral Committee on Child Labor and Its Worst Forms:* Established October 11, 2023, by the Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Employment to serve as the key coordinating body on child labor issues. Its 21 members include representatives from the Ministry of Labor; the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights, and Gender; the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research; the Employers Association; the confederation of trade unions; and international and local NGOs. The Committee is mandated to meet at least twice a month, with the objectives of creating a national action plan to address child labor, monitoring implementation of the plan, proposing research to accurately assess the challenges around child labor, and developing school-based prevention initiatives. By the end of the year, it had met twice and developed a draft national action plan.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Burundi established policies related to child labor. However, some policies are implemented in such a way as to increase children’s vulnerability to child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Strategy for the Prevention and Community Reintegration of Street Children and Adult Beggars: On the prevention side, seeks to improve the economic resiliency of families who currently send their children into the streets to beg; develop socio-educational and recreational alternatives for children at the community level; prevent and protect against the exploitation of street children; improve awareness of child protection and family planning; and advocate for improvements to the legal framework. On the community reintegration side, aims to remove children from the streets, place them in temporary transit centers where they will receive social services according to their needs, and reintegrate them into families, schools, and/or vocational training as appropriate. However, there have been reports of the government rounding up street children <i>en masse</i> and detaining them in prison-like conditions prior to transferring them to reintegration centers, where they have been reported to lack sufficient food and social services, and possibly be even more vulnerable to child trafficking.</p> <p>Burundi National Development Plan (2018–2027): Aims to address economic and social challenges in the country, with goals to target poverty and access to education. Seeks to enhance youth employment through strategies such as updates to the labor code and improvements in basic and vocational education. As part of this policy and in cooperation with the UN, Burundi continued its Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan during the reporting period. In 2023, the program provided food assistance, core relief items, birth registration, and educational opportunities to 26,486 returning refugees.</p> <p>National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2023–2027):† Approved in July 2023, provides a roadmap for all anti-trafficking efforts, including prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership/coordination. Activities completed under the plan during the reporting period included working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to design and procure data collection software, launching the standard operating procedures on counter-trafficking developed the previous year, and repatriating victims of child labor exploitation (primarily from Tanzania).</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Burundi funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors.</p> <p><i>† Program is partially funded by the Government of Burundi.</i></p>	<p>Centers for Family Development:† Operated by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights, and Gender to address human rights issues, including child exploitation, at the provincial and communal level. Coordinate with Child Protection Committees to refer survivors to local NGOs for care as needed. In 2023, the Ministry of National Solidarity increased the number of representatives to ensure all 18 of Burundi’s provinces now have a Center for Family Development representative and three agents in charge of gender, justice, and social affairs.</p> <p>Education Cannot Wait Multi-Year Resilience Program 2022–2024 for Burundi: Launched as a collaborative agreement among the Government of Burundi, UNICEF, and World Vision, 3-year, \$30 million program aiming to provide educational opportunities to 300,000 vulnerable children and reduce the risks of exploitation, including child labor, for vulnerable families. During the reporting period, interventions included dignity kits for adolescent girls, construction or renovation of 283 classrooms, provision of textbooks, teacher training, and school feeding programs.</p> <p>National School Feeding Program:† Initiated in 2008 and sponsored by Burundi’s First Lady, designed to reduce child labor by increasing school retention. Provides meals to approximately 650,000 children in 847 schools throughout the country. In addition to funding received from international donors, the Government of Burundi increased its contribution to the program from \$2 million in previous years to \$6 million during the reporting period.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

The Government of Burundi has interfered in union activities and placed restrictions on the right to strike. Penalties for anti-union discrimination are also not dissuasive and laws protecting freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are not adequately enforced. These factors can severely hinder workers’ ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



CABO VERDE

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Cabo Verde made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Enforcement officials participated in multiple trainings throughout the reporting period to increase their understanding of child pornography crimes, strengthen survivor referral mechanisms, incorporate current best practices and proactive investigative techniques, and build their capacity to detect, identify, and refer cases of the worst forms of child labor more effectively. Cabo Verde approved its second National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which contains measures to build the capacity of its National Human Trafficking Observatory, establish a data collection and analysis system, and raise awareness to increase the identification and protection of victims. In addition, it established an emergency center on the island of Sal, which operates 24/7 and provides shelter, social reintegration, and psychological care to child victims of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. However, Cabo Verde’s laws prohibiting forced labor are not sufficient because while they criminalize slavery, they do not specifically criminalize practices similar to slavery or debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor. In addition, there is limited information sharing on investigations between law enforcement agencies, which hampers enforcement efforts. Finally, social programs to assist children involved in agriculture and domestic work are not sufficient to address the scope of the problem.

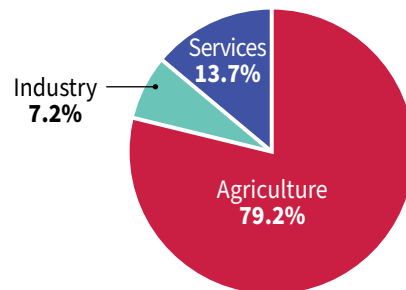


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	3.2% (2,392)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	90.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	1.7%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Cabo Verde are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including carrying heavy loads,† raising livestock, and artisanal fishing in small boats.†



Industry

Construction.



Services

Street work, including vending, garbage scavenging,† car washing, and begging. Domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Cabo Verde’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that laws prohibiting forced labor criminalize not just slavery but also practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor.

Prescribe by law the number of hours per week and conditions under which light work may be undertaken by children.

Ensure that the National List of Dangerous Work for Children is extended to protect all children under age 18.

Enforcement

Ensure that the Inspectorate General of Labor is provided with an adequate budget to fulfill all its needs.

Ensure that the number of labor inspectors is sufficient to address the scope of the workforce.

Ensure that criminal investigators receive sufficient financial and human resources to conduct thorough investigations, including investigations of child labor.

Make data on the number of child labor violations found during each reporting period publicly available and ensure that criminal investigators receive training related to the worst forms of child labor.

Develop a system to compile and share comprehensive anti-trafficking in persons and victim identification data and increase criminal enforcement agencies’ case-sharing capabilities to improve overall law enforcement coordination efforts.

Ensure that the judiciary has sufficient resources and personnel to allow cases to be prosecuted in a timely manner.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and that results from these activities are published annually.

Social Programs

Ensure that students with special needs and children in remote areas have equal access to education, including by providing adequate transportation.

Conduct awareness-raising activities on human trafficking, including child sex tourism, on all nine inhabited islands.

Institute programs to address child labor in agriculture and domestic work.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Traffickers exploit Cabo Verdean and foreign national girls and, to a lesser extent, boys in sex trafficking. According to a study by an NGO, in some cases, parents encourage girls as young as 14 years old to engage in commercial sex with older Cabo Verdean men or tourists for financial gain or marriage; traffickers use this opportunity to exploit girls in child sex trafficking. Some hotel employees and taxi drivers may facilitate tourists’ participation in child commercial sexual exploitation. The commercial sexual exploitation of boys and girls continued in Cabo Verde, including online child sexual abuse and exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

According to the Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents (ICCA), not all students with special needs or children in remote areas of Cabo Verde have equal access to education. In some areas, mountainous topography can make it difficult for some children to commute to school.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cabo Verde has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Cabo Verde’s laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor because while they criminalize slavery, they do not specifically criminalize practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Article 261 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 264 of the Labor Code; Article 133 of the Civil Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✗	National List of Dangerous Work for Children
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✗	Article 14 of Chapter 3 of the Labor Code; Articles 271 and 271-A of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 149 and 271-A of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 144, 145, 148–150, and 271-A of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 8 of the Drug Trafficking Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 17 Years	✓	Article 31 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Article 2 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Article 268-C of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡	✓	Articles 13 and 20 of the Education Law
Free Public Education	✓	Article 14 of the Education Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Laws prohibiting forced labor are not sufficient because while they criminalize slavery, they do not specifically criminalize practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor. In addition, the National List of Dangerous Work for Children does not meet international standards since it only applies to children under age 16, and while the Civil Code includes a list of light work activities that children aged 14 are allowed to perform, the law does not prescribe the number of hours per week permissible for light work, nor does it specify the conditions under which light work may be performed.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Cabo Verde took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient allocation of financial and human resources and limited capacity to collect anti-trafficking statistics hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Inspectorate General of Labor: Monitors and enforces child labor laws, working closely with the Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents (ICCA). Overseen by the Ministry of Family, Inclusion, and Social Development.

Attorney General’s Office: Determines whether reported complaints or violations, which the National Police initially receive and the Judicial Police further investigate, should be prosecuted and prepares cases for trial, including cases of the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, **18** labor inspectors conducted **866** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. Although the total number of criminal investigations conducted is **unknown**, the government investigated **2** cases identified as the worst forms of child labor in the country.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Cabo Verde has established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor: Oversees the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and helps to coordinate referrals of child labor cases between law enforcement and social services. Led by ICCA, with support from the Ministry of Family, Inclusion, and Social Development. In 2023, the government conducted a training course titled “Training to Protect Homeless Children and Adolescents,” which focused on providing technicians, animators, and social educators with the knowledge, tools, and techniques to help children in street situations.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Cabo Verde has established policies related to child labor. However, some of these policies were not implemented.

National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor: Prioritizes the eradication of child labor. Outlines specific objectives, including data collection, institutional capacity building, and enhancement of measures to prevent, protect, and remove children from involvement in child labor.

Policies to combat sexual violence: Includes the National Plan to Prevent and Combat Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents (2022–2024), which aims to prevent and eliminate the sexual exploitation of children by building on lessons learned from the previous plan, while ensuring coordination among institutions and organizations that work to prevent and address sexual violence against children and adolescents. Establishes five goals, including (1) the active participation of children and adolescents; (2) the development of preventive actions against sexual violence; (3) a network of specialized care by trained professionals; (4) combating impunity; and (5) strengthening the national, regional, and local entities focused on combating and eliminating sexual violence against children and adolescents, including commercial sexual exploitation. The National Communication Strategy for the Prevention and Combat of Sexual Violence aims to coordinate public policies to protect children and adolescents from sexual violence, including commercial sexual exploitation. During the reporting period, ICCA continued to conduct awareness-raising events within communities in partnership with NGOs, civil society, and UNICEF, including a music event on the island of Sal.

National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons:† Aims to address human trafficking by strengthening the capacity of the National Observatory for Monitoring and Identification of Trafficking in Persons, establishing a data collection and analysis system, and increasing training and awareness raising activities.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>In 2023, Cabo Verde funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating and preventing child labor. However, these social programs did not target all sectors where child labor has been identified, including agriculture and domestic work.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Cabo Verde.</i></p>	<p>Child Labor Awareness Campaigns:† Government program implemented by ICCA and the National Committee for Child Labor Prevention and Eradication that conducts national awareness-raising campaigns on the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the government relaunched an awareness-raising campaign on national television that addressed child labor and held several other awareness-raising events in communities.</p> <p>Help for At-Risk Children and Social Protection and Reintegration Centers:† ICCA-implemented program centers providing education, health services, and professional training to vulnerable children and their families, including seven day centers for street children vulnerable to sexual and labor exploitation, including sex trafficking; three centers for street children operated by the <i>Nô's Kaza</i> center; and five long-term social protection and reintegration centers that provide support and educational integration services to children who have experienced long-term trauma, including child trafficking.</p> <p>Child Emergency Centers:† ICCA-implemented program that operates two emergency centers for child victims of abuse and sexual exploitation on Santiago and São Vicente islands, operating 24/7. In 2023, the government opened an additional child emergency center on the island of Sal.</p>
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For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

CAMBODIA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Cambodia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government rescued 123 children from commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking and released guidelines on child safety online in the face of increasing instances of online sexual exploitation of children. However, despite these new initiatives to address child labor, Cambodia is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because the government failed to take active measures to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence public officials who participate in or facilitate the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children and debt-based forced labor in brick kilns. In addition, judges, police, and labor inspectors were reported to have accepted bribes to overlook child labor offenses in the country, especially when the perpetrator had alleged ties with the government. Lastly, the laws prohibiting commercial sexual exploitation of children are insufficient because the use or offering of a child for pornographic performances is not criminally prohibited.

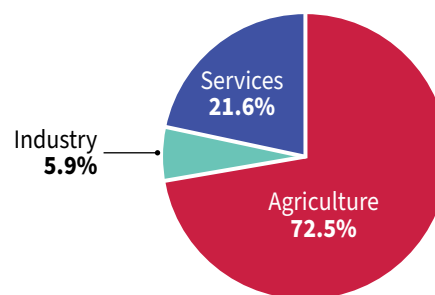


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	8.9% (285,499)
Boys		9.3%
Girls		8.6%
Urban		5.4%
Rural		10.6%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	43.1% (422,161)
Boys		46.9%
Girls		39.3%
Urban		33.8%
Rural		49.5%
Attending School	5 to 14	87.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	9.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Cambodia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in forced child labor in brickmaking. Children also engage in child labor in the agriculture sector, including in the production of rubber and cassava.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Fishing, including deep-sea† and night fishing;† peeling shrimp; logging† for the production of timber; herding bovines; producing tobacco, cassava, rubber, and sugarcane.



Industry

Making bricks,† including feeding clay into brickmaking machines, removing wood fuel from trucks and feeding to brickmaking machines, drying bricks, transporting bricks to the oven,† and loading bricks onto and off of trucks. Working in construction† and in slaughterhouses for meat production.† Producing alcoholic beverages† and textiles. Manufacturing wood and metal† products.



Services

Domestic work and street work, including car washing, begging, vending, garbage scavenging, and collecting garbage. Also working as security guards† and in entertainment† as bartenders,† masseurs,† dancers,† and waiters.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; forced begging and street begging; producing bricks; and fishing.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Cambodia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Apply the minimum age for work to all children, including those engaged in informal work in domestic work and employed by their relatives.

Establish a law that criminally prohibits the use of a child for pornographic performances in not only public spaces, but also private spaces or through the use of communication and information technologies.

Establish a law that criminally prohibits the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Ensure free education is guaranteed for all children, regardless of citizenship.

Establish by law a compulsory education age of 15 years old such that it aligns with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Build the capacity of labor law enforcement authorities to enforce child labor and forced labor regulations by providing more technical training opportunities on how to properly identify child labor during inspections.

Provide inspectors of construction sites training on identifying child labor violations and ensure that such training is coordinated with the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training’s labor inspectorate to ensure inspectors’ safety.

Increase the number of labor inspectors to 628 to ensure adequate coverage of Cambodia’s workforce of 9,418,600, including in the informal sector.

Conduct unannounced inspections in all sectors in which child labor is reported to occur, including in the informal, construction, and entertainment sectors, and impose penalties when child labor violations are found.

Collect, properly store, and publicly release disaggregated data on labor and criminal law enforcement efforts, including labor inspectorate funding, initial training for new criminal investigators, the number of prosecutions initiated, the number of convictions, and the number of penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.

Address malfeasance in all law enforcement agencies, including by prohibiting the acceptance of bribes to influence the outcome of cases or providing tip offs in advance of raids, and investigating and prosecuting individuals and government officials who are complicit in facilitating and profiting from the worst forms of child labor.

Train all criminal law enforcement officials on trafficking indicators and how to conduct investigations into trafficking crimes, and ensure that funding is sufficient to cover expenses, including transportation costs.

Develop standard judicial procedures to monitor human trafficking perpetrators pending trial to prevent criminals from fleeing and to enable victims to receive restitution.

Coordination

Improve interministerial coordination to address child labor, including but not limited to reporting efforts made by the National Committee on Countering Child Labor to implement the National Plan of Action on Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Publish activities undertaken by the National Committee on Countering Child Labor on an annual basis.

Government Policies

Publish activities undertaken to implement the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children (2017–2023) on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Increase regulation of microfinance and lending institutions to reduce borrowers’ vulnerability to debt-based coercion and provide support to children whose families are victims of predatory microfinance institutions.

Publish the results of the 2019 nationwide child labor survey.

Increase access to free basic education by eliminating unofficial school-related fees; addressing issues related to limited transportation and inadequate school infrastructure, including the unsafe “floating schools” on or near fishing communities; eliminating barriers to school for ethnic minority children, indigenous children, children with disabilities, girls, and children from rural and disadvantaged communities; and providing safe, sanitary schools with access to water and latrines.

Provide sufficient funding for social programs so that they can fully address the extent of child labor in Cambodia, particularly the online sexual exploitation of children.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children continue to be at an increased risk of working in brick kilns and factories, though operational brick factories have experienced a slowdown in business recently. Moreover, failed harvests from droughts have compounded farmers' debts, forcing them to sell their harvests to brick kiln owners and subsequently placing farmers' families into debt bondage. In recent years, the microfinance industry in the country has grown rapidly with inadequate regulation, leading to an increasing number of overburdened debtors. Cambodian human rights organizations cite cases of extrajudicial land sales, child labor, and debt bondage linked to the microfinance crisis. Children are forced to work because their parents have incurred debts to landowners or employers, sometimes resulting in forced land sales to pay back debts owed. Research also showed that children were taken out of school so they could work to help with debt repayment. Additionally, since 2016, there has been an increase in the number of women and girls travelling from Cambodia to China for forced or arranged marriages, with a further spike since the pandemic.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The Education Law establishes free basic education for citizens only, and unofficial school-related fees, such as for extra classes or school uniforms, are prohibitive for some families. Other barriers to education include denied enrollment for children without birth certificates, limited transportation to schools in remote areas, a lack of drinking water, a severe shortage of teachers, language barriers, and a lack of safe sanitation conditions in some schools. Sanitation conditions are particularly unsafe in Cambodia's "floating schools" on or near fishing communities, to which children as young as age 6 row themselves by boat each day. These barriers disproportionately affect ethnic minority children, indigenous children, children with disabilities, and children from rural and disadvantaged communities.








LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cambodia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, gaps exist in Cambodia's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of criminal prohibitions for the use of a child for pornographic performances in private spaces or through communication and information technologies.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 177 of the Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 173 and 177 of the Labor Law; Regulation on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labor; Articles 339 and 340 of the Penal Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 2 of the Regulation on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labor
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 15, 16, 369, and 370 of the Labor Law; Articles 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15–17, and 19 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2, 3, 7, 8, 10–20 and 22 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 7-8, 10, 12, 15, 19, 23, 25, 28, 30–37, 40, and 41 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation; Articles 284, 289, and 346 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 345 of the Penal Code; Articles 3 and 47 of the Law on Control of Drugs

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 42 of the Law on General Statutes for the Military Personnel of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 41 and 42 of the Law on General Statutes for the Military Personnel of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age		
Free Public Education		Article 31 of the Education Law; Article 68 of the Constitution

Cambodian laws do not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children, as the use of a child for pornographic performances is criminally prohibited in public places but not in private spaces or through the use of communication and information technologies. Although the Labor Code prohibits work by children under age 15, the law does not apply to children outside of formal employment relationships and, therefore, does not conform to international standards that require all children be protected under the law that sets a minimum age for work. Moreover, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training’s (MOLVT) regulation on household work extends minimum age protections for domestic workers to age 18 and provides clear definitions of household work, but it does not specify legal protections for domestic workers employed in informal relationships, including when working for their relatives without a contract. Finally, Cambodia lacks compulsory schooling, which makes children under age 15 particularly vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to be in school but are not yet legally permitted to work.

 **ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR**

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Cambodia took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of unannounced inspections in the informal, construction, and entertainment sectors may hinder enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MOLVT): Enforces child-related provisions of the Labor Law and trains Commune Committees for Women and Children that oversee local child labor monitoring systems. Tasked with removing children from child labor, including at brick kilns. Head of the MOLVT’s Child Labor Bureau also serves as the Secretary General of the National Committee on Countering Child Labor (NCCL). Refers cases involving possible criminal violations to the Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department. During the reporting year, raised awareness about child labor by disseminating labor laws and legal documents about child work. Also provided study materials for children under the age of 15 so they remain in school and vocational training for children over 15. Research indicates that Cambodia does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. Reporting also indicates that labor inspectorates at the provincial level are unable to adequately enforce child labor laws due to insufficient funding and resources.

Ministry of the Interior Cambodian National Police Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department (AHTJP): Enforces laws against human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children in collaboration with municipal and provincial anti-human trafficking and juvenile protection offices; reports to the AHTJP Department Director. Provides training to labor inspectors. Fields complaints from the public about human trafficking, which can be filed through the anti-human trafficking hotline. Oversees the Information and Technology Office, which searches for evidence of human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children on the internet, in printed media, and in other sources.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **592** labor inspectors conducted **219** worksite inspections, finding **1** child labor violation. The number of criminal investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, prosecutions initiated, and perpetrators convicted is **unknown**.

Evidence suggests that labor inspectors and other law enforcement personnel are unwilling to investigate child labor allegations involving powerful business owners. In addition, law enforcement officials have requested bribes from employers when child labor violations have been found. Malfeasance within the MOLVT and law enforcement agencies limits the capacity of local authorities to adequately enforce regulations for children related to hazardous work, resulting in penalties related to the worst forms of child labor rarely being imposed in accordance with the law. Additionally, the Government of Cambodia has failed to regularly investigate, prosecute, or convict public officials who participate in or facilitate the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children and debt-based forced labor in brick kilns. NGO contacts claim that the government has limited political will to investigate any Cambodian officials complicit in these illegal activities, and there was no evidence of public officials being investigated, prosecuted, or convicted during the reporting period.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Cambodia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is insufficient interministerial coordination, making it difficult to track progress and outcomes of efforts.

National Committee on Countering Child Labor (NCCL): Serves as the primary interagency coordinating body for the government’s various ministries on child labor issues. The Minister of Labor serves as its chair and the head of the MOLVT’s Child Labor Bureau serves as the Secretary General. Coordination across relevant ministries remains a challenge. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Cambodia established policies related to child labor. However, there were no reported activities to implement the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children.

National Plan of Action on Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2016–2025): Overseen by the MOLVT and aims to build the capacity of law enforcement officers, raise public awareness of child labor issues, enhance child labor monitoring systems at the community level, and create a roadmap to eradicate the worst forms of child labor by 2025 in various sectors, including services, agriculture, mining, and energy. In 2023, trained hundreds of national and provincial officials and conducted campaigns in several provinces to raise awareness for factory owners about child labor and consequences of violations.

Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children (2017–2023): Provided Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OSEC)-related interventions in policy and governance, including providing training for teachers and developing curriculum to help children build online safety skills; providing OSEC materials to law enforcement; and developing an online hotline to help identify platforms that perpetuate OSEC. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.

Action Plan for Gender Equality Promotion and Child Labor Elimination in Fisheries Sector (2022–2030): Aims to prevent and withdraw children from child labor and hazardous work in the fisheries sector, and to improve monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on child labor in this sector. During the reporting year, trained 31 officials and held workshops in Takeo, Kandal, and Kampong Speu provinces to promote gender equity and raise awareness of child labor in the fishery sector. Plan was extended from 2026 to 2030.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

In 2023, Cambodia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address all worst forms of child labor, including in the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

† Program is funded by the Government of Cambodia.

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

Cambodia Countering Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP) (2019–2023): \$10 million, USAID-funded, 5-year (including a 1-year cost extension) program implemented by Winrock International to strengthen the capacity of government and community stakeholders to prevent human trafficking, protect at-risk populations, and increase the number of successful prosecutions of perpetrators. During the reporting period, held public awareness campaigns and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Police to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement personnel to address human trafficking.

UN WFP Country Program (2020–2024):† Multi-government and private sector-funded program implemented in collaboration with the Government of Cambodia that includes a school feeding program for children in need. Provided school meals to 186,000 children in 2023.

Child Protection Programs:† Family Care First (FCF|REACT) (2015–2023) was led by Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSAVY). Funded by the European Union, USAID, the GHR Foundation, Save the Children Hong Kong, and UNICEF. Aimed to support more than 7,000 Cambodian children to live in safe, nurturing, family-based care. Activities included supporting the development of Social Service Workforce Training curriculum, the reintegration of children from residential care institutions to family-based care, the closure of residential care institutions, and the provision of social services. During the reporting period, FCF provided cash and livelihood assistance to over 700 recipients, intended to reduce trafficking risks for children in extreme poverty. Cambodia Child Protection Program (2009–2023) was led by UNICEF and MOSAVY and aimed to strengthen the child protection system in Cambodia and to prevent and reduce violence against children and unnecessary family separation. Built capacity of national and sub-national authorities in all 25 provinces to formulate and implement nationally approved institutional and legal frameworks. The government stated that the program was operational but did not report implementation activities conducted during the reporting period.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects



WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

The government puts restrictions on workers’ ability to form and join unions of their own choosing. Foreigners are only permitted to join unions if they are literate in Khmer, have worked in Cambodia for at least 2 years, and have permission to residence in/have a permanent residency in the country. In addition, the government prevents unions and workers from accessing collective dispute settlement under the Arbitration Council. These restrictions, as well as the Cambodian government’s failure to investigate and prosecute cases of anti-union discrimination and harassment can create a climate of fear that hinders workers’ ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

CAMEROON

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Cameroon made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government undertook a country-wide birth registration program and promoted school enrollment by providing educational materials, recruiting teachers, and designating inclusive schools throughout the country. Cameroon's four education ministries established a joint framework regulating the admission of children with disabilities to all levels of public schooling, including higher education and vocational training. Specialists were assigned at 25 police stations in the Northwest and Southwest Regions to oversee crimes against children. In addition, the government provided rehabilitation services to around 1,400 child soldier survivors in the Northwest, Southwest, and Far North Regions. Finally, the government adopted the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Despite these efforts, prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require that children be threatened, forced, or coerced to establish the criminal act; contrary to international law. The law also does not prohibit the use of children in illicit activities or the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. Cameroon does not meet the international standard for protection from commercial sexual exploitation because it does not criminalize the use of a child for prostitution or the use, offering, and procurement of a child for pornographic performances. The government did not report penalties for labor violations or efforts to enforce laws criminalizing the worst forms of child labor. Finally, 29 children were detained by national authorities for their alleged association with armed groups and on national security grounds; the United Nations Report on Children in Armed Conflict has verified that, as of December 2023, 14 children remained in detention.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	43.7% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	80.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	42.4%

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 recruitment by non-state armed groups for use in conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cocoa production and gold mining.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in cocoa production.†



Industry

Artisanal gold mining,† including handling mercury, and digging or standing in stagnant water to extract minerals.



Services

Domestic work and street work, including vending and begging. Working in restaurants, as phone booth operators, and in transportation, including as assistants to bus drivers.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict, including fighting, gathering intelligence, providing operational support as porters and cooks, and sexual slavery. Forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, work in spare parts shops, artisanal gold mining, quarries, street vending, construction, and forced begging.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Cameroon's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify all key international conventions concerning child labor, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Increase the compulsory education age from age 12 to age 14 to align with the minimum age for work.

Establish by law 9 years of free basic public education, in harmony with international commitments.

Criminalize the use of children under the age of 18 for prostitution. Criminalize the use, offering, and procuring of children under the age of 18 for pornographic performances.

Criminally prohibit the use of children for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Remove the requirement of threats, the use of force, and coercion from child trafficking provisions, and ensure that child trafficking prohibitions apply to all children age 18 and under.

Prohibit work at dangerous heights and underwater for children.

Enforcement

Ensure that children associated with armed groups are referred to social services providers, ceasing the practice of detaining them as adults.

Provide the labor inspectorate with sufficient funding and increase the number of labor inspectors from 224 to 773 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 11.6 million people.

Conduct inspections in all sectors, including mining and the informal sector, and institute routine inspections during periods of increased labor demand, such as harvests.

Provide training and funding for criminal law enforcement to investigate cases of the worst forms of child labor.

Collect and publish comprehensive statistics on criminal law enforcement efforts.

Train enforcement officials on how to identify child trafficking, ensure that survivors receive rehabilitation services, and raise awareness of referral mechanisms for child labor complaints.

Coordination

Allocate resources to the National Committee to Combat Child Labor commensurate with its mandates.

Ensure that the National Committee to Combat Child Labor monitors cases of the worst forms of child labor, improves coordination among agencies collecting and reporting data on these efforts, and publishes its activities.

Social Programs

Secure the autonomy and inviolate safe space of school properties, removing all armed groups from educational facilities and protecting the peaceful gathering of students and teachers for schooling. Provide a sufficient number of schools and teachers, allowing for basic classroom furniture, toilets, and sanitation.

Continue to increase birth registration and expand access to identity documents so children can access secondary school and exams.

Provide for the costs of books, uniforms, tuition, and additional school fees so all children are able to access education.

Increase funding and programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including street begging, gold mining, and agriculture.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Armed conflict and several regional crises in Cameroon and neighboring countries have displaced millions of people and disrupted livelihoods and schooling. Refugee children, primarily from Nigeria and the Central African Republic, along with Cameroonian internally displaced children are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Children in the Far North Region are at higher risk of abduction and forced recruitment by non-state armed groups.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Many children in the Far North Region had no schooling, as Boko Haram and ISIS-WA attacks had destroyed classrooms and forced residents to flee. In addition, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that 46 percent of schools were not operational in the Northwest and Southwest Regions as of November 2023. Separatists and other criminal groups attacked and kidnapped students and teachers, often to collect ransom. The UN Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict verified 50 attacks on schools, hospitals, and staff. In the Far North Region, 10 schools continued to be used for military purposes by the Cameroon Armed Forces (CAF) during the reporting period. Many public officials have fled crisis regions, leaving children without birth registration services and thereby making them ineligible for exams or secondary school and prone to drop out; often resorting to child labor. Additional school fees also pose a significant barrier for many families, including the cost of uniforms, instructional materials, textbooks, and Parent-Teacher Association fees to build classrooms and purchase chairs, benches, and tables. Further barriers to education include inadequate school infrastructure, including toilets and sanitation, and an insufficient number of teachers.








LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cameroon has not ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. In addition, Cameroon’s laws do not meet international standards on free, compulsory, basic public education, the identification of hazardous occupations, commercial sexual exploitation, or the prohibition of child trafficking, or for commercial sexual exploitation.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Article 2 of Order N° 17 on Child Labor; Section 86 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 9–23 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor; Section 86 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 9–23 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 2–6 of the Law Relating to the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery; Sections 11, 292, 293, 342, and 342-1 of the Penal Code; Section 2 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2 and 4–6 of the Law Relating to the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery; Sections 11 and 342-1, and 352–354 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Section 294 of the Penal Code; Articles 76, 81, and 82 of the Law on Cybersecurity and Cyber-criminality
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		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
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		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
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 12 Years †		Preamble of the Constitution; Articles 9 and 16 of the Law Orienting the Education System
Free Public Education		Article 9 of the Law Orienting the Education System; Articles 46, 47, and 48 of the Decree on the Organization of Public Schools

* Country has no conscription

† Age calculated based on available information

The Decree on the Organization of Public Schools only provides 6 years of free schooling, but the international standard requires a free and compulsory education for a total of 9 years. The failure to provide for complete free basic education may increase the risk of children’s involvement in the worst forms of child labor. Cameroon does not meet the international standard for protection from commercial sexual exploitation because it does not criminalize the use of a child for prostitution or the use, offering, and procurement of a child for pornographic performances. Cameroon’s human trafficking provisions do not protect children aged 16 to 18 and require threats, the use of force, or coercion to establish the crime, contrary to international standards. Further, hazardous work at dangerous heights and underwater is not prohibited for children. The government has not addressed gaps in Cameroon’s legal framework regarding the prohibition of the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs and the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal enforcement agencies in Cameroon took actions to address child labor. However, funding was insufficient to address existing challenges.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MINTSS): Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor, and promotes decent working conditions. In 2023, MINTSS acquired 4-wheel-drive pick-up trucks to facilitate inspections, achieving a 9 percent increase in inspections compared to the previous year and conducting a total of 6,000 inspections. Officials said that security concerns in certain parts of the country limited the number of inspections conducted. Reports also indicate that the labor inspectorate lacked sufficient financial and human resources.

Criminal Law Enforcement Agencies: The Ministry of Justice prosecutes cases referred by the General Delegate for National Security or the Ministry of Defense’s National Gendarmerie. The National Gendarmerie investigates cases of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in both urban and rural areas and operates a hotline to report human trafficking crimes. The General Delegate for National Security is the national police service of Cameroon, enforcing laws against the worst forms of child labor and investigating violations in urban areas. Through its Special Vice Squad, investigates cases of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse against women and children. The National Interpol Bureau coordinates with criminal law enforcement and social services agencies to identify children subjected to forced labor. Although there is a National Referral System to assist human trafficking survivors,

research was unable to determine whether stakeholders used the system during the reporting period. In August 2023, the Ministry of Justice organized a 2-day capacity building workshop for magistrates, social affairs workers, lawyers, and law enforcement officers on ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, although the government conducted **6,000** inspections, it is **unknown** how many of these were worksite labor inspections or investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor. In addition, it is also **unknown** whether child labor violations were found, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Cameroon established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there was a lack of sufficient resources to carry out mandates.</p>	<p>National Committee to Combat Child Labor (CNLCTE): Coordinates government efforts to address child labor. Led by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and includes representatives from other ministries and government bodies as well as representatives from civil society. CNLCTE held its sixth session on November 24, 2023, to discuss the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and effectiveness of the toll-free hotline on child labor. The Committee did not report any cases of the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Cameroon established policies related to child labor. However, the government lacks a policy specifically dedicated to addressing child labor.</p>	<p>National Development Strategy (NDS30) (2020–2030): Includes goals such as poverty reduction, access to basic services, improved legal frameworks on the worst forms of child labor, and 10 years of free basic education. In 2023, the Government of Cameroon, in collaboration with the UN Development Program (UNDP), organized a forum on development finance under the Joint Sustainable Development Goal Fund, which gathered over 150 influential actors to adopt measures to implement the integrated national financing strategy of the NDS30.</p> <p>Operational Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (2021–2023): Addresses trafficking in persons, including child trafficking, by raising awareness, improving services to trafficking survivors, increasing prosecution of perpetrators, enhancing data collection, and coordinating anti-trafficking efforts. Includes the goals of identifying and suppressing forced child labor and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. In 2023, the government continued to implement the plan and drafted updates, which were still pending approval at the close of the reporting period.</p> <p>National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (Plan d’Action National pour l’Élimination des Pires Formes de Travail des Enfants au Cameroun) (2018–2025): A national policy and strategic instrument specifically dedicated to the elimination of child labor adopted by CNLCTE. Implementation of the plan was ongoing during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Cameroon funded and participated in programs that include the goal of preventing or eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors.

Shelters and Programs:† In conjunction with the National Employment Fund, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS)-funded Project to Fight the Phenomenon of Street Children (Project 559) provides food, clothing, temporary shelter, medical services, psychosocial counselling, basic education, and vocational training. The Cameroon Childhood Institute at Betamba, also has an intake capacity of 240 overnight lodgers and can accommodate up to 500 day-time visitors, including child survivors of forced labor. MINAS provided similar care to trafficking survivors through seven shelter and rehabilitation centers across the country, which also offer special protection measures, as well as family, school, or socioeconomic reintegration. In April 2023, MINAS partnered with UNDP to launch a 6-month, \$415,000 project aimed at the socioeconomic reintegration of 700 street children in Douala, Yaoundé, and Ngaoundere.

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 in the Center, Littoral, South, and West Regions of Cameroon. Implemented by the NGO association, *Enfant Jeunesse Avenir*, in partnership with Cameroon’s largest cocoa processor, Cameroon Cacao Industrial Corporation (SIC Cacaos). Other key stakeholders include the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family, the Ministry of Basic Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Services, and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Forever Chocolate guides farmers in the cocoa basin towards production methods free of child labor and includes supply chain tracing, monitoring, and remediation systems to ensure the eradication of child labor. The project also cares for vulnerable children by providing for school fees, school kits, and health services. Systemic curbs on demand for child labor were instigated by empowering women and providing families with alternative sources of income.

Zero Children in Gold Mines:† Implemented by the state-owned National Mining Corporation (*Société Nationale des Mines*) to eliminate child labor in gold mining in the East Region, which has more than 300 gold mining sites. The program reintegrates children into the educational system by supporting school registration, monitoring class attendance, distributing educational materials, and promoting the benefits of education and the dangers of mines to parents and traditional rulers. The program continued for a third consecutive year 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.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, the Central African Republic made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government trained police officers, gendarmes, leaders of law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders on the 2022 anti-trafficking law. It also worked with international donors and partners to rebuild damaged schools, train teachers, and increase birth registration to improve children’s access to education. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, the Central African Republic is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because government security forces continued to use children in support roles and to coordinate with an armed group that recruited and used children in armed conflict. In addition, the government provided no funding to its labor inspectorate to conduct inspections during the reporting period. Labor inspections are a key tool for identifying child labor violations, and their absence makes children more vulnerable to child labor. The government also did not publish complete data on its civil and criminal child labor law enforcement efforts, and it lacks a coordinating body, policies, and programs that address all relevant forms of child labor in the country.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	30.8% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	68.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	39.7%

Children in the Central African Republic are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use in armed conflict and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in mining and agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including sowing, weeding, harvesting, and handling fertilizers and pesticide.† Working in forestry, including carrying tools. Herding livestock and working in fishing.



Industry

Diamond and gold mining,† including digging, washing ore, carrying heavy loads, and processing, sometimes resulting in exposure to mercury.† Quarrying.† Working in forges† and sawmills,† including sharpening sawblades. Working in construction.



Services

Domestic work and street work, including vending, portage, and loading and unloading vehicles.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Recruitment by state security forces for use in armed conflict, including as domestic workers, checkpoint assistants, and errand runners. Recruitment by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict, including as combatants, cooks, porters, informants, and domestic workers, and for sexual exploitation. Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, vending, and mining. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.

In 2023, the Government of the Central African Republic failed to cease its use of children in armed conflict. In 2019, the government and 14 armed groups signed the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, which included a call for all parties to immediately cease recruitment of child soldiers. Nevertheless, during the reporting period, the United Nations verified and documented the recruitment and use of 103 children by all parties to the conflict, including pro-government Wagner Group forces, the Central African Armed Forces (FACA), and a variety of non-state armed groups. While non-state armed groups committed the majority of violations, government and pro-government forces were found to have used 23 children in support roles, including domestic work, assisting at checkpoints, and running errands.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Central African Republic's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish, by law, free basic education through lower secondary school.

Increase the age to which education is compulsory from 16 to 18 to align with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Ensure that the labor inspectorate is fully funded so it can carry out its mandate to enforce labor laws.

Conduct worksite inspections, including routine and unannounced inspections, in both the formal and informal sectors, to identify child labor violations.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate has sufficient material resources, including transportation, office facilities and supplies, and computers, to enforce child labor laws.

Ensure that inspectors use their own transportation, rather than accepting transportation from employers, to ensure impartiality of inspections.

Ensure that regional labor inspection offices are under the supervision and control of a central authority, and that regional directorates submit periodic reports on inspection activities.

Train Ministry of Mines inspectors on child labor laws and referral mechanisms to ensure that they enforce national prohibitions against child labor in mining and connect children found performing hazardous work with appropriate services.

Publish complete labor law enforcement data, including labor inspectorate funding, number and type of inspections conducted, number of child labor violations found, number of violations for which penalties were imposed, and number for which penalties were collected.

Publish complete criminal law enforcement data, including the number of investigations, number of prosecutions, number of convictions, and penalties imposed.

Ensure that formal penalties or sanctions are imposed for child labor law violations, rather than conciliation, as appropriate.

Ensure that referral mechanisms for children found in child labor situations are well-funded and fully operational.

Ensure that judicial and criminal law enforcement officials receive sufficient funding and training and ensure that citizens can report violations and access formal judicial processes throughout the country.

Coordination

Establish a coordinating mechanism that addresses all worst forms of child labor, including in mining, agriculture, and domestic work.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses child labor in all relevant sectors, including in agriculture and domestic work.

Ensure that signatories to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation uphold their commitments to cease the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and release children currently in their ranks.

Social Programs

Improve access to education for all children, regardless of displacement status or religious affiliation, by eliminating school-related fees; making additional efforts to provide all children with birth registration; ensuring that religious minorities are not denied access to education; improving basic educational infrastructure throughout the country, including buildings and adequate furniture, sanitary facilities, teachers, and supplies; and ensuring that schools are safe spaces and free from armed groups.

Expand programs to assist former child soldiers and children associated with armed groups, support their reintegration into society, and improve coordination among relevant actors.

Allocate sufficient resources and implement programs to address the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation and child labor in mining, throughout the country.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Conflict-affected children in the Central African Republic face increased risks of child labor, especially its worst forms, due to the instability created by ongoing violence and the threat inherent in the presence of armed groups. These children may be susceptible to direct recruitment and use in armed conflict, or may be exploited in forced labor in mining, domestic work, or sexual slavery by armed groups that control the area where they live. Girls in the Central African Republic also face higher risks of commercial sexual exploitation independent of conflict situations, including in urban centers like Bangui, where girls as young as age 12 are subjected to exploitation in brothels for the wealthy.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children face numerous barriers to accessing education in the Central African Republic, including chronic shortages of basic infrastructure, a shortage of teachers, school-related fees, labor exploitation by teachers themselves, security concerns, and destruction and occupation of some school buildings by armed groups, government security forces, and Wagner Group elements. While the government has achieved a measure of stability in the capital region, violence and insecurity in the rest of the country exacerbate barriers to education, especially for girls, who fear sexual assault when traveling long distances between home and school. The lack of access to sanitation and sanitary products also pose obstacles to girls attending school. Finally, despite recent efforts to implement free birth registration, the government still lacks sufficient capacity to reach all children, especially in rural areas, leaving many children without the identity documents required to enroll in school. There has also been reporting that children in Muslim families or with names perceived to be Muslim face discrimination in obtaining identity documentation.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Central African Republic has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, the Central African Republic's laws do not meet international standards on education because they do not guarantee free public education through lower secondary school and the compulsory education age is lower than the minimum age for work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Articles 389–394 of the Labor Code; Articles 61 and 64 of the Child Protection Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 263 of the Labor Code; Articles 63–66 of the Child Protection Code; Order on Hazardous Child Labor
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 261 of the Labor Code; Article 190 of the Mining Code; Order on Hazardous Child Labor
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 7 and 393 of the Labor Code; Articles 63 and 173 of the Child Protection Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 151 of the Penal Code; Articles 3, 5–10, 15, and 44 of Law on Combatting Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 262, 263, and 393 of the Labor Code; Articles 90–92 and 111 of the Penal Code; Articles 63 and 67 of the Child Protection Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 262, 263, and 393 of the Labor Code; Articles 63 and 173 of the Child Protection Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Decree N° 85.432, Declaration to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	 *	Articles 262 and 393 of the Labor Code; Article 75 of the Child Protection Code; Declaration to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 262 and 393 of the Labor Code; Articles 75 and 179 of the Child Protection Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 43 of the Constitution; Articles 37 and 49 of the Child Protection Code
Free Public Education		Article 43 of the Constitution; Articles 49 and 54 of the Child Protection Code; Education Sector Plan (2020–2029)

* Country has no conscription

On August 30, 2023, the Central African Republic adopted a new constitution. While the previous constitution provided for free public education at all levels, the new constitution only provides for free public education at the primary level, which covers the first 6 years of formal education. This does not meet the international standard of free public education through lower secondary school and leaves children vulnerable to exploitative labor. Children are also only required to attend school up to age 16. This standard makes children ages 16 and 17 vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work without restrictions until age 18. Legislation implementing the new constitutional guarantees and requirements on education has not yet been put in place.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in the Central African Republic took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial, human, and material resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Protection (MOL): Monitors and enforces laws related to child labor through its General Directorate of Labor and Social Welfare and seven regional labor directorates. Reporting suggests that MOL lacked the financial, human, and material resources needed to fulfill its mandate.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ): Oversees Juvenile Court, which maintains sole jurisdiction over criminal cases involving juvenile plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses, and victims of crime, including former child soldiers. Also oversees a special police unit responsible for monitoring children’s safety and welfare in large cities and industrial or mining areas and for recording criminal offenses against children. Judges are responsible for working with the police, the Child Protection Unit, the Children’s Prosecutor, and social workers to refer child victims to services. In partnership with the Ministry of Interior, MOJ oversees the Mixed Unit for Rapid Intervention and Repression of Sexual Violence to Women and Children, an interagency enforcement body responsible for operating a 24-hour hotline, supporting investigations into child trafficking allegations, and connecting victims with medical and social services. During the reporting period, police and gendarmes received training on trafficking in persons and child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

An **unknown** number of labor inspectors conducted **0** worksite inspections in 2023. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

Research indicates that the government did not allocate funds for labor inspections during the reporting period, effectively removing the inspectorate’s ability to enforce the country’s labor laws. Labor inspections are a key tool for identifying child labor violations, and their absence puts children at risk of child labor.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>The Central African Republic established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of a coordinating mechanism to address all worst forms of child labor in the country, including in mining, agriculture, and domestic work.</p>	<p>National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons: Interministerial working group with representatives from key ministries, including MOL. Coordinates implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Children and provides day-to-day coordination of state agencies. During the reporting period, conducted awareness-raising and training activities for the judicial sector and the public. While the committee makes an effort to address child labor broadly in its anti-trafficking work, it lacks the capacity and mandate to effectively address all relevant forms of child labor in the country.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The Central African Republic established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover child labor in all sectors, including in agriculture and domestic work.</p>	<p>Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic: Peace agreement signed by 14 armed groups and the Transitional Government in February 2019. Includes provisions to end the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, and to facilitate the separation of children from their ranks. Led to the adoption of the National Strategy for Community-Based Reintegration of Children Formerly Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups and the creation of Community Child Protection Networks and a Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, and Rehabilitation coordinating body. Following several years of stalled action, the government held a meeting to restart implementation of the agreement in 2023, and local authorities, national defense and security forces, and peacekeepers participated in MINUSCA training on monitoring and reporting grave violations against children in armed conflict. However, MINUSCA reported that armed groups continued to recruit and use children in armed conflict during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p><i>† Policy was adopted during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Roadmap:† Action plan developed to accelerate commitments toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7, which calls for the eradication of forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking by 2030 and the eradication of child labor by 2025. During the reporting period, MOL worked closely with stakeholders to develop this roadmap for the Central African Republic, which includes adopting regulations that address the worst forms of child labor, adopting a national social protection policy, strengthening anti-trafficking coordination bodies, mapping stakeholders, expanding awareness campaigns to educate communities about the worst forms of child labor and human trafficking, conducting a nationwide human trafficking study, creating warning committees on mine sites and high-risk areas, building shelters for victims in the provinces, expanding protection capacity, and improving data management and tracking for human trafficking cases.</p> <p>National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Children (2022–2023): Adopted in April 2022, established provisions to counter child trafficking, with a specific focus on preventing children from being recruited and used in conflict. Included awareness-raising programs for both the public and military forces, specialized training for FACA members, and a communication channel for officials to share information about the use of children in armed conflict and draw attention to potentially problematic situations. Provided assistance to children previously associated with armed groups and their families to prevent revictimization, including through economic and educational opportunities. In 2023, the government conducted awareness activities for 5,759 community members and leaders, NGO representatives, members of local peace committees, religious leaders, national defense and security forces, and members of the judiciary.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Central African Republic funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation and child labor in mining, throughout the country.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>UNICEF Programs: Coordinate the removal of children from forced labor situations, in partnership with NGOs, and provide necessary social services for their rehabilitation, enrollment in schools or vocational training programs, and placement in stable homes. Provide basic education and vocational skills training to children who are most at risk for child labor exploitation and armed group recruitment. Support shelters that provide immediate care, food, and psychosocial support to vulnerable children and former child soldiers. During the reporting period, worked with the government to provide community reintegration support to children formerly associated with armed groups; raised awareness of the importance of education, especially for girls; trained teachers and provided school materials; provided cash transfers to families, including 3,149 children; and continued to lead fact-finding surveys to gather information on child labor across the country.</p> <p>War Child Programs: Work to demobilize and reintegrate children associated with armed groups. Mobilize community-based child protection committees and provide mental health services to children affected by armed conflict. Assisted 372 children during the reporting period.</p> <p>Pilot Project to Support the Modernization of the Civil Registry in the Central African Republic: EU-funded pilot program implemented by CIVIPOL-RCA, with the cooperation of the Government of the Central African Republic. Aims to map current systems in place; build capacity of stakeholders responsible for issuing and managing vital records; better understand how to account for indigenous populations, refugees, and displaced persons in the civil registry; and provide operational support to improve the issuance and registration of birth certificates. During the reporting period, the program issued birth certificates to children in the pilot area.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

CHAD

NO ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor

In 2023, Chad is receiving an assessment of no advancement. Despite initiatives to address child labor, Chad is assessed as having made no advancement because it demonstrated complicity in the use of forced child labor. Government officials used their authority to approve the sale of children by parents for use as livestock herders. Government and military officials also exploited children directly in forced labor as herders. Otherwise, the government adopted a child protection policy and provided training on trafficking in persons issues, including child labor, for Ministry of Justice and law enforcement officials. However, the government did not publish key data on its civil and criminal child labor law enforcement efforts. In addition, gaps remain in Chad’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of prohibition against the use of children in illicit activities and the exclusion of non-citizens without formal refugee status from free public education.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	45.8% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	39.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	27.0%

Children in Chad are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor in livestock herding, mining, and domestic work. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and forestry. Herding cattle and other livestock. Fishing, including catching, smoking, and selling fish.



Industry

Working in mining† and carpentry. Producing construction materials and carrying heavy loads.†



Services

Domestic work. Street work, including vending, garbage scavenging, and carrying heavy loads.† Street begging† in urban centers. Working in auto repair shops.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, herding, begging, domestic work, fishing, forestry, mining, and street vending. Recruitment by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Chad’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that laws specifically prohibit children from being used, offered, or procured for illicit activities.

Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Chad, including non-citizens.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Enforcement

Investigate, prosecute, convict, and penalize government and military officials who engage in forced child labor or child trafficking.

Ensure that child labor violations are prosecuted to the full extent of the law and officials who seek to interfere with legal mechanisms and processes are penalized in accordance with the law.

Ensure that the role of the Child Protection Brigade's child trafficking and child labor complaint mechanism is well-known and understood by the public.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate provides inspectors with sufficient resources—including training, transportation, and budget allocations—to conduct inspections in both the formal and informal sectors.

Collect, store, and publish data on law enforcement efforts in a central database, including information about labor inspectorate funding; the number and type of inspections conducted; whether civil violations were found, penalties imposed, and fees collected; and the number of criminal investigations conducted, violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions obtained, and penalties imposed.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 36 to 140 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies are sufficiently funded, that law enforcement officers are trained, and that existing penalties are enforced according to the law.

Ensure that the judicial system receives sufficient resources, including training on child labor laws and funding for digital infrastructure, to effectively prosecute cases and manage data on the worst forms of child labor.

Investigate, prosecute, and when appropriate, convict and sentence religious teachers complicit in facilitating the worst forms of child labor, such as forced begging.

Coordination

Establish and fund a coordinating mechanism to prevent and eliminate child labor and report on its activities.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy to address all relevant worst forms of child labor in Chad, including human trafficking.

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key policies, including the Child Protection Policy and Women & Peace Policy, related to child labor during the reporting period and that data on these activities are published.

Social Programs

Ensure access to education for all children by eliminating school-related fees; increasing the number of schools, grade levels, classrooms, and teachers available throughout the country; implementing programs to increase enrollment of girls; and providing accommodations for students with disabilities.

Ensure that all children are issued birth certificates so they can enroll in school and take year-end exams.

Establish or expand programs to provide services to children subjected to the worst forms of child labor, such as forced child labor in mining, herding, construction, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

Increase access to social protection for refugees and internally displaced children who may be vulnerable to labor exploitation.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children entrusted to extended family or strangers who promise to care for them face increased risk in Chad, as frequently these situations lead to forced labor. Girls are more likely to be subjected to domestic servitude in Chad, including through the practice of forced early marriage, while boys are more likely to be exploited in pastoral activities, mining, or construction. Reporting suggests that boys sent to Koranic schools, or *mouhadjirin*, may be forced to beg and surrender the money they receive to their teachers. Children in Chad's internally displaced and refugee communities, whose numbers have increased significantly due to the conflict in neighboring Sudan, are also vulnerable to labor exploitation and human trafficking due to the instability of their situation and lack of access to support systems.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Chad was the first country in the region to integrate its network of refugee schools into the national education system; these schools are fully accredited and receive state funding. Notwithstanding this positive development, Chad only guarantees education for children who are citizens or refugees, rather than for all, leaving children who fall outside these groups unable to access schooling. Furthermore, poor access to birth registration documents in rural Chad creates an obstacle for children once they reach third grade, when formal identification is required to take year-end exams. While basic education is free by law, some schools require additional payment for textbooks and for supplemental fees. Other barriers to education include shortages of schools, classrooms, and teachers, and the inability of some schools to offer all grade levels. Girls experience higher dropout rates than boys, and children with disabilities face barriers to school attendance, including inadequate facilities.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Chad has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Chad's laws do not meet international standards because there is no specific legal prohibition against the use of children in illicit activities and non-citizens without formal refugee status are excluded from free public education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Article 52 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of the Decree Relating to Child Labor
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 6 and 7 of the Decree Relating to Child Labor
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 6 and 10 of the Decree Relating to Child Labor; Articles 5, 19, and 22 of the President's Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 20 of the Constitution; Chapter 1, Article 5 of the Labor Code; Articles 5 and 15 of the President's Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons; Articles 292(e), 292(c), 327, 328, 330, and 331 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 3, 5, 6.2, and 7.1 of the President's Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons; Articles 10, 330, and 331 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 335, 336(a), 362–364, 443, and 446 of the Penal Code; Articles 81–85 of the Law on Cyber Security and Fight Against Cyber Criminality; Articles 5, 16, and 22 of the President's Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 32 of the Law on the Organization of the Armed Forces; Article 1 of the Ordinance Prohibiting the Use of Children in Armed Conflict; Article 52 of Military Statute N° 006/PR/06; Article 5 of the President's Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons; Articles 10, 286(cc), 288(g), and 370 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 32 of the Law on the Organization of the Armed Forces; Article 22 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; Articles 5, 18, and 22 of the President's Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons; Articles 10, 286(cc), 288(g), and 370 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 1 of the Ordinance Prohibiting the Use of Children in Armed Conflict; Articles 5, 18, and 22 of the President's Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons; Articles 10, 286(cc), 288(g), and 370 of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years ‡		Articles 21, 23, 25, and 28 of the Law Orienting the Education System; Article 38 of the Constitution
Free Public Education		Article 9 of the Law Orienting the Education System; Article 38 of the Constitution

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Chad lacks a specific legal prohibition on children being used, offered, or procured for illicit activities. Furthermore, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before completion of compulsory education. Lastly, while Chad’s laws provide for free basic education for citizens and refugees, they do not meet the international standard because they do not cover non-citizen children without refugee status.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal enforcement agencies in Chad took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient resources and government complicity in child labor crimes hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Service, Employment, and Social Dialogue (MOPS): Oversees Chad’s labor inspectorate and enforces child labor laws. Administers a directorate charged with addressing the worst forms of child labor and maintains a specific point of contact to assist in coordinating child protection and human trafficking issues. In 2023, MOPS officials received training on child labor exploitation.

National Police’s Child Protection Brigade (CPB): Enforces child protection laws. Investigates allegations of child exploitation, including human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor, and removes children from exploitative situations. Includes 100 “focal points” spread throughout all 23 provinces. These focal points are not trained investigators, but they are responsible for coordinating investigations with the country’s seven hub offices and referring allegations to investigators. The CPB is active in Chad’s largest cities (N’Djamena, Moundou, Sarh, Mongo, Mao, and Abéché). The CPB or other local authorities notify the Ministry of Justice (MOJ)’s Directorate for Protection and Legal Monitoring of Children, UNICEF, and local NGOs when there is a case of child trafficking or exploitation. The government’s regional child protection technical committees also identify and refer child trafficking victims to the CPB and the Ministry of Gender and National Solidarity. The CPB coordinates with the Ministry of Gender, MOPS, and MOJ from its UNICEF-funded headquarters in N’Djamena to provide children with shelter, assist with investigations, and search for long-term accommodations. However, lack of resources hampered its ability to effectively fulfill its mandate.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, it is **unknown** how many worksite inspections were performed by Chad’s **36** labor inspectors and whether any child labor violations were found. There was **1** investigation into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes with an **unknown** number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted.‡

‡ Data are up until November 2023.

Government officials used their authority to approve the sale by parents of their children for use as livestock herders. Government and military officials have also exploited children directly in their capacity as herd owners who sign contracts with the parents of children, or

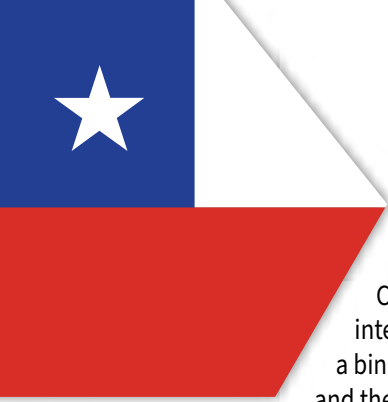
who take receipt of children from traffickers to use them as herders. Observers report that complicity exists at multiple levels, including high-ranking military officers, local government officials, and local security forces. Officials may intimidate victims from pursuing criminal cases, cover up allegations of trafficking crimes, intimidate prosecutors and judges, or not pursue cases to protect suspected traffickers. Despite increased attention brought to the issue by both international partners and local civil society organizations, as well as a robust legislative and penal framework in place since 2018, the Chadian government has continued to allow forced child labor and child trafficking crimes to be perpetrated with impunity by some of its members.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Research found no evidence that Chad established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Chad established policies related to child labor. However, gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including a lack of policies to address all worst forms of child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was adopted during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Road Map to Implement the President’s Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons: Adopted in 2019, with the goal of implementing a National Action Plan and ensuring interagency enforcement of the 2018 President’s Ordinance on Trafficking in Persons. Includes provisions for training members of the courts, local authorities, traditional and religious leaders, members of civil society, and members of enforcement agencies. During the reporting period, the government drafted a National Action Plan to Combat Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking (2023–2025) that includes awareness campaigns, establishment of an early warning system in remote areas, and research on the root causes of human trafficking in Chad and the exploitation of girls in domestic work to inform judicial sector and policy actions. The plan was awaiting approval at the end of the reporting period.</p> <p>National Child Protection Policy:[†] Developed with the support of UNICEF and adopted on March 4, 2023. Includes a budgeted action plan. During the reporting period, partners produced proposed revisions to the Child Code to be submitted to Parliament in 2024.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Chad funded and participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address the full scope of the problem, including forced child labor in herding, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>Shelters Program: The Ministry of Gender and National Solidarity, with support from UNICEF and civil society organizations, runs shelters to provide temporary assistance to victims of child trafficking. Shelters provide food, education, medical and psychological care, and reintegration services. Services are funded in part by a National Solidarity Fund maintained by the Prime Minister’s Office. Shelters continued to provide victim services during the reporting period.</p> <p>UNICEF Programs: Multifaceted humanitarian action targeting children, including refugees and internally displaced children in Chad. Includes interventions in education, healthcare, nutrition, and other areas of basic need. The \$21 million Education Cannot Wait (2020–2023) program was developed under the Ministry of National Education’s Transitional Education Plan and supports education for 446,744 at-risk children. Interventions include education services and materials as well as non-formal education and literacy programs for out-of-school adolescent children. UNICEF also supports the digitization of birth registration, providing registration and delivery of birth certificates directly in health centers, and maintains child-friendly spaces to support resilience among crisis-affected children. During the reporting period, UNICEF finalized a national case management system in partnership with the Ministry in charge of Child Protection and provided training on harmonized case management for government and non-governmental social workers.</p> <p>World Food Program (WFP) Programs: Aim to provide food security and educational outcomes in Chad among crisis-affected and vulnerable populations. Seek to promote resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems, including by providing meals to school children. Prioritize strengthening national institutions to manage food security and coordinating cooperation with humanitarian and development partners in Chad. During the reporting period, provided unconditional food assistance and cash transfers to 2.8 million crisis-affected people, including over 600,000 refugees and returnees fleeing conflict in Sudan; supported 431,758 children and school staff in school-based programs; and reached 240,839 people through asset creation and livelihood programs.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



CHILE

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Chile made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Chile assumed the role of Chair in the Global Coordinating Group of Alliance 8.7, providing leadership in international action towards a future without child labor and human trafficking. Chile and Argentina established a binational Child Labor Commission to exchange good practices and policies on the eradication of child labor and the protection of adolescent workers. The government conducted a National Survey of Activities of Children and Adolescents, which will result in new data to adjust programs and efforts to address child labor. In addition, the government increased its number of labor inspectors from 350 in 2022 to 481 in 2023 and conducted 10.3 percent more inspections than in the previous year. Moreover, the Ministry of Education updated an education policy to secure the right to education and inclusion for foreign children living in Chile. However, despite these efforts, human resources for the labor inspectorate were still not sufficient to fully cover a workforce of 9.6 million people, and carry out inspections covering sectors of the economy beyond agriculture. Social programs are also needed to prevent the engagements of migrant and indigenous youth in child labor.

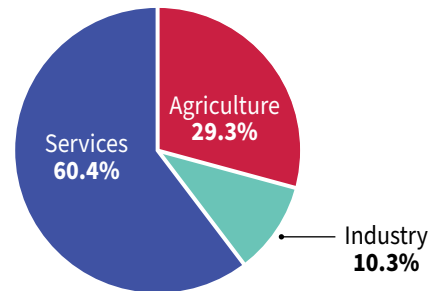


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	3.8% (94,025)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	99.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	4.5%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Chile are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Agricultural production, working in livestock rearing, forestry,† hunting,† and fishing.†



Industry

Construction,† bricklaying,† and carpentry.†



Services

Domestic work and street work,† including street vending. Working in retail, hospitality, corner stores, offices, restaurants, and bars.† Working in garbage collection† and street cleaning.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Use in illicit activities, including in the production, selling, and distribution of drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, mining, construction, street vending, domestic work, and garment and hospitality sectors. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Chile's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 481 to 642 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 9.6 million workers. Conduct a comprehensive inspection campaign beyond agriculture, monitoring all areas and sectors in which child labor is occurring.

Publish information on the number of child violations found in all labor inspections and number of penalties imposed and collected. Also make the information on number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions for the worst forms of child labor crimes public.

Provide regular labor inspector refresher training.

Coordination

Improve collaboration between governmental agencies, unions, and civil society stakeholders involved in addressing child labor and forced labor.

Government Policies

Ensure that the National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking (2023–2026) is approved and implemented, and publish information about activities undertaken following the plan.

Implement the Fourth Action Plan against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. Make information on the results of the Third Action Plan against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents and the progress of the current plan's activities publicly available.

Social Programs

Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in forestry, hunting, and fishing to inform policies and programs.

Ensure that educational barriers, such as the lack of transportation to school in rural areas, overcrowded public schools, and discrimination against migrant children in educational settings, are addressed to prevent child labor.

Plan and deliver special programs to reduce school dropout rates and ensure the re-engagement of students.

Provide targeted social programs to support migrant and indigenous youth to prevent child labor and the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that there are adequate services and shelters available for child survivors of human trafficking, including specialized services for male survivors.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In Chile, children from indigenous communities and migrant children are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture, mining, street vending, domestic service, and the hospitality sector. Chilean girls, migrant girls and adolescents, especially from Venezuela and Colombia, are also at higher risk for commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, state care institutions have subjected some children to commercial sexual exploitation and used them in the production of pornography, as revealed by an investigation into Better Childhood Service. Before the creation of Better Childhood Service, similar problems were found to exist in its predecessor, the National Minor's Service (SENAME).



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While education is compulsory through secondary school, some educational barriers do exist in Chile, including a lack of transportation to schools in rural areas and discrimination in educational settings, specifically against migrant children. Public schools can be overcrowded, which also creates difficulties in accessing education.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Chile has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Chile's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Articles 13 and 17 of the Labor Code; Article 13 of Law No. 21.271
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 13, 14, and 18 of the Labor Code; Articles 14, 15, and 18 of Law No. 21.271
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 14–18 of the Labor Code; Decree 1; Article 18 of the Law No. 21.271
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 19, No. 2 of the Constitution; Article 2 of the Labor Code; Article 411 of the Penal Code; Article 37 of Law No. 21.430
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 411 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 366, 367, and 411 of the Penal Code; Law No. 20.594; Article 37 of Law No. 21.430
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 72 of the Penal Code; Law 21.444
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Chapter 1, Article 32 of the Armed Forces Recruitment and Mobilization Law No. 2.306
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Chapter 1, Article 13 of the Armed Forces Recruitment and Mobilization Law No. 2.306
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 26 of Law No. 20.357
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years ‡		Articles 4, 25, and 27 of the General Education Law No. 20.370
Free Public Education		Article 4 of the General Education Law No. 20.370

‡ Age calculated based on available information



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Chile took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resources and judges suspending or commuting sentences for those convicted of child commercial sexual exploitation crimes hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MINTRAB): Enforces child labor laws, coordinating with the Better Childhood Service and the Department of Fundamental Rights. In 2023, Chile replaced the Department for the Eradication of Child Labor with the Department of Fundamental Rights. The latter leads the Ministerial Advisory Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Workers (CETI), and is tasked with eradicating child labor and forced labor, as well as addressing labor issues pertaining to migration and people with disabilities. In addition, CETI launched a public website containing information on actions by the Commission and its regional offices during the reporting period. The Undersecretary of Labor within MINTRAB chairs the Ministerial Advisory Commission for the Implementation of the Protocol (ILO C.29) on forced labor.

National Prosecutor’s Office (Fiscalía Nacional): Conducts criminal investigations and prosecutes crimes related to the worst forms of child labor. Trains and coordinates with interagency partners, including the National Investigative Police, the National Uniformed Police (*Carabineros*), and regional and local prosecutor’s offices. In 2023, one person was sentenced to 20 years in prison for trafficking 16- to 20-year-old Colombian female migrants for commercial sexual exploitation in Chile. In another case, 2 perpetrators were sentenced to 13 and 10 years in jail, respectively, for trafficking in persons for commercial sexual exploitation with aggravated conditions because one of the victims was a minor. In June 2023, the Chilean Police Force concluded operation ‘Orion 2,’ which targeted child pornography. As a result of the operation, 95 people were arrested and 2 minors were rescued from exploitation.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **481** labor inspectors conducted **91,040** worksite inspections, including **71** inspections following reports of workplace accidents in the agricultural sector involving children that resulted in identifications of **71** violations. The number of penalties imposed and collected is **unknown**. The government conducted investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor and convicted perpetrators of crimes. Nonetheless, the total number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions is **unknown**.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Chile established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

Ministerial Advisory Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Working Adolescents: Coordinates with the Department of Fundamental Rights on implementing the National Strategy for the Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers at the national and subnational levels. In 2023, the commission signed letters of intent with employers and labor organizations, designed a case referral protocol, and implemented outreach campaigns for adolescents. Reports have noted that more robust coordination with stakeholders and NGOs is needed.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Chile established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Strategy for the Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers (2015–2025): Aims to eradicate child labor by combining efforts across national and regional agencies, and private and public entities. It also requires regions to establish a strategy to address child labor issues in their area and use a gender-based and a multicultural approach, prioritizing underserved communities. MINTRAB leads the effort, uniting government institutions, employer organizations, worker organizations, civil society, and international organizations in interinstitutional actions. The guidelines in the strategy call for a survey to be conducted every four years. In 2023, the National Statistics Institute of Chile carried out the National Survey of Activities of Children and Adolescents.</p> <p>Fourth Action Plan against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (2021–2025): Creates cooperation mechanisms for private and public institutions to collaborate on preventing and detecting the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and providing social services and rights restitution to survivors. In October 2023, the government published a new interinstitutional investigative protocol for commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Chile funded and participated in a program that includes the goal of eliminating and preventing child labor. However, there is an insufficient number of shelters for survivors of human trafficking and a lack of shelters for male victims.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Chile. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Better Childhood Service (Mejor Niñez):[†] Operates under the Ministry of Social Development and Family and works in coordination with the Department of Child Labor Eradication, guaranteeing the protection of vulnerable children and adolescents, particularly those living on the streets, and survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Also coordinates with Local Offices of Childhood (<i>Oficinas Locales de la Niñez</i>) to refer cases of children whose rights have been violated to social services. These offices are located in municipalities throughout the country and are part of the larger social protection network overseen by Better Childhood Service. In 2023, the Specialized Protection Service for Children and Adolescents launched two regional Protection Plans in Antofagasta and Arica to address sexual and commercial sexual exploitation.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Although research found that no child labor exists on Christmas Island, in 2023, the government made moderate advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. In June 2023, the Government of Australia ratified the International Labor Organization’s Minimum Age Convention of 1973 (No. 138), which entered into force on June 13, 2024. However, despite this effort, the laws in force on Christmas Island do not afford free public education to children without permanent resident status, including undocumented children.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists on Christmas Island.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government action below would close a gap USDOL has identified in Christmas Island’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that free public education is afforded to all children, regardless of legal or resident status.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Christmas Island is non-self-governing and is included as part of the territory of the Australian Commonwealth. Under the Acts Interpretation Act 1901 (Cth), all laws of the Commonwealth are applicable to Christmas Island as if it were a part of mainland Australia. Australia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Christmas Island’s laws do not meet the international standard related to free public education because free public education is not afforded to all children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 17.5 Years	✓	Section 190 of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) (CI); Section 29 of the School Education Act 1999 (WA) (CI)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Part 7.1 Division 2 r.336 of the Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations; Section 634 of the Mines Health and Safety Act of 2020 (WA) (CI); Section 193 of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) (CI)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Applicant Guide – Application for a High Risk Work License; Section 634 of the Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022 (WA) (CI)
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Sections 270.1A-270.7 and 270.8 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Divisions 270.3, 270.7, 271.1, 271.4, 271.7, and 271.7F-7G of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Sections 3-4 and 16-18 of the Prostitution Act 2000 (WA) (CI); Section 3 and 192 of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) (CI); Section 217 of the Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA) (CI)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Divisions 309 and 310 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Canberra Act 2600
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Canberra Act 2600

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Sections 268.68 and 268.88 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Compulsory Education Age, 17.5 Years		Section 6 of the School Education Act 1999 (WA) (CI)
Free Public Education		Section 4, 97, and 98 of the School Education Act 1999 (WA) (CI); Sections 12-14A, and 62 of the School Education Regulations 2000

*Country has no conscription

Christmas Island’s laws on free public education are not in line with international standards because free public education is not afforded to children without permanent resident status, including undocumented children.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Australia has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Australian Federal Police: Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Lead the Australian Center to Counter Child Exploitation.

Western Australia Department of Communities: Enforces laws related to the minimum age for work through a Service Delivery Arrangement under which Australian government services are provided on Christmas Island.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor. However, Australia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to prevent child labor.</p>	<p>Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Trafficking and Slavery: Deals with child labor law enforcement and policy, including the worst forms of child labor, from a counter-trafficking perspective. Comprises 11 government agencies, including the Australian Federal Police, Department of Employment, and Department of Foreign Affairs, and is chaired by the Department of Home Affairs. The Committee meets at least twice a year, including once at the ministerial level, and includes an Operational Working Group subcommittee that met five times in 2023 and refers emerging policy issues for consideration.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor. However, Australia established a policy to prevent child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery (2020-2025): Sets five strategic priorities for addressing modern slavery, which the National Action Plan defines as trafficking in persons, slavery, slavery-like practices, and the worst forms of child labor. Priorities include: (1) prevention; (2) disruption, investigation, and prosecution; (3) support and protection for victims; (4) partnerships; and (5) research.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, Australia funded a program that includes the goal of preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Cash Assistance Programs: The Child Care Subsidy Program provides support for the care of children ages 13 or younger using an approved childcare service, and the Parenting Program provides an income support payment for the principal caretakers of a child under age 8.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Although research found that no child labor exists on Cocos (Keeling) Islands, in 2023, the government made moderate advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. In June 2023, the Government of Australia ratified the International Labor Organization’s Minimum Age Convention of 1973 (No. 138), which entered into force on June 13, 2024. However, despite this effort, the laws in force on Cocos (Keeling) Islands do not afford free public education to children without permanent resident status, including undocumented children.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists on Cocos (Keeling) Islands.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government action below would close a gap USDOL has identified in Cocos (Keeling) Islands’ implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that free public education is afforded to all children, regardless of legal or resident status.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Cocos (Keeling) Islands are non-self-governing and are included as part of the territory of the Australian Commonwealth. Under the Acts Interpretation Act 1901 (Cth), all laws of the Commonwealth are applicable to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands as if they were a part of mainland Australia. Australia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Cocos (Keeling) Islands’ laws do not meet the international standard related to free public education because free public education is not afforded to all children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 17.5 Years		Section 190 of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) (CKI); Section 29 of the School Education Act 1999 (WA) (CKI)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Part 7.1 Division 2 r.336 of the Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations; Section 634 of the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulation 2022 (WA); Section 193 of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) (CKI)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Application for a High Risk Work License; Section 634 of the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulation 2022 (WA)
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 270.1A-270.7 and 270.8 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Divisions 270.3, 270.7, 271.1, 271.4, 271.7, and 271.7F-7G of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 3-4, and 16–18 of the Prostitution Act 2000 (WA) (CKI); Sections 3 and 192 of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) (CKI); Section 217 of the Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA) (CKI)

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Divisions 309 and 310 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Canberra Act 2600
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Canberra Act 2600
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Sections 268.68 and 268.88 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Compulsory Education Age, 17.5 Years	✓	Section 6 of the School Education Act (WA) (CKI)
Free Public Education	✗	Sections 4, 8, and 97 of the School Education Act (WA) (CKI); Sections 12-14A, and 62 School Education Regulations 2000

* Country has no conscription

Cocos (Keeling) Islands’ laws on free public education are not in line with international standards because free public education is not afforded to children without permanent resident status, including undocumented children.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Australia has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Australian Federal Police: Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Lead the Australian Center to Counter Child Exploitation.

Western Australia Department of Communities: Enforces laws related to the minimum age for work through a Service Delivery Arrangement, under which Australian government services are provided in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor. However, Australia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to prevent child labor.</p>	<p>Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Trafficking and Slavery: Deals with child labor law enforcement and policy, including the worst forms of child labor, from a counter-trafficking perspective. Comprises 11 government agencies, including the Australian Federal Police, Department of Employment, and Department of Foreign Affairs, and is chaired by the Department of Home Affairs. The Committee meets at least twice a year, including once at the ministerial level, and includes an Operational Working Group subcommittee that met five times in 2023 and refers emerging policy issues for consideration.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor. However, Australia established a policy to prevent child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020–2025: Sets five strategic priorities for addressing modern slavery, which the National Action Plan defines as trafficking in persons, slavery, slavery-like practices, and the worst forms of child labor. Priorities include: (1) prevention; (2) disruption, investigation, and prosecution; (3) support and protection for victims; (4) partnerships; and (5) research.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, Australia funded programs that include the goal of preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Cash Assistance Programs: The Child Care Subsidy Program provides support for the care of children ages 13 or younger using an approved childcare service, and the Parenting Program provides an income support payment for the principal caretakers of a child under age 8.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

COLOMBIA

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Colombia made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor provided technical assistance and awareness-raising campaigns on child labor issues in over 550 municipalities. The Colombian Family Welfare Institute reached over 100,000 children and adolescents vulnerable to recruitment by armed or organized criminal groups through a program which uses cultural, sports, and science events. The government also introduced a new national action plan that provides monetary support to vulnerable groups affected by armed conflict, and another national action plan to guarantee uninterrupted education and safe spaces at schools in areas affected by armed conflict. In addition, the Governments of Colombia and Ecuador designed new data collection and assistance mechanisms to support children engaged in child labor in mining in the border region between the two countries. However, despite these efforts, the number of labor inspectors is insufficient to fully cover a workforce of over 24.6 million workers. In addition, social programs in Colombia are not adequate to address the scope of the country's child labor problem, particularly in areas impacted by armed conflict. Moreover, migrant children, refugee children, and children separated from their families require additional assistance to prevent them from being recruited and used by criminal or armed groups, including for illicit activities and commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and forced labor.

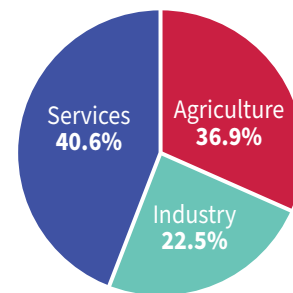


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	1.3% (110,393)
Boys		1.6%
Girls		1.1%
Urban		0.6%
Rural		3.3%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	10.3% (258,990)
Boys		14.7%
Girls		5.7%
Urban		7.0%
Rural		19.3%
Attending School	5 to 14	93.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	1.4%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Colombia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, forced street vending, forced begging, and recruitment by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in animal husbandry,† forestry, agriculture,† fishing,† and hunting, including in the production of coca, coffee, sugarcane,† pome and stone fruits, and grapes.



Industry

Mining† coal, emeralds, and gold. Construction,† particularly in large-scale projects. Producing bricks.



Services

Street work,† including vending and helping shoppers carry bags in urban markets,† begging,† and guarding cars and motorcycles.† Domestic work,† including caring for children,† cooking, gardening, and shopping for the home. Working in retail establishments, hotels, and restaurants. Recycling.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in the production of pornography. Forced street vending and forced begging. Use in illicit activities by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, including committing homicides, extortions, trafficking drugs, and the production of coca (stimulant plant), each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Colombia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to age 18 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 1,159 to 1,642 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 24.6 million workers.

Publish information on the number of children removed from child labor due to inspections and the number of children referred to social services.

Ensure that labor inspectors do not encounter any barriers to conduct inspections in private residences if child labor is suspected.

Enhance the Attorney General’s Office’s case management system to track entire criminal proceedings beyond sentencing, to include information on the sentences and penalties handed down after conviction.

Ensure that all children rescued from child labor situations are provided social services.

Social Programs

Improve education access for all children, especially those in rural and marginalized urban environments, including by ensuring adequate transportation to school, improving school infrastructure, and addressing violence affecting school attendance.

Expand social programs to sufficiently address the scope of the worst forms of child labor, particularly commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and recruitment for use in illicit activities.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In Colombia, migrant, refugee, and indigenous children are economically disadvantaged and, as a result, are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Venezuelan and Ecuadorian migrant and refugee children are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation and street work. Refugee and unaccompanied migrant children, as well as those who got separated from their families while transiting through areas of the country where state institutions have limited capacity, are at greater risk of being recruited and used by criminal organizations and armed groups for labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Afro-Colombian and indigenous children in the departments of Arauca, Cauca, Chocó, Córdoba, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, and Valle del Cauca are at high risk of child soldier recruitment or use by non-state groups for armed conflict, as well as recruitment by criminal organizations. In addition, girls living in areas with foreign tourism, in mining communities, and in areas with large construction projects are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and forced labor.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in rural and marginalized urban parts of the country face barriers to accessing education due to poor school infrastructure, violence at school, and living long distances from schools combined with a lack of adequate transportation. While children under age 18 are eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), migrant and refugee children face difficulties in obtaining TPS—without which they cannot attend school—due to their adult guardians’ lack of familiarity with the process, thereby increasing barriers to education access and vulnerability to child labor. In 2023, 135,000 migrant children from Venezuela did not attend school. In addition, 27 attacks on schools took place and 18 schools have been used by armed groups in 2023.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Colombia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, as Colombia's minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 35 of the Child and Adolescence Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 117 of the Child and Adolescence Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 3 of Resolution 1796
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 141 and 188A of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 188A–188C and 231 of the Penal Code; Law No. 2168
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 213–219B of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 162, 188D, and 384 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 81 of Law 1861
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 4 of Law 1861
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 162 of the Penal Code; Article 20 of the Child and Adolescence Code; Article 14 of Law 418
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years		Decree 4807 of 2011
Free Public Education		Articles 2.3.1.6.4.1 and 2.3.1.6.4.2 of Decree 1075; Article 1 of Decree 4807; Article 28 of the Child and Adolescence Code



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Colombia took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Receives complaints of labor law violations and conducts labor inspections, including inspections to verify labor conditions for adolescent workers and compliance with other child labor provisions through its Inspection, Monitoring, Control, and Territorial Management Directorate. Also oversees the Internal Working Group on Child Labor Eradication. Additionally, the Directorate of Fundamental Rights' Unit for Labor Protections operates the Comprehensive Child Labor Information System (SIRITI), a child labor monitoring system that identifies children engaged in or at risk of child labor.

Attorney General’s Office (AGO): Investigates and prosecutes cases of child recruitment for use in armed conflict and illicit activities, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking. With support from the Office’s Technical Investigation Unit, advises the Attorney General in the design of policies and strategies related to the role of judicial police investigators. Oversees the Articulation Group for Addressing Trafficking in Persons, which includes prosecutors, analysts, and judicial police engaged in addressing organized crime and human trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **1,159** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections and found **7** child labor violations. The AGO also conducted **2,248** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **734** prosecutions, and convicted **1,908** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Colombia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Interagency Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker (CIETI): Coordinates efforts to address the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by MOL, includes 21 government agencies and representatives from trade unions, business associations, and civil society organizations. Oversees department-level CIETIs throughout the country, each comprising municipal-level committees. In 2023, the committee convened twice.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Colombia established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>National Policy Guidelines to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor and Protect the Adolescent Worker (2017–2027): Aims to address child labor in the agriculture sector, develop child labor prevention strategies, improve the quality and coverage of child protection services, protect adolescent workers from hazardous work, create strategies to address child labor in domestic work, and establish evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to assess progress. Contains a roadmap to prevent and eliminate child labor in mining and a cooperative agreement between the Ministry of Mining and Energy and the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (<i>Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar</i> [ICBF]) to prevent child labor in mining. In 2023, MOL provided targeted support to the department of la Guajira through CIETI. It also provided a \$25,000 grant to the department and reported that it would address 308 cases of child labor.</p> <p>National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (2018–2028): Guides government actions at the national, departmental, and municipal levels for the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation, survivor assistance, and the strengthening of sentencing for perpetrators. As a core part of this strategy, the government maintains an “Eyes in All Places” (<i>Ojos en Todas Partes</i>) public awareness campaign, which aims to prevent child sex tourism. The campaign is led by MOL through the National Consulting Interagency Committee. The Committee consists of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism; ICBF; the Attorney General’s Office; the National Police; UNICEF; the Foundation <i>Renacer</i>; and regional and municipal authorities.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>National Policy for the Prevention of Recruitment, Use, and Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups of Organized Criminal Groups (2018–2028): Directs government actions to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, address violence against children, and improve interagency coordination. The government also has a roadmap that establishes protocols to assist child survivors of armed conflict.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Colombia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem.</p> <p>† Program is funded by the Government of Colombia.</p> <p>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Campaigns Against Child Labor:† ICBF campaigns to increase coordination for the protection of children and adolescents with other government agencies at the national, departmental, and municipal levels, while leading the Family National Welfare System. In 2023, ICBF organized awareness-raising events and workshops, conducted capacity building exercises, and distributed materials.</p> <p>Programs Addressing Trafficking in Persons:† Aim to raise awareness of child trafficking crimes. AGO oversees the “Don’t be Fooled” (#EsoEsCuento) public awareness campaign to prevent human trafficking. The National Police also implement their own public awareness and child protection program, “Open Your Eyes” (<i>Abre Tus Ojos</i>). The program aims to protect children from exploitation in the worst forms of child labor. In 2023, the National Police continued organizing workshops, as well as recreational and sports events, for children, adolescents, parents, and teachers. In 2023, the Ministry of Interior launched the “What is Trafficking?” (<i>De Que Trata la Trata</i>) public awareness campaign to educate the public on human trafficking and available resources, including a national anti-trafficking hotline.</p> <p>Development for Social Prosperity Programs:† Families in Action (<i>Familias en Acción</i>) uses a conditional cash transfer program to address poverty and build human capital; United Network (<i>Red Unidos</i>) coordinates actions to reduce inequality and end extreme poverty; Healthy Generations (<i>Generaciones con Bienestar</i>) operates a children’s rights program offering cultural and recreational activities for children ages 6 to 17 identified as vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor; and Youth in Action (<i>Jóvenes en Acción</i>) provides technical job training and conditional cash transfers to vulnerable urban youth ages 16 to 24.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

**WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Violence, threats, harassment, killings, and other practices against trade unionists are common in Colombia. The government did not adequately enforce laws protecting freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, resulting in a continued high degree of impunity for violators. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses may go undetected when unions’ ability to operate freely is curtailed.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

COMOROS

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Comoros made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted a new policy that promotes decent work and includes child labor prevalence studies and awareness efforts. However, despite this initiative to address child labor, Comoros is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because in 2023 the labor inspectorate conducted zero worksite inspections. Labor inspections are a key tool for identifying child labor violations, and their absence makes children more vulnerable to child labor. In addition, Comoros' Labor Code applies only to workers with a formal work agreement, leaving child laborers, particularly those working in the informal sector, vulnerable to exploitation. Comoros also lacks a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor in the country, and the legal framework stipulates child trafficking crimes to require the use of force, fraud, or coercion, which does not conform with international standards.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working		11.7% (Unavailable)
Boys	5 to 14	12.9%
Girls		10.5%
Urban		6.8%
Rural		13.8%
Hazardous Work by Children		24.1% (Unavailable)
Boys	15 to 17	26.0%
Girls		21.9%
Urban		22.8%
Rural		24.6%
Attending School	5 to 14	87.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	14.8%

Children in Comoros are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor in agriculture and in illicit activities. Children also perform dangerous tasks in construction, carpentry, and domestic work.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Animal husbandry† and fishing.†



Industry

Construction† and carpentry.†



Services

Domestic work.† Street vending. Repairing cars† and bicycles,† including tire vulcanization† and battery charging.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, construction, street vending, baking, fishing, agriculture, and in illicit activities, such as drug trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Comoros’ implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law’s light work provisions set age 13 as the minimum age for work, prescribe the number of hours per week that light work may be undertaken, and specify the conditions under which light work may be conducted, as defined by international standards on child labor.

Establish by law the right to free basic education.

Ensure that the law’s minimum age for work provisions and protections apply to children in unpaid or non-contractual work.

Align child trafficking laws with international standards by ensuring that force, fraud, or coercion are not required elements in child trafficking cases.

Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to age 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Provide the labor inspectorate with an operating budget for resources, training, transportation, equipment, and an adequate number of labor inspectors; 6 inspectors would ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 246,700 people.

Provide inspectors with appropriate training on new laws related to child labor and offer regular refresher trainings on the concepts of child labor law enforcement.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate uses its authority to conduct unannounced inspections in sectors in which child labor is likely present, such as the informal sector, rather than relying solely on incoming complaints to initiate inspections.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate fulfills its mandate to collect and publish data and statistics related to inspection efforts on an annual basis.

Ensure that a reciprocal survivor referral mechanism between enforcement authorities and social services is used to refer child labor victims to services on all of Comoros’ islands, not solely on Grand Comore.

Publish information on the number of child labor violations found. Also publish information on the criminal law investigations, prosecutions initiated, convictions, and penalties assessed related to cases of the worst forms of child labor.

Provide additional trainings to criminal law enforcement personnel and judges, as well as expand the allocation of resources, transportation, and equipment, to enhance criminal law enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Committee Against Child Labor carries out its intended mandate.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as a new national action plan to combat child labor.

Undertake activities to implement key policies related to child labor and ensure that data on these activities are published on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education, by offering appropriate facilities to meet the needs of girls, improving infrastructure and teacher availability, and addressing school violence.

Collect and publish data on the types of work children perform in Comoros.

Ensure that social program personnel, such as those in the *Services d’Ecoute*, have adequate and relevant training to be able to appropriately respond to the needs of child survivors, including those abused by religious instructors.

Implement and expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, particularly in agriculture, fishing, domestic work, and informal work.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from poor or rural families are at higher risk of being placed into forced labor. Some parents who are unable to care for their children send them to wealthier families, who are expected to provide food, shelter, and schooling for the children in exchange for housework. In practice, some may become domestic workers and victims of labor trafficking. These children are also often sexually and physically abused. In addition, it is traditional practice to send children to Koranic teachers to receive an education in Comoros. However, some Koranic teachers force their students to perform domestic or agricultural work.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although boys and girls attend public primary schools in equal numbers, fewer girls complete primary education. Due to a lack of facilities to accommodate female menstrual cycles, girls often miss school or leave altogether. Furthermore, poor school infrastructure, the limited availability of teachers, and physical and sexual violence in schools may impede access to education and increase the vulnerability of children to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Comoros has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Comoros' Labor Code applies only to workers who perform work under a formal employment agreement, which does not conform to international standards requiring that all children be protected under the law establishing a minimum age for work

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 129 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 131(d) of the Labor Code; Article 7 of the Law to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		List of Dangerous Occupations; Article 131(d) of the Labor Code; Article 7 of the Law to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 2.1 and 131 of the Labor Code; Articles 6, 8, 13, and 14 of the Law to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking; Article 266-11 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 131 of the Labor Code; Articles 6, 8, 13, and 14 of the Law to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking; Articles 266-11, 266-12 and 353 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 131 of the Labor Code; Articles 6, 8-11, and 13 of the Law to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking; Articles 322 and 323 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 131(c) of the Labor Code; Article 6(c) of the Law to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Articles 41, 52, and 58 of Law No. 97-006/AF
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 6(a) of the Law to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 2 of the Outline Act on the Education System; Article 4 on the Decree on Education Policy
Free Public Education		Article 1 of the Outline Act on the Education System; Preamble of the Constitution

* Country has no conscription

Comoros’ Law to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking defines child trafficking as requiring the use of force, fraud, or coercion, which does not conform with international standards. While the Labor Code does not stipulate this requirement, it also does not exclude the means of force, fraud, or coercion for child trafficking victims. The 2020 Penal Code also does not exclude the means of force, fraud, or coercion for child trafficking victims. In addition, the Labor Code allows children under age 15 to perform light work in domestic work or agriculture if it does not interfere with their education or physical or moral development. However, it does not set age 13 as the minimum age for light work, specify the conditions under which light work may be conducted, or limit the number of hours for light work, as defined by international standards on child labor. In addition, the Labor Code applies only to workers who perform work under a formal employment agreement, which does not conform to international standards requiring that all children be protected under the law establishing a minimum age for work.

Although education is compulsory from ages 3 to 16 in Comoros, there is no free basic education for children in Comoros as established by law. This, in addition to the barriers to education access noted in the section above, increases the risk of children’s involvement in child labor. Furthermore, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

 **ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR**

In 2023, labor inspectors conducted zero worksite inspections. Labor inspections are a key tool for identifying child labor violations, and their absence makes children more vulnerable to child labor. In addition, it is unknown whether criminal law enforcement agencies in Comoros took actions to address child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Enforces child labor laws, investigates allegations of child labor, and refers cases of the worst forms of child labor for criminal investigation. Reports indicate that there is a lack of training, equipment, transportation, and funding available to conduct child labor inspections.

Ministry of Justice: Prosecutes criminal cases, including those related to child trafficking. Has specialized courts for minors, with judges responsible for the prosecution of cases involving forced labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

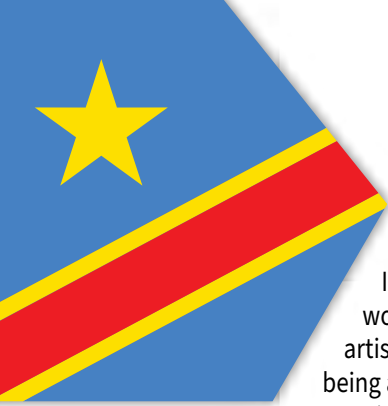
In 2023, **2** labor inspectors conducted **0** labor inspections, due to a lack of resources to carry out inspections. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Comoros established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unclear whether the coordinating body convened during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Committee Against Child Labor: Coordinates government efforts on child labor. Chaired by MOL. Research was unable to determine whether the committee was active during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Comoros established a policy related to child labor. However, the country lacks a national policy specifically dedicated to addressing child labor.</p> <p>‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues.</p>	<p>National Policy for the Protection of Children (2016–2021): Aimed to improve child protection. Although child labor is integrated into some government policies, research has not been able to identify if Comoros has adopted a new national action plan to address child labor since the previous plan expired in 2021.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Comoros funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address child labor in all sectors.</p> <p>† Program is funded by the Government of Comoros.</p>	<p>Listening Services (Services d’Ecoute):† UNICEF-funded, government-backed centers that provide protective services and offer immediate assistance to vulnerable and abused children. Investigates allegations of violence against children, including the worst forms of child labor, and refers perpetrators to criminal authorities for prosecution. An independent evaluation of Listening Services found that it responded to the needs of child survivors of violence and improved the professionalism of those responding to child survivors. However, program personnel lack relevant training in social services provision and in international standards on child protection, which has resulted in incomplete casework and a lack of evaluation and follow-up with child survivors. Services were active during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



CONGO DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, the Democratic Republic of the Congo made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government piloted the Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System in 10 artisanal cobalt mining sites, and as of December 2023, 5,346 children were registered in the database and are being assessed for services. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is receiving an assessment of minimal advancement because the country’s armed forces coordinated with and supplied material support to armed groups known for recruiting children. In addition, the government did not publish labor or criminal law enforcement data. It also failed to take active measures to ensure that children are not inappropriately incarcerated, penalized, or physically harmed solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of their exploitation in the worst forms of child labor. Other gaps remain, including inadequate financial resources allocated to enforcement agencies.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	17.4% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	68.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	16.3%

Children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in the forced mining of gold, tin ore (cassiterite), tantalum ore (coltan), and tungsten ore (wolframite), and are used in armed conflict, sometimes as a result of forcible recruitment or abduction by non-state armed groups. Children also mine cobalt ore (heterogenite) in the Copperbelt region.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including tilling fields, planting seeds, weeding, watering, and harvesting crops, carrying heavy loads,[†] and use of chemical products and machetes; fishing; and herding livestock.



Industry

Mining, including carrying heavy loads,[†] digging, sifting, sorting, transporting, using explosives, washing, and working underground[†] in the production of diamonds, copper, cobalt ore (heterogenite), gold, tin ore (cassiterite), tantalum ore (coltan), and tungsten ore (wolframite).



Services

Domestic work; vending; and garbage scavenging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced mining of gold, tantalum (coltan), tin (cassiterite), and tungsten (wolframite); forced labor in domestic work and agriculture; forced begging; commercial sexual exploitation; recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict; use in illicit activities, including the smuggling of minerals.

[†] 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.

Members of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (French acronym FARDC) coordinated with non-state armed groups that recruited and used children in armed conflict in 2023, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (French acronym FDLR), Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (French acronym APCLS), and Nduma Défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-Rénové). These non-state armed groups and actors largely identified under the name “Wazalendo” (Swahili for “patriots”) mobilized in support of the FARDC’s fight against the Rwanda-backed M23 armed group and the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF). Per UN reporting, a meeting was held in Goma in September 2023 between FARDC members and the “Wazalendo” – including U.S.-sanctioned armed groups like the FDLR and actors like the NDC-Rénové leader. This meeting was reportedly used to develop a FARDC-Wazalendo operational strategy to fight M23 and RDF and also created a coalition of combatants, Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland (French acronym VDP), led by armed group leaders to serve as a proxy force of the FARDC. UN reporting also documented FARDC providing material support to these armed groups and others under the VDP and “Wazalendo” banners.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish by law free basic education, including lower secondary education.

Raise the compulsory education age from 12 years to 18 years to align with the minimum age for work.

Ensure that laws on child trafficking do not require force, fraud, or coercion for a child to have been considered trafficked.

Increase penalties for child labor crimes so that they are sufficiently stringent to serve as a deterrent.

Enforcement

Ensure that the labor inspectorate is fully funded, including by providing vehicles and government-issued computers to allow inspectors to carry out their mandated duties.

Collect and publish complete data on labor law enforcement efforts, including labor inspectorate funding, the number of worksite inspections conducted, and the number of violations found, penalties imposed, and fines collected.

Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints.

Ensure that inspectors and criminal law enforcement agencies receive adequate training to carry out their duties.

Collect and publish complete data related to criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, and penalties imposed related to worst forms of child labor crimes.

End Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo support for non-state armed groups that recruit children; ensure children are not detained in dangerous conditions; and hold perpetrators of child labor crimes, including child soldiering, accountable.

Ensure the criminal justice system has sufficient resources to investigate and prosecute child labor violations.

Improve coordination among relevant criminal law enforcement agencies in conducting investigations, collecting data, and providing services to survivors.

Ensure that security forces do not subject children to human rights violations, including extortion and physical abuse, in artisanal small-scale mining operations.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Committee to Fight the Worst Forms of Child Labor has sufficient funds and participation from relevant ministries to carry out its mandate.

Government Policies

Ensure all relevant policies, national action plans, and sectoral strategies to address the worst forms of child labor are funded and implemented as intended.

Social Programs

Conduct a stand-alone child labor survey to better inform child labor policies and practices along with a prevalence survey focused on mining.

Improve access to education by enhancing services and programs for children with disabilities and LGBTQI+ children, eliminating informal fees, and making additional efforts to prevent schools from being attacked and occupied by armed groups.

Expand efforts to address the needs of demobilized children and prevent re-recruitment.

Expand access to shelters and social services for survivors of child labor and child trafficking.

Establish or expand social programs designed to assist children engaged in forced labor in agriculture, mining, street work, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation, and implement programs to protect children at higher risk, including internally displaced children, LGBTQI+ children, and street children.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), economically disadvantaged children, children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and children in conflict zones are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. In Kinshasa, the capital city, there are up to 35,000 homeless and displaced street children who are at higher risk of labor exploitation, commercial sexual exploitation, and use in illicit activities. In addition, some ethnic groups—including Bayakhas, Pygmies, and Bakete—are at higher risk of child labor and child trafficking. Escalating conflict in the east rendered children increasingly vulnerable to recruitment by non-state armed groups, forced labor in artisanal mining, and child sex trafficking. Due to a dramatic uptick in violence, more than 2.78 million people in the DRC had to leave their homes during the reporting year. In 2023, the DRC had 6.9 million internally displaced people. The Rwanda-backed non-state armed group March 23 Movement (M23) recruited children in the DRC with false promises of employment, transported them to Rwanda and Uganda for military training, and then redeployed them into combat after returning them to the DRC. M23 also forced children to work in fields and carry out chores. Former child soldiers separated from armed groups often remain vulnerable to re-recruitment due to insufficient rehabilitation services.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While Congolese law provides for free, compulsory primary education, parents are sometimes asked to pay informal school fees, which were often prohibitively high, to support teacher salaries. Across multiple provinces, 2.7 million children faced severe disruptions to their education due to conflict and natural disasters, and 848 schools were closed, impacting the education of over 320,000 children. In addition, children with disabilities faced barriers, including inaccessible infrastructure and lack of awareness among teachers and school staff. LGBTQIA+ children also often leave school due to discrimination. Children unable to access education may be more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, its laws related to compulsory education do not meet international standards because children over age 12 are not required to attend school.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years	✓	Prelude and Articles 6 and 7 of the Labor Code; Articles 2, 50, and 55 of the Child Protection Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 10 of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Children’s Work
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 8–15 of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Children’s Work; Articles 26 and 299 of the Mining Code; Article 8b of the Decree on Validation Procedures for Artisanal Mines; Article 125 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 2 and 3 of the Labor Code; Articles 53 and 187 of the Child Protection Code; Articles 16 and 61 of the Constitution; Article 8 of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Children’s Work; Article 68 of the Law on the Prevention and Repression of Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	Articles 3, 321, 326, and 328 of the Labor Code; Article 68 of the law on the Prevention and Repression of Trafficking in Persons; Articles 53, 162, and 187 of the Child Protection Code; Article 174j of the Penal Code; Articles 8 and 20 of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Children’s Work
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Article 3 of the Labor Code; Articles 53, 61, 169, 173, 179–180, 182–183, and 187 of the Child Protection Code; Articles 174b, 174j, 174m, and 174n of the Penal Code; Article 8 of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Children’s Work
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 3 of the Labor Code; Article 8 of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Children’s Work; Articles 53, 187–188, and 194 of the Child Protection Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 27 of the Law on the Military Status of the Congolese Armed Forces; Articles 2, 53, 71, and 187 of the Child Protection Code
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A	Articles 2 and 7 of the Law on Armed Forces; Article 27 of the Law on the Military Status of the Congolese Armed Forces; Articles 53, 71, and 187 of the Child Protection Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 53, 71, and 187 of the Child Protection Code; Article 190 of the Constitution
Compulsory Education Age, 12 Years ‡		Article 38 of the Child Protection Code; Articles 7.21, 12, and 72 of the Law on National Education; Article 43 of the Constitution
Free Public Education		Article 38 of the Child Protection Code; Article 43 of the Constitution; Articles 12 and 72 of the Law on National Education

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Law No° 22/067 for the Prevention and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons continues to require a threat, use of force, coercion, fraud, deception, or abuse of power for a child to have been considered trafficked. In addition, children are required to attend school only up to approximately age 12, based on available information. This standard makes children ages 12 to 18 vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work. In addition, the law provides for free schooling for 6 years, although basic education is a total of 9 years. The failure to provide for complete free basic education may increase the risk of children’s involvement in the worst forms of child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo took actions to address child labor. However, these entities lacked resources and capacity to fully carry out their mandates, and the government failed to collect data on both its labor and criminal enforcement actions.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment, Labor, and Social Welfare (MELSS): Investigates cases related to child labor, including its worst forms, and refers cases to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. MELSS currently lacks the capacity to conduct inspections in the mining sector. In 2023, it hired over 2,000 new labor inspectors, controllers, and administrative staff. However, subsequent reports indicate that the new employees have not received their salaries since their hiring.

Ministry of Justice: Enforces criminal laws related to child labor and oversees five juvenile courts in Kinshasa. During the reporting year, the Ministry of Justice prosecuted several cases of child trafficking. However, poor coordination in conducting investigations, collecting data, and providing services to survivors continued to hinder the government’s efforts.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	No
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **1,117** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections. The government conducted an **unknown** number of investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, and the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted is **unknown**.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>The Democratic Republic of the Congo established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the National Committee to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor lacks funding to fully carry out its mandated duties.</p>	<p>National Committee to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Led by the MELSS and includes representatives from 12 other ministries, local NGOs, and civil society. Oversees the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. During the reporting year, the committee’s activities were impeded by lack of funding.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The Democratic Republic of the Congo established policies related to child labor. However, these policies lack sufficient funding for implementation.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2012–2025): Promotes the enforcement of laws prohibiting the worst forms of child labor; awareness raising; prevention and reintegration services; universal primary education; monitoring and evaluation efforts; and improved coordination of stakeholders. During the reporting year, the MELSS began implementing the ministerial decree of 2022 related to the creation, organization, and functioning of the coordination committee of Alliance 8.7.</p> <p>National Sectoral Strategy to Combat Child Labor in Artisanal Mines and Artisanal Mining Sites (2017–2025): Aims to strengthen relevant laws, improve data collection on the prevalence of child labor in the mining sector, promote responsible sourcing regulations, improve child protection measures, and build stakeholder capacity. During the reporting year, the government launched a child labor monitoring and remediation system for artisanal cobalt.</p> <p>National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (2020–2024): Aims to prevent human trafficking through national awareness raising and government training programs, survivor identification and care, and law enforcement cooperation and coordination. In January 2023, President Tshisekedi replaced the Agency for the Prevention and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons with a new structure called the Coordination for Youth and the Fight Against Sexual Violence and Trafficking in Persons, tasking it with a leading role in guiding front-line actors involved in combating human trafficking and offering them an institutional space for meetings and data collection. In its first year of existence, Coordination collaborated with relevant ministries to collect data on human trafficking.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Democratic Republic of the Congo funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor. However, social programs are inadequate because they do not address the full scope of the problem in all relevant sectors.</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System:* Aims to identify and provide remediation services for child laborers in the artisanal cobalt sector. Managed by the MELSS with support from the ILO. It was launched at 10 pilot sites in 2023, and as of December, 5,346 children were registered in the database pilot program and are being assessed for services and case management.</p> <p>Free Primary Education Program: A Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education program that provides free primary education for children up to the age of 12 with support from the World Bank and Global Partnership for Education. During the 2022–2023 academic year, 4 million more children attended primary school compared to the 2017–2018 academic year.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

CONGO, REPUBLIC OF THE

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, the Republic of the Congo made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Republic of the Congo became an Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country, developing and adopting a Roadmap to accelerate its efforts to eradicate child labor by 2025. The Roadmap includes steps to strengthen the legal framework on child labor and forced labor, improve coordination and capacity of institutions at the local and national levels, centralize planning and data collection on labor exploitation, and create free education and vocational training programs for child and adult survivors of labor exploitation to support their reintegration. During the reporting period, the government also conducted human trafficking awareness campaigns in major cities and shared information and trainings on child trafficking with the Ministry of Education, for awareness raising in schools. However, despite these efforts, the government lacks a legal statute identifying the hazardous occupations prohibited for children. In addition, both civil and criminal enforcement agencies in the Republic of the Congo lack the funding, capacity, and training they need to enforce child labor laws and track data on their efforts to address child labor. Lastly, the body intended to coordinate interministerial efforts on trafficking in persons has not met or received funding in several years.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	25.4% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	92.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	27.1%

Children in the Republic of the Congo are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced domestic work. Children also perform dangerous tasks such as working in mines and quarries.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including harvesting crops. Working in fishing.



Industry

Working in mines and quarries, including extracting minerals and breaking stones.



Services

Directing road traffic; domestic work; working in markets and street vending; and carrying heavy loads.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture and fishing. Forced labor in market and street vending as well as in domestic work. Forced labor in quarries, including breaking stones.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Republic of the Congo's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Enforcement

Ensure that the government establishes a formal process for referring children to the appropriate social services when they are found in situations of child labor.

Publish information related to labor and criminal law enforcement statistics, including the funding level for the labor inspectorate, the number and type of labor inspections conducted, violations found, penalties imposed and collected for child labor violations, number of criminal investigations conducted, convictions secured, and penalties imposed.

Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating routine inspections rather than performing inspections solely based on complaints received.

Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating targeted inspections based on analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents, including inspections of employers in rural areas, family enterprises, the informal sector, and those hiring self-employed children.

Ensure that all criminal law enforcement personnel, including from the police forces, courts, and the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights, and the Promotion of Indigenous People, are properly trained to know how to identify, recognize, prosecute, and handle worst forms of child labor cases.

Institutionalize training for all labor inspectors, investigators, and law enforcement officers, including by offering periodic refresher courses and courses on child labor issues.

Strengthen the labor inspectorate by ensuring that inspectors have adequate resources, such as government vehicles, to conduct unannounced inspections.

Ensure that funds budgeted for the National Commission to Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action, and Solidarity to address human trafficking are regularly disbursed.

Remove barriers to enforcement and prosecution by strengthening the judicial system through improved record-keeping, decreased court backlogs, more frequent hearings, and improved training for criminal law enforcement officials and judges on human trafficking legislation.

Expand criminal law enforcement efforts beyond large cities.

Ensure that criminal enforcement agencies such as the National Police are properly funded and do not seek payment from stakeholders to conduct investigations and operations.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Commission to Fight Against Trafficking in Persons receives adequate resources, including sufficient funding, to function as intended.

Establish and fund a national coordinating mechanism to address the worst forms of child labor in all relevant sectors, including in agriculture, mining, and domestic work.

Social Programs

Conduct a comprehensive study of children’s activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor.

Improve access to education for all children, including those in non-urban areas, regardless of refugee status or ethnicity, by eliminating all school-related fees, providing sanitation facilities, building additional schools, training additional teachers, and ensuring that students are not subjected to physical or sexual violence.

Ensure that indigenous children do not experience discrimination or barriers to education, including by raising awareness of tuition waivers available to them, providing instruction in their native languages, and facilitating obtention of the identity documentation required to register for national exams.

Fund and implement social programs to address the worst forms of child labor, including domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In some rural areas, the majority ethnic Bantu population forces non-majority, indigenous children—such as from the Baka, Aka, and Kola groups—to perform agricultural work for low wages and under the threat of physical abuse. Rural children in general are more likely to engage in child labor in the Republic of the Congo. In urban environments, including the major cities of Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville, foreign children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Benin, and other West African nations are frequently subjected to forced domestic work, forced labor in market vending, or commercial sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While the Constitution in the Republic of the Congo provides for free education until age 16, in practice some parents are required to pay for books, uniforms, and school fees, which limits access to education for some children. Indigenous children additionally face exclusion, extreme poverty, lack of birth registration, and ethnic and cultural discrimination in schools. The government offers an expenses subsidy—“tuition waiver”—for indigenous children to improve their inclusion, but research indicates that the waiver program has not been clearly communicated to families in remote areas, resulting in limited use. The absence of sanitation facilities; a lack of teachers, schools, and transportation; and sexual and physical violence in schools also pose barriers to education for some children, particularly in non-urban areas and among refugee populations.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Republic of the Congo has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, the Republic of the Congo’s laws do not include a list of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years	✓	Article 116 of the Labor Code; Article 68 of the Child Protection Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 68 of the Child Protection Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✗	
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 4 of the Labor Code; Articles 68 and 122 of the Child Protection Code; Article 33 of the Constitution; Articles 4–6 and 14 of Law No. 22-2019 on Combating Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 2, 4, and 6 of Law No. 22-2019 on Combating Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 60, 65–68, and 122 of the Child Protection Code; Articles 334 and 335 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 68–70 and 122 of the Child Protection Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Article 30 of the Military and Gendarmerie Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 49 of the Child Protection Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Articles 49 and 111 of the Child Protection Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years	✓	Article 29 of the Constitution; Articles 1 and 3 of the Education Law
Free Public Education	✓	Article 29 of the Constitution; Article 1 of the Education Law

*Country has no conscription



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in the Republic of the Congo took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient resource allocation and corruption hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Social Security: Enforces child labor laws. Conducts initial inspections before referring cases to the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights, and the Promotion of Indigenous People (MOJ) for prosecution and works with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action (MSA) to provide support to victims afterwards.

Ministry of the Interior’s National Police: Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor and conducts investigations into cases of forced labor, human trafficking, and the use of children in illicit activities. Conduct operations to remove trafficked children from labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Collect evidence and refers cases to the District Attorney’s office under MOJ. A human trafficking module is included in annual training for law enforcement officials. While the police made efforts to enforce laws on the worst forms of child labor, there was reporting that some police demanded payment from individuals reporting a crime before acting to remove children from exploitation.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, **248** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



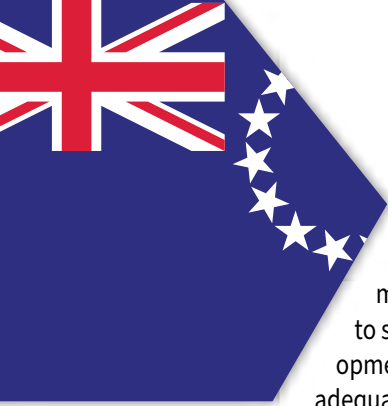
COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>The Republic of the Congo established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, an absence of funding hindered its efficacy.</p>	<p>National Commission to Fight Against Trafficking in Persons: Federal-level interministerial committee intended to coordinate government efforts on human trafficking and forced labor, including of children. Research indicates that the commission did not meet and did not receive funding during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The Republic of the Congo established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was adopted during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Child Protection Action Plan (2022–2026): Updated and disseminated by the Legal Directorate of MSA, with input from MOJ and the National Police. Identifies specific measures for MSA to pursue in the area of child protection, including assisting child trafficking survivors, undertaking a census of relevant NGOs to improve coordination, and providing training for Directorate personnel on human trafficking identification and protection techniques. In 2023, the government conducted human trafficking awareness campaigns in major cities and shared information and trainings on human trafficking topics with the Ministry of Education for school-based awareness campaigns.</p> <p>Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Roadmap:† Action plan to accelerate efforts toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7, which calls for the eradication of forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking by 2030 and the eradication of child labor by 2025. Includes actions to strengthen the Republic of the Congo’s legal framework, improve coordination and capacity of institutions at the local and national levels, centralize planning and data collection on labor exploitation, raise awareness among the general population, and create free education and vocational training programs for child and adult survivors of labor exploitation to support their reintegration. With the development of this roadmap, the Republic of the Congo became an Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country in 2023.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Republic of the Congo funded and participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address child labor in all sectors.</p>	<p>Lisungi Safety Net Program (2014–2027): \$145 million World Bank-funded social protection project implemented by MSA. Provides cash transfers to poor households in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, and Likouala and encourages children’s school attendance and use of health services. During the reporting period, the government worked with the World Bank to expand the program, increasing income-generating activities and reaching more young people.</p> <p>World Food Program (WFP) Programs: Include school meals programs, humanitarian relief for refugees, support for smallholder farmers, direct food distribution and cash transfers, and capacity-building support for MSA, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Education, which help families meet basic needs and keep children in school. School feeding component comprises two activities: one that serves food provided through the U.S. McGovern-Dole Food Program and contributions from the Government of Japan, and another that is working to build the Congolese government’s capacity to implement and maintain a Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) program. In 2023, WFP programs provided school meals to nearly 126,000 children in 491 public schools and indigenous schools across the country. However, while the government participated in capacity-building activities, it has yet to disburse the estimated \$5 million budgeted for the HGSF program.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of the Republic of the Congo.</i></p>	<p>Education Initiatives:† Ministry of Education programs implemented under the Education Sector Strategy (2021–2030), which aims to provide quality basic education for all young people and remove barriers to access for girls, indigenous children, out-of-school children, and other populations in situations of vulnerability. Include initiatives to improve infrastructure, build instructional and administrative capacity, and provide vocational and secondary education to prepare young people for productive employment. Observe, Reflect, Act (ORA) schools fall under this umbrella and provide 2 to 3 years of community-based instruction to indigenous children to prepare them to enter the formal primary education system. However, ORA schools are primarily funded by international organizations, private companies, or local communities, and teachers frequently work on a voluntary basis. During the reporting period, the government solicited input on improving the education system, integrated community-based teachers into the Ministry of Education payroll, and delivered training for primary and secondary school teachers.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



COOK ISLANDS

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in the Cook Islands, in 2023, the government made minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The government continued to support the objectives outlined in the National Youth Policy, which identifies priority areas for youth development, including education, health, and safe work opportunities. However, the government has not established adequate legal protections to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The law does not criminally prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, or pornographic performances. Finally, the law also does not criminally prohibit the use of children for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in the Cook Islands.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Cook Islands' implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the UN Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Ensure that the law's light work provisions determine the sectors in which light work is permitted.

Ensure that the law prohibits the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law identifies hazardous occupations or prohibited activities for children.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit slavery and practices similar to slavery.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit both domestic and international child trafficking.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children.












Establish by law free basic public education for all children.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Cook Islands is self-governing in free association with New Zealand. Since 1988, no treaty signed, ratified, accepted, approved, or acceded to by New Zealand extends to the Cook Islands, unless New Zealand acted expressly on behalf of the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands has not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, the Cook Islands' laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children, the prohibition of using children in illicit activities, and free public education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 30 of the Employment Relations Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 73(2) of the Employment Relations Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 73 of the Employment Relations Act; Articles 52 and 53 of the Industrial and Labor Ordinance
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 2–6 of the Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor Ordinance; Articles 109b, 109e, 109h, and 109i of the Crimes Amendment Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 109b, 109e, 109h, 109i, and 109j of the Crimes Amendment Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 109b, 109h, 109i, and 109k of the Crimes Amendment Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Articles 36 and 37 of the Government of New Zealand’s Defense Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 23.1 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 22.2 and 22.3 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

† Country has no standing military

The Employment Relations Act 2012 prohibits children younger than age 13 from being employed and also prohibits a school-age person, defined as ages 13 to 16, from working during normal school hours, working for more than 10 hours a week outside of school hours, or doing work that is not considered light work. However, the Cook Islands’ government has not determined the sectors in which light work is permitted for children. Furthermore, although the Employee Relations Act prohibits children younger than age 18 from engaging in hazardous occupations, the government has not identified a list of prohibited hazardous occupations for children. The Cook Islands’ laws also do not criminalize the use of children in illicit activities, particularly in the production and trafficking of drugs. Although the Crimes Amendment Act of 2004 prohibits slavery and practices similar to slavery, it is only in the context of international trafficking. Cook Islands’ law prohibiting practices related to slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor are therefore not sufficient, because they do not criminalize slavery or practices similar to slavery in all contexts. Additionally, the Crimes Amendment Act of 2004 is not sufficient to meet international standards because it only applies to international trafficking. While the Crimes Amendment Act 2004 prohibits child trafficking, it does not prohibit the use or offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, or pornographic performances. Moreover, although there are no armed forces in the Cook Islands, the law does not criminally prohibit non-state armed groups from recruiting children under age 18. Finally, while the Cook Islands provides free education to citizens, permanent residents, and children of permanent residents, children outside of these categories must pay a school fee.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, the Government of the Cook Islands has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Internal Affairs: Lead agency for implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Made up of multiple divisions, including Labor, Welfare, and Consumer Services, among others. The division currently has three labor inspectors that handle all matters related to employment and consumer affairs.

Cook Islands Police Service: Responsible, in conjunction with the Crown Law Office, for enforcement of criminal laws against forced child labor, child trafficking, and criminal sexual exploitation. If cases are detected by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they are referred to the police.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor. However, the Government of the Cook Islands has established a policy that may contribute to preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Cook Islands National Youth Policy (2021–2026): Identifies priority areas for youth development, including education, health, and safe work opportunities. During the reporting period, the Government of the Cook Islands continued its support of the policy.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor.</p>	

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



COSTA RICA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Costa Rica made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government reactivated its National Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Work to coordinate government efforts to address child labor and signed two cooperation agreements with non-governmental organizations and labor unions to prevent child labor in the informal and agricultural sectors. The Office for the Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker also provided cash transfers to 327 working minors and collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to respond to cases of working minors in the agricultural sector. However, social programs did not reach all child laborers working in the provinces of Limon, Puntarena, and Guanacaste, which have the highest incidences of child labor in the country. In addition, 108 labor inspectors were inadequate to effectively monitor a labor force of 2,521,400 and monitor all sectors in which child labor was occurring.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	6.5% (46,509)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	98.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.0%

Children in Costa Rica are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Picking coffee and cattle raising.



Industry

Construction and manufacturing.



Services

Working in restaurants and hotels. Street vending.† Domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in the agriculture, construction, and commercial sectors. Forced domestic work. Use in transporting or selling drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Costa Rica’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to age 17 to align with the compulsory education age.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)**Enforcement**

Publish labor law enforcement information, including the number of child labor violations, whether penalties were imposed for child labor violations, and the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected.

Publish labor law enforcement information, including the number of worst forms of child labor violations, whether penalties were imposed for worst forms of child labor violations, and the number of worst forms of child labor penalties that were collected.

Allocate sufficient funding and human resources to ensure that labor inspections occur in all workplaces, including in rural areas and the agriculture and informal sectors.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 105 to 167 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 2.5 million workers.

Ensure that the judiciary, prosecutors, municipal authorities, and the police have sufficient staff, training, and resources to investigate, prosecute, and convict perpetrators of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and to identify victims of child trafficking and refer them to appropriate social services.

Enhance data collection and monitoring of human trafficking cases in order to improve enforcement and prevention efforts.

Address instances of disorder, abuse, and neglect in the National Child Welfare Agency shelter network, which provides services to victims of the worst forms of child labor, by addressing issues of management, staff training, facility conditions, and any other areas identified as problematic.

Coordination

Strengthen coordination and information sharing between institutions responsible for investigating child labor and providing social services to victims.

Increase transportation and human resources for the Office for the Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker so that the office can improve program oversight.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural areas, girls, LGBTQI+ youth, children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, and migrant children, by increasing awareness of school enrollment requirements, improving school water and electrical infrastructure, and increasing access for students with disabilities.

Enhance social programs to address all forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.

Ensure that the Let's Get Ahead Program is sufficiently funded to provide its intended benefits to all participants.

Update the 2019 Child Labor Risk Indicators Module that classified cantons according to levels of vulnerability to inform policies and programs.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Children living in coastal regions have the highest risk for child labor in agriculture, including coffee production, with the highest incidences of child labor occurring in the provinces of Limón, Puntarenas, and Guanacaste. Afro-descendant, migrant, and indigenous children are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation in Costa Rica. Children living in tourist destinations, border areas, and in the Northern and Pacific coastal zones are also subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, migrant girls from Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and other Latin American countries have been identified as victims of sex trafficking and domestic work, with children from Nicaragua subjected to forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While preschool and general basic education are free and compulsory, some children in rural areas, girls, LGBTQIA+ youth, children with disabilities, and children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities face barriers to education access, including discrimination and gender stereotypes. Costa Rica has implemented innovative inclusion models for students and eliminated documentation requirements for enrollment, such as transcripts showing previous schooling or parent’s identity documents. However, parents often incorrectly believe that such documents are still necessary, and school officials reportedly sometimes request them, either due to a lack of awareness of current regulations or influenced by discrimination. In addition, as the 2023 education budget was the lowest in 9 years, it may have affected the government’s efforts to provide support to vulnerable populations. Moreover, in 2023, 19 percent of educational centers did not have access to water, and 10 percent lacked electricity.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Costa Rica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, as Costa Rica’s minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Articles 3, 78, 92, and 101 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 1 and 5 of Law 8922; Article 87 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 94 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 5 of Law 8922; Article 88 of the Labor Code; Articles 5 and 6 of Regulation No. 36640
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 1 and 2 of Law No. 9545; Articles 20 and 56 of the Constitution; Article 8 of the Labor Code; Articles 7, 172, 189 bis, 192, 376, 381, 383, and 384 of the Penal Code; Article 7 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Law No. 9545; Articles 7, 172, 189 bis, 192, 381, and 383 of the Penal Code; Articles 5, 7, and 74 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 160, 167, 168, and 170–174 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 7, 188, 381, and 390 of the Penal Code; Article 77 of the Narcotics Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years‡	✓	Articles 57 and 59 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 78 of the Constitution
Free Public Education	✓	Article 59 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 8 of the Education Law; Article 78 of the Constitution

† Country has no standing military

‡ Age calculated based on available information

On August 23, 2023, Costa Rica enacted Directive MAG-N°003-2023, mandating that all institutions in the agricultural sector adhere to the Protocol for Interinstitutional Coordination for the Care of Underage Workers, preventing child labor and ensuring compliance with regulations concerning adolescent workers. The Directive also instructs Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock officials to refer cases of working minors in the agricultural sector to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security’s Office for the Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker (OATIA). Despite this effort, as Costa Rica’s minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Costa Rica took actions to address child labor. However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS) and criminal enforcement agencies, including insufficient resource allocation and training for criminal investigators, that hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

MTSS: Monitors and enforces provisions in the Labor Code related to child labor, including conducting school visits and worksite inspections. Through OATIA, responds to and attempts to prevent child labor through policy development and public awareness campaigns. Also provides referrals for those found to be in exploitative labor to government social services. On October 19, 2023, MTSS signed two cooperation agreements to combat child labor and protect adolescent workers nationwide. The first agreement, with the Association for the Defense of the Rights of Persons Under 18 years of age (DNI Costa Rica), focuses on preventing child labor in the informal and agricultural sectors through training for labor inspectors. The second agreement, which involves MTSS, the Confederation of Workers Rerum Novarum, and the Trade Union of Women Workers and Costa Rican Education Workers, aims to prevent child labor and protect adolescent workers through coordinated efforts. MTSS also launched the SOMOS+ Socio-Labor Recognition System to support its annual initiative to recognize companies’ best practices in four categories: prevention of child labor and protection of adolescent workers, inclusion of workers with disabilities, inclusion of older workers, and promotion of gender equality, with collaboration from various public institutions assisting vulnerable populations. In addition, OATIA provided direct assistance to 412 working minors in 2023 through the Working Minors Conditional Cash Transfer program, investing approximately \$517,387 in this initiative. OATIA also worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to respond to cases of working minors detected during site visits in the agricultural sector.

Attorney General’s Office: Enforces criminal laws protecting children, including laws prohibiting the worst forms of child labor. Coordinates efforts with the Judicial Investigative Police, which investigate violations related to the worst forms of child labor; the Immigration Police; the National Police; and municipal police forces. Also coordinates with the National Child Welfare Agency, the Social Security System, the Ministries of Education and Health, and the Civil Registry, as well as with NGOs, international organizations, diplomatic missions, and foreign law enforcement.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **108** labor inspectors conducted **14,031** worksite inspections, finding **1** child labor violation. There were also **53** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, with **24** prosecutions initiated and **2** perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Costa Rica established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of sufficient human resources to ensure coordination among relevant agencies.</p>	<p>National Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Workers: On April 24, 2023, the government reactivated this committee with the participation of 11 public institutions, as well as representatives from the business sector, labor unions, and civil society. The committee is responsible for implementing the Roadmap to Make Costa Rica a Country Free of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Costa Rica established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>Roadmap to Make Costa Rica a Country Free of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms (2021–2025): Aims to eradicate all forms of child labor in Costa Rica by 2025 by strengthening efforts to identify and track hazardous child labor, and by increasing social awareness and collaborative efforts to address child labor. In 2023, the National Child Welfare Agency worked with MTSS to monitor implementation of the roadmap and provided training to officials on how to identify and refer children in need to social services. The National Coalition against Trafficking in Person and Smuggling (CONATT) also continued to implement the Comprehensive Care Strategy for survivors of human trafficking and their dependents, providing legal, psychosocial, educational, employment, housing, and reintegration, repatriation, and resettlement support. On October 6, 2023, CONATT, with technical support from the UN, launched a joint program against human trafficking and smuggling, funded by the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund. The program’s objective is to bolster authorities’ capabilities in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting instances of human trafficking and smuggling. Additionally, throughout 2023, CONATT’s Prevention Commission, in close collaboration with the state institutions, carried out activities such as 180 training processes focused on issues related to human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Through these programs, a total of 8,626 people were trained, including 1,656 public officials and 6,970 people from the general population, increasing awareness of trafficking in persons issues and how to refer suspected trafficking in persons cases.</p> <p>National Policy Against Trafficking in Persons (2020–2030): Outlines goals and actions to prevent and combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, as well as strengthen human trafficking investigations and sanctioning criminals. Research was unable to determine activities undertaken by this policy during the reporting period. In 2023, CONATT, in collaboration with state institutions and the International Bureau for Children’s Rights (IBCR), developed a Work Plan for the prevention of human trafficking and migrant smuggling for the coming years. This plan, aligned with the National Policy and the Strategic Plan, was developed through working groups facilitated by IBCR and had the active participation of all the actors involved.</p> <p>Interinstitutional Coordinating Protocol for the Protection of Working Minors: Outlines provision of services for child laborers through collaboration between MTSS, the National Child Welfare Agency, the Ministry of Public Education, and the Joint Social Welfare Institute (IMAS), as well as their regional and local agencies and the private sector. In 2023, 153 cases were referred through the mechanism. Additionally, MTSS, through the Special Worker Protection Department, trained 2,543 people on child labor, adolescent labor, and dangerous adolescent labor through the coordination protocol during 2023.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Costa Rica funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Costa Rica. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Houses of Joy (Casas de la Alegría):† Public-private initiative that seeks to support the social inclusion of children, particularly migrant and indigenous children, while their parents and relatives are working in the coffee harvest. The program provides centers that offer free childcare, healthcare, meals, and social protection services and mitigate the risk of child labor on coffee plantations. IMAS funds meals, caregiver salaries, and training while farm owners provide the land and classrooms, with financial contributions from UNICEF for buildings and teaching materials. The program continued in 2023 and operates in 41 centers nationwide. Notably, <i>Cafetalera de Tierras Ticas SA</i>, a coffee farm in Los Santos and Coto Brus, has been praised for its social, environmental, and economic responsibility, operating 6 Houses of Joy that benefit over 300 children and 205 collaborators and their families, while also championing sustainable production and community education.</p> <p>Let’s Get Ahead Program (Avancemos):† IMAS program that provides monthly conditional cash transfers to low-income families to keep children in school and out of exploitative work. As of September 2023, the program provided \$165,659,855 (85,303,736,000 <i>colones</i>) to 289,974 participants. In 2023, the Brunca Region was one of the largest beneficiaries of <i>Avancemos</i> subsidies, with approximately \$25.6 million (12,767,101,000 <i>colones</i>) awarded to 42,485 students across 25,330 households. However, reports indicate that the program has experienced a reduction in its budget since 2021, leading to insufficient resources to fulfill the annual demand from the population.</p> <p>Working Minor (Persona Trabajadora Menor de Edad):† The Working Minor Conditional Cash Transfer program was established through collaboration between the Ministry of Labor and IMAS to mitigate child labor by bolstering the formal education of economically disadvantaged adolescents, thus preventing school dropout. IMAS supplements family incomes based on continued school attendance. The program targets vulnerable communities, with joint efforts held in indigenous regions for training on child labor issues. OATIA provided direct assistance to 412 working minors in 2023 through the Working Minor Conditional Cash Transfer program, with the government investing approximately \$520,296 into this initiative.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Côte d'Ivoire made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased the Ministry of Education's budget by 13 percent, or \$240 million, leading to an increase in the number of teachers and classrooms available for students, and launched a new action plan to address human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. The Ministry of Employment and Social Protection also created 111 departmental child labor monitoring committees and 304 committees at the village level across the country.

However, the government does not have a mechanism to assess civil penalties for labor law violations, and the lack of financial resources and personnel may have hindered labor law enforcement efforts. In addition, accessibility issues for students make it difficult for them to attend school, making them more susceptible to child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	25.6% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	70.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	21.8%

Children in Côte d'Ivoire are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in the harvesting of cocoa and coffee.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of cocoa and coffee, including burning† and clearing fields,† cutting down trees,† applying chemical fertilizers,† spraying pesticides,† and using sharp tools to break pods,† and transporting heavy loads† of water and pods. Also used in fishing, including deep sea diving† and repairing and hauling nets.



Industry

Mining,† including crushing and transporting stones, blasting rocks, digging, and sieving. Also used in construction† and manufacturing, including repairing automobiles.



Services

Domestic work, carrying goods,† street vending, and work in restaurants and in transportation.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced mining, carpentry, domestic work, street vending, and agriculture, including in the production of cocoa and coffee, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking; commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Also used in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, and in commercial sexual exploitation and begging as *talibés* by Koranic teachers, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Côte d'Ivoire's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish by law free public education.

Enforcement

Establish a mechanism to assess penalties for child labor violations.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Ensure that the labor inspectorate receives sufficient funding to conduct inspections throughout the country, including in the informal sector.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 344 to 624 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 9.4 million workers.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies, including the Anti-Trafficking Unit, receive the resources and personnel needed to adequately enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Finalize and publish the national action plan to address child labor.

Social Programs

Improve access to education by increasing transportation options, the number of teachers, textbooks, sanitation facilities, and classrooms; as well as increasing the number of schools in rural areas; ensuring that schools are free of physical and sexual abuse; and increasing children’s access to birth registration and identity documents.

Expand existing programs, including the child labor monitoring and remediation system, and institute new ones aimed at addressing the full scope of the child labor problem in Côte d’Ivoire, including outside the cocoa sector.

Ensure that survivors of the worst forms of child labor are able to access social services throughout the country.

Publish disaggregated child labor data, including information on gender disparities, schooling, and sectoral work.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Due to recent security issues in both Mali and Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire has had a surge of refugees, of which an estimated 59 percent are children. Children are also brought to Côte d’Ivoire from those countries for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, including in begging, cocoa production, and artisanal mining. Children from Côte d’Ivoire are also subjected to human trafficking for forced labor in domestic work within the country and North Africa.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

During the reporting period, the Ivorian government increased the Ministry of Education’s budget by 13 percent, or \$240 million, which increased the number of teachers and classrooms available for students. Despite these efforts, there remains a shortage of teachers. In addition, poor school infrastructure, insufficient classroom space, the lack of transportation systems in rural areas, and inadequate sanitation facilities have negatively impacted children’s ability to attend school. Further, roughly one in four girls in Côte d’Ivoire do not attend primary school. Research also suggests that some students are physically and sexually abused at school, which may deter some students from attending school. Although the education laws provide for free education, students are often required to pay for textbooks and uniforms, which may be prohibitive to some families. In addition, birth registration or identity documents are required for students to take entrance exams for secondary school, posing a barrier to continued education beyond the primary level.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Côte d’Ivoire has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Côte d’Ivoire’s laws do not meet the international standard for free public education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 23.2 of the Labor Code; Article 16 of the Constitution

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 4 of the Prohibitions of Hazardous Work List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 5–11 of the Prohibitions of Hazardous Work List; Articles 6 and 19 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 5 of the Constitution; Articles 4, 6, 7, 8, 11–14, and 20–23 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Article 3 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 5 of the Constitution; Articles 11, 12, 20–22, and 26 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Article 370 of the Penal Code; Articles 4.4 and 6 of the Law on Combatting Trafficking of Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 8, 9, 15, and 24–29 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Articles 4.4 and 6 of the Law on Combatting Trafficking of Persons
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 4 and 30 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 56.4 of the Armed Forces Code; Articles 7, 8, and 18 of the Law Determining the Conditions for Entering the Military
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	*	Article 56.4 of the Armed Forces Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 4 and 31 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 10 of the Constitution; Article 2.1 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Article 2 of the Law on Education

*Country has no conscription

Côte d'Ivoire does not meet the international standard for free public education because the law allows for charging of fees, including school registration fees.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Côte d'Ivoire took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of funding and inspections in sectors at high risk for child labor may have hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment and Social Protection: Drafts and enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor. The Anti-Trafficking Unit, a Sub-Directorate, and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Children provides support to survivors of child trafficking and other forms of child labor.

Ministry of the Interior and Security: Through its Anti-Trafficking Unit, investigates crimes related to child trafficking and provides survivors with rehabilitation support. Through its Vice Squads (*Brigades Mondaine*), investigates crimes related to commercial sexual exploitation and refers cases for prosecution to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. Through its Unit for Combating Transnational

Organized Crime, supports the UN Office on Drugs and Crime’s West African Coast Initiative, which aims to improve cross-border cooperation to address human trafficking crimes. In May 2023, the Anti-Trafficking Unit arrested 4 child traffickers at Dikodougou, in the north part of the country, and rescued 13 minors between the ages of 13 and 16 years old.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **368** labor inspectors conducted **9,536** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **1,250** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated **1,005** prosecutions, and convicted **603** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Côte d’Ivoire established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Monitoring Committee on Actions to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (CNS): Supervises, monitors, and evaluates all government activities related to child labor and child trafficking, including making policy recommendations and harmonizing laws with international conventions. Also oversees the country’s child labor monitoring and remediation system (*Système d’Observation et de Suivi du Travail des Enfants en Côte d’Ivoire* [SOSTECI]), which enables communities to collect and analyze statistical data on the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, 111 departmental SOSTECI committees and 304 SOSTECI village committees were created across the country. In addition, chairs the Interministerial Committee for the Fight against Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (CIM), and provides medical and social assistance to survivors of child labor and trafficking. In 2023, CNS launched the “Together to act on the root causes of child labor in Nawa” (ENACTE) project with funding from the EU. The project is implemented by ILO, the International Organization for Migration, and UNICEF, and aims to address child labor by providing children with access to education and basic social services and offering children above the minimum working age and their parents with decent work opportunities.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Côte d’Ivoire established policies related to child labor. However, the primary policy to address child labor, including its worst forms, expired at the end of 2023.

National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (2019–2023): Implemented by CNS and CIM, aimed to significantly reduce the number of children engaged in the worst forms of child labor by drawing on best practices and building on lessons learned from the implementation of previous national action plans. Priorities included increasing efforts to mobilize resources at the national level, reinforcing regional cooperation and public-private partnerships, and incorporating worst forms of child labor considerations into national and sector-specific programming.

National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking: Implemented by the Ministry of Social Cohesion, Solidarity, and the Fight Against Poverty, the new action plan focuses on addressing human trafficking and the illicit trafficking of migrants. Strategies from this plan include coordinating at the regional and national levels, providing additional protection and care for survivors, and improving the legal proceedings in the court system.

Labor Inspection Strategy (2019–2023): Through the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, with assistance from ILO, aimed to enable the government to ensure the application of legal provisions for the improvement of working conditions and the removal of children from work through the inspection of worksites, the provision of counseling, and monitoring. In 2023, labor inspectors participated in capacity building seminars to learn how to better work with members of local communities to address the worst forms of child labor.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Côte d'Ivoire funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in the cocoa sector.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire.</i></p> <p><i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>ACCEL AFRICA:[†] Co-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, under the name “Accelerate action for the elimination of child labor in Africa’s supply chains” (<i>Accélérer l’action pour l’élimination du travail des enfants dans les chaînes d’approvisionnement en Afrique</i>, or ACCEL AFRICA). UNICEF and ILO representatives shared best practices with project participants in order to strengthen interagency efforts to address child labor. In 2023, the project expanded health care coverage to eight cocoa farming communities.</p>
	<p>World Bank-Funded Projects: Aim to improve access to education and provide poverty relief. Include the Productive Social Safety Net (2015–2024), which has supported 227,000 participant households (representing 1,342,128 individuals). In addition, the project’s Unique Social Registry currently counts 315,925 poor and vulnerable individuals as project participants, and the Registry is being used to monitor efforts to increase timely digital payments to participants.</p>
	<p>Projects in the Cocoa Sector: Aim to increase sustainability in the cocoa sector, improve farmer livelihoods, increase access to education opportunities for children, and address the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-growing areas. While private industry continued to implement the Cocoa and Forests Initiative during the reporting period, the scope of existing programs, including in cocoa, is insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem in Côte d'Ivoire. The industry-funded NORC report released in October 2020 found that programs like the child labor monitoring and remediation system, access to quality to education, and programs to increase farmer yields and household income need to be scaled and expanded to impact more families.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



DJIBOUTI

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Djibouti made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Labor was made aware of two child labor cases involving teenage Ethiopian workers employed in construction. The labor inspectors immediately informed the site manager and removed the underaged workers from the job. However, Djibouti’s minimum age for work protections do not meet international standards because they apply only to children who perform work under a formal employment agreement. In addition, Djibouti’s laws do not meet international standards for the prohibition of commercialized sexual exploitation because there are no laws that specifically criminalize the use of a child for prostitution.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	12.3% (23,693)
Attending School	5 to 14	67.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	10.2%

Children in Djibouti are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in street work.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Construction.



Services

Domestic work.† Street work including vending, shining shoes, washing cars, and begging. Working in restaurants, small shops, and businesses.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic work and forced begging.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Djibouti’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that all children are afforded minimum age for work protections under the law, including children working outside formal employment relationships.

Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include sectors in which child labor is known to occur and that expose children to abuse, injury, unhealthy environments, and particularly difficult conditions, including street work.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in prostitution.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Enforcement

Publish complete labor law enforcement information, including funding of the labor inspectorate, the number of labor inspections conducted in total and at worksites, whether routine inspections are targeted, if unannounced inspections are conducted, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed and collected.

Establish a formal mechanism for the Ministry of Labor to receive child labor complaints and a reciprocal referral mechanism between the labor inspectorate and social services to protect and rehabilitate children involved in child labor.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate has the necessary equipment, including adequate transportation, to conduct labor inspections in all regions.

Impose monetary penalties for child labor violations that are consistent with the law and commensurate with the seriousness of the violation.

Publish complete criminal law enforcement data, including training for criminal investigators, number of investigations, number of violations, number of prosecutions, number of convictions, and number of penalties imposed.

Institutionalize child labor-focused trainings for all labor inspectors, including by training new labor inspectors at the beginning of their employment, as well as providing refresher courses throughout their employment.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Council for Children is active and able to carry out its intended mandate of assessing progress on issues pertaining to children and proposing child-related policy and strategic guidelines.

Establish a coordinating body dedicated to preventing and eliminating all forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Implement key policies related to child labor, including the National Strategic Plan for Childhood, the National Strategy for Migration, and the Action Plan for Education and Training and that data on these activities are published on an annual basis.

Adopt a comprehensive national policy to address all forms of child labor, including its worst forms.

Social Programs

Conduct a comprehensive study of children’s activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor.

Ensure that all children, including refugees, asylum seekers, and children in rural areas have access to education by removing barriers to obtaining national birth certificates or United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees documentation to attend school.

Implement programs to specifically assist children involved in domestic work, street work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key social programs to address child labor and make information about implementation measures publicly available, including the Ministry of Women and Families Programs, International Organization for Migration Center for Unaccompanied Children and Vulnerable Migrants, and Expanding Opportunities for Learning.

 **CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Continued conflict between Russia and Ukraine—which account for the majority of Djibouti’s wheat imports—and continued drought in the region have led to rural workers losing livelihoods and rising commodity prices throughout the country. Reports indicate that this has subjected children to higher risks of labor exploitation, including child labor, and has increased the risk of school dropout for 26,500 children, particularly girls. Djibouti is vulnerable to the effects of a changing climate, and children will become increasingly vulnerable to exploitation as the country experiences more climate change-related weather events and trends such as droughts, floods, and sea level rise. Lastly, migrant children, including undocumented migrant girls, are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation in Djibouti City, along the Ethiopia-Djibouti trucking corridor.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Requirements for documentation and birth registration can be barriers to accessing education because in practice, migrant children and refugees without UN High Commissioner for Refugees documentation cannot attend public schools, and children in rural areas and street children without birth registration documents can attend school but cannot take exams.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Djibouti has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Djibouti's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the Labor Code's minimum age provision applies only to children who perform work under a formal employment agreement. In addition, Djibouti's laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children because laws do not specifically criminalize the use of a child for prostitution.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 5 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 108 and 110 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 110 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 23 of the Law Regarding Terrorism and Other Serious Crimes
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 1 and 5–7 of the Law on the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons and the Illegal Smuggling of Migrants; Article 23 of the Law Regarding Terrorism and Other Serious Crimes
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 394, 396, 462, and 463 of the Penal Code; Articles 1 and 5–8 of the Law on the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons and the Illegal Smuggling of Migrants
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 355, 356, and 461 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 1 of the National Army Amendment Decree
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 149–151 and 461 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles 4 and 14 of the Law on the Orientation of the Education System
Free Public Education		Article 16 of the Law on the Orientation of the Education System

*Country has no conscription

The Labor Code’s minimum age provision applies only to children who perform work under a formal employment agreement, which does not conform to international standards requiring the protection of all children under the minimum age for work. In addition, while Djibouti’s Labor Code contains a hazardous work list, it only applies to domestic work, work in hotels, and work in bars, omitting hazardous activities like street work, in which children are known to be engaged in the country. Article 111 in the Labor Code grants authority to the Minister of Labor to publish a hazardous work list enumerating additional hazardous sectors, which has not yet been done. Furthermore, laws do not specifically criminalize the use of a child for prostitution.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, research did not find information on whether criminal or labor law enforcement agencies in Djibouti took actions to address child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor: Enforces all labor laws, including child labor laws and regulations. Through its General Inspectorate of Labor and Social Laws, regulates youth employment. During the reporting period, there were two child labor cases involving teenage Ethiopian workers employed in construction. The labor inspectors immediately informed the site manager and removed the underaged workers from the job.

Criminal Enforcement Agencies: Through the Djibouti National Police, enforce criminal laws and investigate crimes related to child labor, including child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. In addition, the Ministry of Justice has two prosecutors specifically trained to handle cases involving trafficking of vulnerable children.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	No
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Djibouti established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unknown whether this mechanism took actions to coordinate efforts to address child labor during the reporting period.

National Council for Children: Assesses progress on issues pertaining to children and proposes policy and strategic guidelines. Headed by the Prime Minister and includes public stakeholders, civil society partners, associations, and NGOs involved in the field of childhood. Research was unable to determine whether the National Council for Children met or carried out activities during the reporting period.

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Djibouti established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all the worst forms of child labor, including the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>Child Protection Policies: Includes the National Child Policy (2022–2032), which sets out fundamental rights for children—including the right to education and the right to health—and mobilizes national resources toward these ends. The National Strategic Plan for Childhood in Djibouti provides political and strategic guidelines for implementing the National Child Policy. Both policies are coordinated by the Ministry of Women and the Family. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Strategy for Migration: Promotes aid and livelihoods for migrants in Djibouti and raises awareness for the rights and humanitarian needs of migrants. Facilitates coordination between humanitarian partners and the government through the National Coordination Office for Migration. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken during the reporting period.</p> <p>Action Plan for Education and Training (2021–2025): In coordination with the Master Plan for Education and Training (2021–2035), aims to expand inclusive and equitable education to all children in Djibouti, increase access to vocational training, achieve universal basic education, and develop the preschool education system. The plans bring together various ministries to ensure cohesive implementation, planning, and monitoring of their programs. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Djibouti funded and participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem.</p> <p>† Program is funded by the Government of Djibouti. ‡ The government had other programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Ministry of Women and Families Programs:† Includes programs that provide children and families from vulnerable groups with resources to reduce their economic and social vulnerabilities, such as: the Social Assistance Program, which provides children and their families with education and in-kind support; the Support Project for Girls and Women in Precarious Situations, a multi-sectoral program which provides girls with education and training; the Country Strategic Option Program (2019–2024), a rural poverty-reduction program; and Djibouti’s Support Program for Children with Academic Difficulties, a program that provides academic support to children from low-income families. Research was unable to determine what activities were undertaken during the reporting period.</p> <p>International Organization for Migration Center for Unaccompanied Children and Vulnerable Migrants: Provides mental health services, medical support, legal assistance, and basic needs to young and child migrants, who are often vulnerable to exploitation. Established in conjunction with the National Referencing Mechanism for Trafficking Victims, which allows civil society organizations and NGOs to refer people impacted by human trafficking directly to law enforcement agencies. Research was unable to determine what activities were undertaken during the reporting period.</p> <p>Expanding Opportunities for Learning (2019–2024): A \$30 million project co-financed by the Government of Djibouti and the International Development Association. Supports Djibouti’s efforts to expand access to quality education for 35,000 at-risk or underserved children, including girls, refugees, and disabled students. The project also plans to build the capacity of teachers and administrators in underserved areas. Research was unable to determine what activities were undertaken during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

The Government of Djibouti has interfered in union activities and has prevented union leaders from leaving the country to attend international union conferences. These factors can hinder workers’ ability to report child labor, particularly in street work and the informal economy.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



DOMINICA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica, in 2023, the government made minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The government released some information related to its labor and criminal law enforcement efforts and continued social programs that help to prevent child labor. However, Dominica’s existing laws do not determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children and the government has not enacted laws explicitly prohibiting the use of children in pornography.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Dominica’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Define the conditions, activities, and number of hours permissible for light work.

Ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is age 18 for all children.

Determine and codify the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.

Criminally prohibit domestic child trafficking.

Enact legislation to specifically prohibit using, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, and pornographic performances.

Prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Dominica, including non-citizens.

Enforcement

Publish all data on labor law enforcement efforts, including the labor inspectorate’s funding.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to ensure access to public education for all children, including accommodating children with disabilities, addressing the bullying of LGBTQIA+ students, and by ensuring access to education within the Kalinago Territory.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.













BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Civil society representatives report that some LGBTQIA+ students are bullied in schools. In addition, children with disabilities can face physical accessibility problems in some schools. Research indicates that during the reporting period, road conditions prevented students living in the Kalinago Territory from attending school on some days, as bus services were limited.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Dominica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Dominica has not established a sufficient minimum age of 18 for hazardous work nor does it have national laws or regulations that comprehensively define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 2 and 46 of the Education Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 14 Years		Articles 2, 4, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2, 4, 5, and 7(1) of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 4 of the Constitution; Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act; Article 18 of the Sexual Offenses Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 16(5) of the Drugs (Prevention of Misuse) Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles 2 and 27 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Articles 15 and 16 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

Pursuant to Section 7(1) of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, children under age 18 are prohibited from working at night, unless they are working with family members. However, the law does not otherwise prohibit the employment of children in work that is likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. Specifically, Dominica does not have national laws or regulations that comprehensively define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children nor has it established a sufficient minimum age of 18 for hazardous work. Moreover, Article 46 of the Education Act prohibits the employment of children ages 5 to 16 during the school year, but allows students ages 14 and older to work during school vacations or in school-sponsored employment training programs without defining the conditions, specific activities, or number of hours permissible for light work. In addition, laws related to child trafficking are not sufficient because they are limited to international human trafficking. The law does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation because the use of children in prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances is not criminally prohibited. Further, the law criminalizing the use of children as carriers for drug trafficking is insufficient because it does not cover the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs. Laws providing for free basic education do not meet international standards because they permit schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Dominica but are not citizens.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Dominica has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, although research did not find information on the labor inspector's funding.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Division, Ministry of National Security and Legal Affairs: Documents and investigates cases involving child labor and refers violations to the Dominica Police Force and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Refers cases to the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Community Development, which have limited social welfare and outreach programs.

Police Force: Enforces criminal laws, including those related to child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, **2** labor inspectors conducted **38** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **0** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **0** prosecutions, and convicted **0** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, Dominica funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor.

Basic Needs Trust Fund: Caribbean Development Bank-implemented program supervised by Dominica’s government that aims to reduce poverty through livelihood services, improved infrastructure, capacity-building projects, and technical services. Activities are undertaken to implement the Basic Needs Trust Fund to address child labor and make information about implementation measures publicly available on an annual basis.

Education Trust Fund:† Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training and National Excellence to provide financial assistance for textbooks, transportation, registration, and exam fees to students in secondary school who would otherwise be unable to complete their education. The program was active in 2023. In addition, the Ministry of Education implements a Uniform and Textbook Assistance program to provide support to parents of Primary and Secondary School children across the island. Under this program, school shoes, uniforms, and textbooks are provided, benefitting vulnerable students in all communities.

School Feeding Program:‡ Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training and National Excellence to provide lunch to primary school students in targeted areas. The Ministry of Education provides funding to each Early Childhood Development Center on the island. The program was active in 2023.

† Program is funded by the Government of Dominica.

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

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, the Dominican Republic made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted Resolution 10-2023, which added 14 additional dangerous and unhealthy categories of prohibited activities for persons under 18 years of age to the country's hazardous work list, including domestic work. The Ministry of Labor and the Attorney General's Office also signed an inter-institutional agreement to increase their coordination to address child labor. However, despite these new initiatives to address child labor, the Dominican Republic is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because school administrators continued to deny access to education to a significant number of children who were without identity or residency documents. Barriers to education access increase children's vulnerability to child labor. Children without identity or residency documents, most of whom are of foreign origin or descent, were also being prevented from receiving social services, including access to the government's poverty reduction and vocational training programs. In addition, significant enforcement gaps remain, including limited human and financial resources for labor and criminal enforcement agencies, and the lack of authority for labor inspectors to directly assess penalties for labor law violations. The Dominican Republic's legal prohibitions related to child trafficking are also insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	6.3% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	96.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	9.2%

Children in the Dominican Republic are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including producing coffee, rice, and tomatoes. Clearing land for sugarcane production, planting and harvesting sugarcane, and collecting cut cane. Farming.† Fishing.†



Industry

Producing baked goods. Mining.† Construction.†



Services

Domestic work.† Street work, including vending,† begging,† washing cars,† shining shoes,† and transporting packages in markets. Scavenging in landfills. Working in woodworking shops, car washes, auto repair shops,† blacksmith workshops, and in convenience store deliveries.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, construction, street vending, begging, and agriculture, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Dominican Republic’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion as elements of the crime.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 207 to 331 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 4.9 million people, especially in remote rural areas.

Ensure that the number of inspections conducted by each inspector is appropriate to guarantee the quality and scope of inspections.

Improve case tracking so that labor inspectors are able to promptly follow up on violations and refer children to remediation services.

Establish a system to verify the age of young workers to better protect children without birth certificates or other legal documentation from exploitation.

Ensure that labor inspectors interview workers in a safe environment and that they are able to communicate with Creole-speaking workers, including those who may be underage.

Provide additional training to labor and criminal law enforcement officials on child labor issues, case documentation, re-inspection protocols, how to use inspection data to enable prosecution, on indicators of human trafficking, and on standard operating procedures on referral of trafficking survivors to services.

Increase human and financial resources to ensure adequate criminal and labor law enforcement related to child labor.

Improve coordination between the Ministry of Labor and the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that violations are adequately investigated, sanctioned, and prosecuted.

Provide legal authorization to allow labor inspectors to conduct inspections in the informal sector.

Government Policies

Take steps to implement the Roadmap Toward the Elimination of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms and Education Pact and publish information about efforts to implement these policies on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Increase efforts to issue identity documents to all children and ensure that children without documentation, including children of Haitian descent and migrant children, can access education and social programs as provided by Dominican law.

Increase school infrastructure and teacher availability, especially in rural areas, remove supply- and school-related fees, and expand efforts to reduce discrimination on the basis of national origin in schools.

Ensure that children are not denied access to education based on their national or ethnic origin, immigration status, or lack of identity documents, and update all Ministry of Education school manuals to align with Dominican law guaranteeing that children without birth certificates or identity documents are able to enroll in schools and receive diplomas certifying school completion.

Expand social protection programs and specialized services for trafficking survivors as applicable, particularly for child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, agricultural labor exploitation, and forced labor, and ensure that programs also provide services to vulnerable children who are without identity documents or regular migration status.

Ensure that the National Council for Children and Adolescents has sufficient resources and facilities to provide the necessary care for survivors of child labor and child trafficking.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Many Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent, including children, continue to remain in undocumented status because of a Constitutional Court decision in 2013 that retroactively revoked birthright citizenship of all persons born after 1929 to non-citizens in the Dominican Republic, almost all of whom were children of Haitian descent. In general, undocumented children and children of undocumented parents are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation because they may lack birth or residency documents. This increases the likelihood that these children may be denied access to education or engage in child labor, including its worst forms, in part because labor inspectors may not be able to verify their ages. In addition, children in tourist locations are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, especially in major urban and coastal resort areas.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

According to Dominican law, education should be free and compulsory until age 14 and accessible to all children, including those lacking identity documents. However, numerous reports indicate that a significant number of children without identity documents were prevented from accessing education in 2023 due to time-consuming processes and extensive documentation requirements, such as notarized and translated copies of birth certificates, and school transcripts or proof of past school enrollment certified by several Dominican and Haitian government ministries and entities. Moreover, despite a July 2023 Ministry of Education (MOE) directive to public schools noting that all children must be allowed to attend school regardless of their identity documentation, the MOE Operations Manual of Public Education Centers incorrectly instructs school administrators to request identity documents for school enrollment. This contradictory guidance has been used by some school officials to explicitly deny migrant children and Dominican children lacking documentation access to schools. While there is a process for appealing cases of education enrollment denial, sources indicate that government officials responsible for managing the appeals process were not responsive and that case resolution could last up to 2 years. Teacher and school infrastructure shortages also create barriers to education access in the Dominican Republic. In addition, a high percentage of students drop out at the primary and secondary levels. These issues particularly affect children living in rural areas and in communities predominantly of Haitian descent. Sources indicate that some children of Haitian descent face discrimination by teachers and peers, travel long distances to schools, and are unable to afford costs related to schooling.












LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Dominican Republic has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, the Dominican Republic's laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of child trafficking.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 245–247 and 249–253 of the Labor Code; Article 40 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Article 56.1 of the Constitution
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 1 and 3 of the Resolution Modifying the List of Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18; Articles 251, 720, and 721 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Section 3 of the Resolution Modifying the List of Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18; Articles 246, 249, 252, and 253 of the Labor Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25 and 409 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Articles 40, 41, and 62.2 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25, 406, and 409–411 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Article 41 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 25 and 408–411 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Article 24 of the Law on Technological Crime; Article 56.1 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 85 of the Law on Drugs and Controlled Substances
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	 *	Articles 26, 29, 96, and 97 of the Organic Armed Forces Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	 *	Articles 4, 96, 97, 231, and 232 of the Organic Armed Forces Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 14 Years ‡		Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education
Free Public Education		Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education; Ministry of Education Circular No. 18 of 2011; Articles 45 and 46 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In 2023, the government enacted the Ministry of Labor's Resolution 10-2023, which modified the list of dangerous and unhealthy jobs for persons under 18 years of age and repealed Resolution 52-04 of August 13, 2004. The new resolution expanded from 26 to 40 the number of specific types of work prohibited to minors under 18 years of age, including the employment of minors in domestic work. Despite this effort, prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking under the 2003 Law on Human Smuggling and Trafficking (Law 137-03). Although the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents criminally prohibits accepting, offering, or transferring children without requiring threats, the use of force, or coercion as an element, it does not criminally prohibit the recruitment or harboring of children.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of authority of labor inspectors to assess penalties and an insufficient allocation of financial resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MT): Leads efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor, supervises compliance with labor regulations, conducts labor inspections, and oversees the Directorate of Policies for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor. Refers children found in exploitative conditions to the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) for social services. However, the labor inspectorate lacks sufficient financial and human resources to carry out adequate inspections and inspectors do not have authority to assess labor penalties, instead writing infraction reports that are sent to prosecutors in the Office of the Attorney General for enforcement action. In 2023, MT acquired 12 new vehicles to assist them in carrying out inspections.

Office of the Attorney General (AG): Prosecutes crimes involving children, including criminal violations related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and other worst forms of child labor. Oversees the Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking, which receives notifications of alleged violations related to the worst forms of child labor through a hotline. Reports indicate that some cases referred to the AG by the MT are not investigated and prosecuted by the AG due to a lack of coordination between these two entities. In 2023, the AG signed an agreement with the MT to increase coordination on efforts related to addressing child labor, as well as developing new avenues of collaboration. As part of the agreement, the AG agreed to establish specialized prosecutor's offices throughout the country, particularly in provinces in which there is a greater presence of child labor and its worst forms, and permitted the use of its hotline to receive reports from members of the public about child labor, which would then be referred to the MT.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **207** labor inspectors conducted **52,706** worksite inspections, finding **264** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, although **59** prosecutions were initiated.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

The Dominican Republic established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor: Develops policies, approves programs, and coordinates, monitors, and evaluates efforts to address child labor in the Dominican Republic. Meets every 2 months, overseen by the MT, and comprises ministerial representatives, labor unions, private sector representatives, NGOs, more than 30 other institutions, and local steering committees in each province. Oversees the system for referring children found during inspections to appropriate social services. In 2023, the committee held six meetings, during which it developed the annual operating plan to coordinate government actions to address child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The Dominican Republic established policies related to child labor. However, it is uncertain if the Education Pact policy implemented activities addressing child labor during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Roadmap Toward the Elimination of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms in the Dominican Republic (2010–2025): Serves as the national strategic framework to achieve the goals established in the Hemispheric Agenda on Decent Work related to child labor. Aims to prevent and eliminate child labor and its worst forms, and sets targets and indicators for poverty reduction, health, education, institutional coordination, awareness raising, and information sharing. Reporting indicates this policy continued to be implemented in 2023.</p> <p>National Development Strategy (2010–2030): Aims to reduce poverty and inequality, and includes programs to address child labor, provide universal education to all children, and expand access to secondary school, including for students without identity documents. In 2023, for the eleventh consecutive year, the government committed to allocating 4 percent of the nation's GDP to primary and secondary education as indicated by the National Development Strategy. However, reporting indicates that, in 2023, they actually allocated only 3.88 percent. The purpose of this continued funding is to improve the national education system.</p> <p>Education Pact (2014–2030): Includes strategies to address child labor and seeks to improve the quality of, and access to, primary and secondary education by increasing attendance and graduation rates and enrolling more students in the Extended School Day Program. Implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and supported by the World Bank. Research was unable to determine whether activities to address child labor were undertaken during the reporting period to implement the Education Pact.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>In 2023, the Dominican Republic funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address the problem of child labor in all sectors, including in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation, and are inaccessible to individuals who are without documentation.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of the Dominican Republic.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>SUPERATE:† Aims to reduce poverty by providing low-income families with social protection interventions, including conditional cash transfers, socio-educational support, educational inclusion, housing, food security, and referrals to other government programs and services. One of the goals of this program is to increase children's school attendance and reduce child labor. Nonetheless, research indicates that SUPERATE is not available to families who are without documentation, including migrants and Dominicans who lack documentation. In 2023, the government continued carrying out cash transfers and joined efforts with NGOs to address hunger in the country.</p> <p>Oportunidad 14–24:† Supports high-risk and socially vulnerable adolescents and young people between ages 14 and 24 who have limited resources by providing access to technical professional training, scholarships, a monthly provision of raw food, and transportation to study centers. However, research indicates that individuals without documentation, including migrants and Dominicans who lack documentation, are ineligible to participate in the program. In 2023, over 22,500 youths were registered in this program throughout 119 centers, with over 3,000 youths having graduated from it during the year.</p> <p>Extended School Day Program (Jornada Escolar Extendida):† MOE program to extend school hours to a full day (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to improve educational achievement and reduce child labor. This program was still active in 2023, and according to reports, over 1 million students throughout the country were enrolled in it during the reporting year.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ECUADOR

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Ecuador made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed the Law Against Human Trafficking and Illicit Trafficking of Migrants, which tasks the Ministry of Interior with leading Ecuador’s inter-institutional committee against trafficking in persons and defines government prevention and protection actions. In addition, all 160 labor inspectors received training on topics pertaining to the prevention and elimination of child labor and national and international legal standards. As part of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the government distributed to all border checkpoints new guidelines to help identify and prevent trafficking in persons crimes. The Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion also signed cooperative agreements with municipal and provincial governments, civil society organizations, and religious organizations to implement programs to eliminate child labor and referred 12,160 children and adolescents vulnerable to child labor to social services. However, despite these efforts, the Ministry of Labor reported that the resources allocated to the labor inspectorate—including the number of inspectors, transportation, and equipment—are insufficient to conduct inspections in the informal sector. The government also has not conducted a nationwide child labor survey since 2012, and social programs are needed to address the vulnerability of migrant, LGBTQI+, indigenous, and Afro-Ecuadorian children to the worst forms of child labor. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labor has not registered certain industry-wide trade unions, including the Trade Union Association of Agricultural and Peasant Workers. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses in the agriculture sector may go undetected as a result.

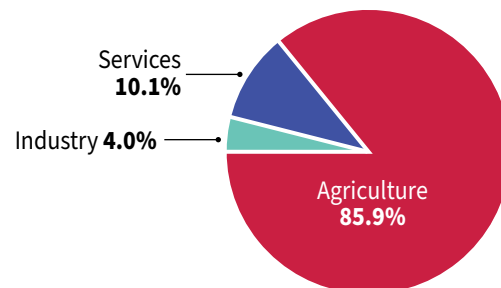


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	7.0% (260,567)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.5%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Ecuador are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including with the use of chemical products† and machetes,† and in the production of bananas, rice, and flowers. Fishing. Raising poultry, hogs, and bovines.†



Industry

Mining, including gold† and small-scale mining.† Construction† and brickwork. Working in the production of bricks.†



Services

Domestic work† and street work† in vending and begging. Working in auto repair garages, including hazardous work involved with using heavy machinery. Working in food

service, including working as waiters and kitchen staff. Scavenging in landfills.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking and robbery, sometimes as result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, mining, domestic work, street vending, and begging. Use in the production of pornography. Recruitment of children by Colombian non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Ecuador’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement

Strengthen referral mechanisms to social services for survivors of child labor, especially for those found in the informal sector.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 160 to 556 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 8.3 million workers.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate is properly funded so that inspectors receive sufficient resources, including transportation and equipment, to carry out their duties adequately.

Publish data on criminal investigations related to the worst forms of child labor, including the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted.

Ensure that laws and regulations governing child labor, especially hazardous labor, are enforced consistently throughout the country, including in rural areas and family-run businesses. Ensure that inspections sufficiently cover sectors in which child labor has been reported, including the informal sector.

Ensure that industry-wide unions, including the Trade Union Association of Agricultural and Peasant Workers, are registered by the Ministry of Labor.

Ensure that labor inspectors have sufficient knowledge of existing laws and receive adequate training in victim identification to conduct inspections and refer survivors to social services.

Ensure that criminal investigators receive sufficient resources, such as additional investigators, to investigate cases of suspected child labor crimes and refer victims to social services consistently.

Provide specialized shelters for children that have been victimized by labor or sex trafficking and ensure that funds are distributed to shelters in a timely manner.

Publish child labor data collected through the Unified System of Registering Child Labor.

Government Policies

Take steps to implement the Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor policy and National Development Plan and publish information about these efforts on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Conduct a comprehensive child labor survey to ensure sufficient and current data to inform government actions to eliminate child labor.

Ensure that students without identity documents are able to graduate.

Develop social programs to address the vulnerability of migrant and refugee children to exploitative labor practices and establish programs to address child labor where it is most prevalent, including the informal and agricultural sectors.

Eliminate barriers to and make education accessible for all children, including indigenous and refugee children and children from rural areas, by increasing classroom space and teachers, addressing teen pregnancy issues, providing adequate transportation, and easing the economic burden of buying school supplies.

Provide quality services to survivors of human trafficking in all provinces of Ecuador, including to migrant children.

Update the social registry—which contains information on low-income families and informs the provision of social assistance—to include families most vulnerable to child labor.

Ensure that social programs address the vulnerability of migrants, LGBTQI+ individuals, and indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian girls at risk of human trafficking.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Migrant and refugee children from Colombia and Venezuela are vulnerable to street work, forced begging, and exploitative labor practices in the fishing sector, in artisanal mining, and in agriculture. The Ecuadorian government, UN, and civil society organizations (CSOs) agree that Venezuelans with irregular migration status are especially vulnerable to trafficking, along with LGBTQI+, indigenous, and Afro-Ecuadorian girls. Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian children are also vulnerable to child labor. In addition, some indigenous children are recruited under false promises of employment and are subjected to forced begging, domestic servitude, or forced labor in sweatshops and commercial vending.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Vulnerable children in Ecuador face numerous barriers to accessing education, including lack of space and teachers, economic difficulty in buying uniforms and school supplies, inadequate school infrastructure, teen pregnancy, and a lack of transportation for children who must attend schools far from their homes. Reporting also indicates that many school-age Venezuelan refugee and migrant children are not enrolled in Ecuador's educational system due to non-institutional barriers like a lack of resources and local discrimination. In addition, undocumented students face difficulties graduating from secondary school as national authorities are unable to grant diplomas without identity documents.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Ecuador has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Ecuador's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 46 of the Constitution; Articles 82 and 95 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 2 and 87 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 5, 6, and 8 of Resolution No. 016 of 2008; Article 5 of Ministerial Accord MDT-2015-0131
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 82, 91, 105, and 213 of the Integral Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 47, 91, and 92 of the Integral Penal Code; Article 117 of the Organic Law on Human Mobility
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 91 and 100–104 of the Integral Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 47, 219, and 220 of the Integral Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 57 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 161 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 127 of the Integral Penal Code; Article 57 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 161 of the Constitution

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Articles 38, 42, and 43 of the Organic Intercultural Education Law
Free Public Education		Article 4 of the Organic Intercultural Education Law; Chapter 5, Article 28 of the Constitution

*Country has no conscription



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Ecuador took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resource allocation and a lack of specialized shelters for boys who are survivors of human trafficking hindered enforcement efforts. The Ministry of Labor has also not registered certain industry-wide trade unions, including the Trade Union Association of Agricultural and Peasant Workers. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses in the agriculture sector may go undetected.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Enforces child labor laws in the formal sector through the Directorate for the Attention to Priority Groups. Monitors and identifies cases of child labor, assesses penalties, promotes public awareness campaigns to prevent child labor, provides technical assistance to local governments on child labor, and identifies victims of child labor for the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) to provide special services. MIES is also responsible for conducting routine inspections in the informal sector. Using the Unified System of Registration of Child Labor, MOL collects information on child laborers and refers children to appropriate government services.

Attorney General’s Office: Enforces criminal laws against child labor and hazardous child labor, including the prosecution of cases. The Attorney General’s Specialized Victim Witness Protection Program provides immediate support and shelter to survivors and witnesses willing to press charges and testify against their abusers, and coordinates referrals for further assistance with other government agencies. In 2023, 2 individuals were sentenced to 10 years in prison for commercial sexual exploitation of a minor. A separate individual was also sentenced to 10 years in prison for the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor during the reporting period.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **160** labor inspectors conducted **11,371** worksite inspections of which **663** were specifically for child labor, finding **5** child labor violations. The government also conducted **332** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes; however, it is **unknown** how many prosecutions were initiated. In addition, **2** perpetrators were convicted of worst forms of child labor crimes.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Ecuador established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Directorate for the Attention to Priority Groups: Serves as the primary coordinating mechanism for the elimination of child labor. During the reporting period, MOL approved Ministerial Regulation No. MDT-2023-112, delegating to the Directorate the responsibility to prevent, promote, and protect the labor rights of priority attention groups. The Directorate is also tasked with contributing to the elimination of child labor through the application and strengthening of public policies, regulations, and national and international instruments with a gender focus.</p>
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Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Ecuador established policies related to child labor. However, Ecuador lacks an active and permanent policy to address child labor.

Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor (2021–2025): Promotes employment for parents and the prevention of child labor through inspections. Developed through the National Council for Intergenerational Equity’s National Agenda for Intergenerational Equity, which was created as a technical planning instrument for the formulation of public policies at the national and local levels. Although the Noboa administration continued to support the Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor policy during the reporting period, research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.

National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2019–2030): Aims to prevent, investigate, and impose legal sanctions against human trafficking, with a focus on human rights, mobility, and gender, as the majority of victims in Ecuador are women. The Action Plan includes U.S.-funded support through the International Organization for Migration and is the government’s first multisectoral plan on human trafficking that establishes goals for every public sector institution to address human trafficking. As part of the Action Plan, the Government of Ecuador trained 580 public officials in Tulcan, Lago Agrio, Huaquillas, and Macara. These public officials came from migrant control units, Ecuador’s Red Cross chapter, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, MIES, and the Ministry of Health. The Government of Ecuador also developed several guides and internal procedures that would assist in the training of border police officers in trafficking in persons crime identification and prevention.

National Development Plan (Plan de Creación de Oportunidades) (2021–2025): Creates employment opportunities for Ecuadorians and aims to establish a plan for future policy areas. These include economic, social, integral security, ecological transition, and institutional policy areas. In the social axis listed in the plan, the Ecuadorian government lays out its objective to protect families, guarantee their rights and services, eradicate poverty, and promote social inclusion. In order to meet this objective, Ecuador has set a goal of decreasing the percentage of children between the ages of 5 and 14 who engage in child labor. This plan aims to reach the goal of decreasing child labor from 6.1 percent to 4.4 percent and increase the number of child labor inspections to 504 by 2025. During the reporting period, the number of child labor inspections conducted was 663, surpassing the target number.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Ecuador funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not address the worst forms of child labor in all relevant sectors.

Child Labor Eradication Service: MIES program that aims to provide social and educational inclusion of children and adolescents in situations of child labor. Currently serves as the primary government-funded social program that is tasked with eliminating child labor in Ecuador. The program seeks to restore the rights of children in situations of child labor through sustained individual, family, and community interventions. During the reporting period, the Child Labor Eradication Service assisted 12,160 children and adolescents and referred them to the appropriate social services. MIES signed cooperative agreements with municipal and provincial governments, CSOs, and religious organizations to implement this program.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i> <i>† Program is funded by the Government of Ecuador.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Service for the Protection of Vulnerable Migrant Population in Host Cities:^{*†} MIES service that aims to provide access to public or private social protection services to vulnerable migrant populations, with emphasis on girls, boys, adolescents, and their families. Also delivers services to migrant pregnant women, people with critical illnesses, people with disabilities, victims of violence, and LGBTQI+ individuals. MIES provides orientation and information for the regularization of participants' immigration and refugee status, and raises awareness about irregular practices such as begging, child labor, domestic violence, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, xenophobic conduct, and other rights violations, through inter-institutional coordination and socio-cultural integration with host communities. This program was implemented during the reporting period.</p> <p>Rights with Dignity:^{*†} MIES program that aims to prevent begging and child labor through the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns and containment actions. This program is carried out within the framework of the National Intersectoral Table for the Prevention of Begging and Child Labor, with the support of 24 state institutions and 6 NGOs. The program's containment actions include a mechanism in which a citizen or state institution can report a case of begging or child labor, and in response, a technical team will be deployed to verify the case and provide government services. Donations of clothing, non-perishable food, and toys are also made to vulnerable families as part of the program.</p>
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For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

The government puts restrictions on unions, including allowing only Ecuadorian citizens to hold leadership roles and permitting the government to dissolve unions that engage in political activities. In addition, the Ministry of Labor is not permitted to register industry-wide trade unions, including the Trade Union Association for Agricultural and Peasant Workers. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses may go undetected.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



EGYPT

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Egypt made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government conducted a national child labor survey and launched a referral mechanism that uses a whole-of-government approach to identify victims of trafficking, refer them to necessary services, investigate cases, and provide rehabilitation and reintegration services. However, the government did not publish data on its efforts to enforce its child labor laws, including labor inspectorate resources, number of child labor violations found, and penalties imposed for child labor violations. The minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment also does not meet international standards as it is below age 16. In addition, programs to address child labor are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem, particularly the lack of targeted programming to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labor in limestone quarrying. Moreover, reports indicate that victims are unwilling to interact with state entities, hindering the government’s ability to refer them to appropriate services.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	3.6% (Unavailable)
Boys		4.8%
Girls		2.4%
Urban		2.1%
Rural		4.6%

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	12.1% (Unavailable)
Boys		13.7%
Girls		10.4%
Urban		8.1%
Rural		15.0%
Attending School	5 to 14	94.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	3.8%

Children in Egypt are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including the production of cotton, feeding chickens, collecting and packaging eggs, and fishing.



Industry

Quarrying† limestone, making bricks, construction, and working in carpentry workshops.



Services

Street work, including selling goods and collecting garbage, repairing automobiles and heavy machinery, driving *tuktuks*, and domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking of drugs and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic work and forced begging.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Egypt's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Provide criminal penalties for recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Prohibit school fees for the first 9 years of education.

Establish age 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military with safeguards for voluntariness.

Enforcement

Publish information on civil child labor law enforcement, including labor inspectorate funding, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of penalties collected.

Establish a mechanism for the labor inspectorate to assess civil penalties for violations of child labor laws.

Employ at least 1,897 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 28.5 million people.

Social Programs

Ensure universal access to free public education, especially for girls and refugee children, by addressing the cost of school fees and supplies, violence in schools, lack of documentation, and other barriers to education.

Expand programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, particularly targeted programming to prevent and address child commercial sexual exploitation and limestone quarrying.

Institute programs to encourage migrants and victims of trafficking to make use of government reporting mechanisms so that they can be referred to the proper services.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from poor families are most likely to engage in child labor, with some families forcing their children into street work and domestic work. Some Egyptian girls are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation under the pretext of temporary marriage, sometimes called "summer marriage," to wealthy foreign men, mostly from Persian Gulf countries. Some migrant and refugee girls are subjected to sex trafficking. Additionally, unaccompanied migrant children are at risk of being forced to sell drugs by criminal gangs.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Egypt face barriers to education, including lack of access to identity documentation and their families' inability to pay the associated costs of attending school, such as school fees. Enrolling in public school requires a certified birth certificate, which some children born out of wedlock or born to parents of differing religions lack. Children also drop out of school because of school-related costs, such as educational supplies, transportation, and uniforms. A lack of qualified teachers, poorly maintained schools, sanitation issues, classroom density, insufficient infrastructure, and bullying in schools prevent some children from attending school. In rural communities, children face difficulties getting to school due to long commuting distances. In addition, girls face additional barriers to education, including harassment on the way to school, as well as cultural constraints. The government offers some refugee children access to the public education system; however, refugee children face language barriers and are subjected to racism and bullying. In response, some non-Egyptians residing in the country, such as those from Sudan, have organized independent school systems unaffiliated with the government for their children.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Egypt has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Egypt's laws do not criminally prohibit military recruitment by non-state armed groups and the minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment is below the age of 16.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Articles 64 and 74 of the Child Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 1 and 3 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 215; Articles 1 and 3 of the Child Law
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 1 and 3, and Table 1 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 215
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2,3, 5, and 6 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2,3, 5, and 6 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Article 116- <i>bis</i> (a) of the Child Law; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2,3, 5, and 6 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking; Articles 1-4 and 6 of the Law on the Combating of Prostitution
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 34 of the Law on Narcotics; Article 65 of the Child Law; Article 3 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 215
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 15 Years	✗	Ministry of Defense Guidelines on Youth Volunteers in the Armed Forces
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Article 1 of the Law on Military and National Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	Article 7- <i>bis</i> (b) of the Child Law
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years	✓	Article 59(1) of the Child Law; Articles 19, 80, and 238 of the Constitution
Free Public Education	✗	Article 54 of the Child Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment does not meet international standards as it is below age 16. Additionally, the law does not criminally prohibit military recruitment by non-state armed groups. While public education is free by law, there are still fees for attending school which, if not met, disqualify students from sitting for final exams; not completing final exams results in a failing grade.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Egypt took actions to address child labor. However, an insufficient number of inspectors and insufficient financial resources allocated to law enforcement bodies hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Manpower: Enforces child labor laws and regulations through its inspection department, including receiving and investigating child labor complaints. Inspectors conduct labor inspections and report violations to the police, who operate under the Ministry of Interior. If police investigations confirm criminal activity, cases are subsequently sent to the Prosecutor General’s Office (PGO), which operates under the Ministry of Justice.

Ministry of Interior: Investigates cases of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Reports violations to the Public Prosecution Office under the PGO. Also receives reports of violations from the Administrative Control Authority, which investigates government corruption and human trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **1,500** labor inspectors conducted **14,600** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is **unknown** how many investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions initiated, or perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Egypt established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee for the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Families: Coordinates efforts to implement the National Action Plan for Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Family. Membership includes the Ministries of Manpower, Social Solidarity, Education, Agriculture, Interior, Planning, Finance, Investment and International Cooperation, Trade, Justice, Health, Local Development, and <i>Awqaf</i> (religious endowments,) in addition to the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), the National Council of Women, the Central Agency for Population and Statistics, the National Media Agency, and Al Azhar University. Active in 2023.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Egypt established policies related to child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan for Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Family (2018–2025): Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2025 and identify roles of government agencies responsible for assisting child laborers. Other objectives include expanding the child labor knowledge base; capacity building of agencies providing support; providing social protection, with links to existing programs; enhancing education, including vocational education for children; and advocacy and awareness raising. Active in 2023.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>National Strategy for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Persons (2022–2026): Aims to address trafficking in persons through prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnership. Includes goals such as empowering households to combat poverty and illiteracy, preventing school dropouts, and reducing child labor. In 2023, the government launched a referral mechanism that uses a whole-of-government approach to identify victims of trafficking, refer them to necessary services, investigate cases, and provide rehabilitation and reintegration services. However, reports indicate that victims may be unwilling to interact with the state, hindering the government’s ability to refer them to appropriate services. Active in 2023.</p> <p>National Strategy for Childhood and Motherhood (2018–2030): Includes a chapter on child labor that aims to promote dialogue on child labor legislation, including updating the hazardous work list; building the capacity of relevant government agencies, such the Ministry of Manpower and NCCM; developing programs to address child labor; and expanding educational and vocational training opportunities. Active in 2023.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Egypt funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem, including in forced begging.</p> <p><small>† Program is funded by the Government of Egypt.</small></p>	<p>Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) Centers for Combating Child Labor:† MoSS-run centers, operated by partner NGOs, to provide services to children and their families. Consisting of 17 centers across 14 governorates. Active in 2023.</p> <p>Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa (ACCEL Africa) (2018–2024): Aims to eliminate child labor in the cotton, textiles, and ready-made-garments sectors; implemented by the ILO and funded by the Dutch government. ACCEL Africa- Egypt partners with the Ministries of Manpower, Education, and Agriculture, as well as MoSS and NCCM, to improve policy, legal, and institutional frameworks. In 2023, worked with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics to conduct a national child labor survey.</p> <p>Solidarity and Dignity Program (Takaful and Karama):† Funded by MoSS, this program promotes school attendance and health monitoring for children by providing income supplements to poor families. This partnership between the government and the World Food Program, the UN Development Program, UNICEF, and the World Bank offers income supplements to poor families provided that household children maintain at least an 80 percent attendance record in school and mothers and children under age 6 provide demonstrable evidence of having been seen at health clinics four times per year. Active in 2023.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Egyptian authorities dissolved over 1,000 unions in 2018 and mandated all unions re-register. As of 2023, only 122 were successfully registered. The government also imposed a single, state-controlled trade union federation and arrested union leaders. The suppression of workers’ rights and the lack of genuine collective bargaining have contributed to labor rights violations in the country and hindered workers’ ability to report child labor, particularly in agriculture and the informal economy.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



EL SALVADOR

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, El Salvador made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government of El Salvador introduced the National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, which included sections on detection, investigation, comprehensive care, and specialized training. The government also conducted several trainings covering topics related to investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons cases, which emphasized the protection of childhood and adolescent rights and reached over 3,000 government officials, including employees of the Attorney General’s Office and the National Civilian Police. The National Council for Early Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence also announced the organizations that will make up the Network of Child and Adolescent Care Entities. The objective of this network will be to align the various programs and projects of its members with national guidelines, with the intention of expanding the range of services available to vulnerable children and adolescents. However, despite these efforts, criminal and civil enforcement agencies continue to lack sufficient resources to enforce child labor laws. Gaps also remain related to the lack of publicly available, comprehensive information on the government’s criminal law enforcement efforts. Finally, social programs do not adequately address the full scope of the child labor problem in the country, particularly in the informal and service sectors.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	2.6% (26,962)
Boys		3.4%
Girls		1.8%
Urban		1.7%
Rural		3.8%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	19.3% (55,095)
Boys		28.8%
Girls		9.9%
Urban		14.0%
Rural		27.2%
Attending School	5 to 14	92.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	2.7%

Children in El Salvador are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and in illicit activities, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the harvesting of coffee.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Harvesting sugarcane† and coffee,† and production of cereal grains. Working in cattle-raising† and fishing,† including harvesting shellfish.†



Industry

Working in construction,† manufacturing fireworks,† and production of baked goods.



Services

Domestic work and street work, including in street begging,† washing cars, and vending.† Garbage scavenging.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced begging, domestic work, agricultural labor, construction, and work in textiles. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in El Salvador’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the legal light work provisions specify the activities in which light work may be undertaken by those under age 16.

Enforcement

Provide sufficient funding and resources to the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and criminal law enforcement agencies to fully enforce child labor laws and investigate cases involving the worst forms of child labor, including in the informal sector.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 100 to 193 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 2.9 million workers.

Collect and publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including whether law enforcement personnel received training on child labor.

Improve coordination between law enforcement agencies in the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases related to the worst forms of child labor, including by developing electronic information-sharing capabilities.

Ensure that there is a sufficient number of criminal law enforcement officials to carry out criminal investigations on the worst forms of child labor.

Screen for indicators of the worst forms of child labor among children apprehended for illicit activity in connection with organized criminal groups and ensure that they are provided with adequate social services.

Social Programs

Ensure that social programs address adolescent girls’ vulnerability to forced domestic work and human trafficking.

Remove barriers to education, such as birth registration, and ensure access for all children, including students of indigenous descent and LGBTQI+ youth.

Ensure that schools have proper infrastructure and sanitation systems to support students.

Ensure that adequate services are available for all human trafficking survivors, including boys and LGBTQI+ youth.

Implement programs that direct support to child laborers who may not be living with their parents, including child domestic workers.

Ensure that annual surveys providing data on child labor include information on specific child labor work sectors and the worst forms of child labor.

Report on specific activities taken to implement the Sustainable Families Program.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children living in rural and economically disadvantaged areas are particularly vulnerable to child labor. According to the results of the 2022 Annual Multipurpose Household Survey, 60.9 percent of children engaged in child labor live in rural communities. Children living in families that lack economic stability and educational opportunities are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation. According to El Salvador’s Trafficking in Person’s Special Prosecutor and local NGOs, adolescent girls with limited education are among the most at risk of being trafficked. The National Council for Early Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence (CONAPINA) reported that trafficking crimes perpetrated by gangs occur on a much smaller scale than in previous years due to the government’s crackdown on gangs via a state of exception, which remained active throughout the reporting period.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in El Salvador face numerous barriers to education including precarious school infrastructure, leaving many schools in the country unprepared to face natural disasters and epidemics. Furthermore, schools around the country do not have adequate sanitation systems, and many do not have access to drinking water. Communities in which indigenous populations are concentrated disproportionately lack educational infrastructure. The NGO COMCAVIS TRANS reported that 33.4 percent of LGBTQI+ youth discontinued their education before high school, compared with 21.2 percent of children nationwide. According to the *Crecer Juntos* law, which came into effect in 2023, a lack of identity documents should not prevent school enrollment. However, research indicates that children are, in practice, being required to have birth certificates to enroll in schools.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

El Salvador has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, gaps exist in El Salvador’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including a light work framework that is inconsistent with international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years	✓	Articles 114, 116, and 627 of the Labor Code; Article 38.10 of the Constitution
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 105 and 627 of the Labor Code; Article 38 of the Constitution; Article 2 of Agreement 241 of 2011
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 1 of Agreement 241 of 2011
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 3, 5, 54, and 55 of the Special Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Article 13 of the Labor Code; Articles 4 and 9 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 3, 5, 54, and 55 of the Special Law Against Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 3, 5, 54, and 55 of the Special Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 169–173 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 3, 5, 54, and 55 of the Special Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 214 and 345 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years	✓	Articles 2 and 6 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓*	Article 215 of the Constitution; Articles 2 and 11 of the Decree No. 298
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Article 345 of the Penal Code; Article 1 of the Law Prohibiting Gangs and Criminal Organizations; Article 7 of the Constitution
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years ‡	✓	Articles 5, 18, 20, and 22 of the General Education Law
Free Public Education	✓	Articles 5, 18, 20, and 22 of the General Education Law; Article 56 of the Constitution

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The light work framework for work of children under age 16 is inconsistent with international standards because it does not specify the activities permitted.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in El Salvador took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare: Inspects worksites for labor violations, including child labor, and monitors working conditions for adolescents who are granted work authorization. Maintains a child labor unit dedicated to child labor law enforcement issues and refers cases of the worst forms of child labor to the Attorney General’s Office. During the reporting period, the government provided additional informational regarding the number of inspectors and the number of inspections conducted in the sugarcane and coffee sectors.

Ministry of Justice and Public Security: Together with the Attorney General’s Office, enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor through the National Civilian Police. The National Civilian Police maintains a special trafficking in persons unit to investigate and prosecute human trafficking, including child trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

In 2023, **100** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections. However, labor inspectors conducted **506** inspections focused child labor violations, finding **1** child labor violation. In addition, there were also **10** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, with **20** prosecutions initiated.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

El Salvador established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

** Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.*

CONAPINA:* Collaborates with law enforcement agencies taking action on child labor cases, coordinates the work of institutions working on children’s issues, and provides services to children rescued during law enforcement operations. CONAPINA is responsible for formulating, evaluating, and updating national policy; accrediting and supervising programs for children and adolescents; issuing guidelines for the implementation of public programs in line with national policy; and providing technical assistance for Early Childhood Care Centers. In 2023, CONAPINA coordinated with the Office of Human Rights Ombudsperson, the National Civilian Police, the Attorney General’s Office, and local governments to conduct inspections at nightclubs, bars, and brothels to verify that no minors were employed.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>El Salvador established policies related to child labor. However, it is unclear whether certain policies were implemented during the reporting period.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Policy to Support Early Childhood Development 2020–2030 (Crecer Juntos): Seeks to ensure that children reach their maximum potential during early childhood by guaranteeing the necessary conditions to provide them with education, health, nutrition, and environments that protect their rights. Also aims to eradicate child labor for children between the ages of 5 and 7 by 2030. During the reporting period, the government introduced the Early Childhood Care Centers, which will be responsible for promoting comprehensive care for girls and boys. These centers provide personal care services, education, and monitoring of growth and development.</p> <p>National Policy for Early Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence:† Establishes and guides the framework for state and private action to guarantee the full enjoyment of the rights of girls, boys, and adolescents. Introduced during the reporting period with the enactment of the <i>Crecer Juntos</i> law.</p> <p>National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons:† Aims to prevent and detect crimes related to human trafficking in El Salvador. Consists of four strategic pillars: promote a comprehensive legal framework, implement awareness campaigns to facilitate identification of human trafficking cases, improve the state’s ability to investigate and prosecute crimes, and provide care and services with the aim of long-term reintegration and well-being.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>El Salvador funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem of all worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic labor and human trafficking.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of El Salvador.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Public Awareness Campaigns for At-Risk Populations:† Government public awareness campaigns implemented by CONAPINA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to raise awareness about the dangers of human trafficking. These include the “Protection Starts at Home” awareness program and the “Call 1 2 3” hotline, both of which promote respect toward the physical, psychological, and sexual integrity of children and adolescents. The hotline offers children and adults the ability to consult specialists in emergency situations. During the reporting period, the Migration Directorate provided 47 awareness-raising sessions to different sectors of the population on topics pertaining to human trafficking and forms of human exploitation.</p> <p>Sustainable Families Program:† Focused on improving health, education, productivity, and security, and eliminating poverty through inclusive and sustainable economic growth and access to public services. Includes Health and Education Bonus Programs that assist families with cash transfers conditioned on children’s school attendance and health checkups. Although research indicates that this program was active during the reporting period, the government did not report specific activities conducted to implement the program.</p> <p>School Prevention and Security Plan:† Programs implemented by the Ministry of Education and Public Security and the National Civil Police in schools with high levels of violence. Includes activities such as provision of psychological help, online classes, skills workshops for youth, and increased police patrols. During the reporting period, the National Civilian Police increased and maintained constant patrols in schools around the country as preventative measures against violence.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ERITREA

NO ADVANCEMENT - *Efforts Made But Complicit in Forced Child Labor*

In 2023, Eritrea is receiving an assessment of no advancement. Despite initiatives to address child labor, Eritrea is assessed as having made no advancement because it demonstrated complicity in the use of forced child labor. Government officials continued to force students in grade 12, some of whom are under the age of 18, to participate in military training elements of the government’s compulsory national service program. In addition, high school students are forced to participate in *maetot*, a government-mandated month-long agricultural work program, for little to no pay. Failure to participate in the program results in immediate expulsion from school.

Otherwise, the government revived the Early Childhood Care and Education Team at the Ministry of Education, which worked with local nongovernmental organizations to enroll students in childhood care and education programs. Additionally, the government renewed the Education Sector Development Plan, which establishes free and compulsory education for all children in elementary school and middle school, and expands access to education to nomadic communities through the provision of portable classrooms. However, Eritrea’s minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside formal employment relationships. In addition, Eritrea’s laws—including its existing Penal Code of 1957—do not criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution; the use, procuring, or offering of a child in illicit activities; or the procuring or offering of a child for pornography or pornographic performances. Moreover, the government did not publicly release information on its criminal or labor law enforcement efforts.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Eritrea are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced agricultural labor and forced military training associated with national service.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and herding livestock.



Industry

Working in small-scale manufacturing, including recycling, remanufacturing, and repurposing metal.



Services

Street work including vending and begging, and domestic work including fetching water and firewood. Working in auto mechanic shops, grocery stores, the Asmara bowling alley, and open markets.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced agricultural work and compulsory participation in national service or military training associated with national service prior to age 18.

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

In order to graduate from high school and meet the compulsory training component of national service prescribed by the Proclamation on National Service No. 82/1995, students are required to complete their final year of schooling (grade 12) at the Warsay Yikealo Secondary School located at the Sawa military complex. Each year, 11,000 to 15,000 students enter grade 12 at Sawa, and while many of these students have typically reached age 18 by the time they participate in the military training component of 12th grade schooling, some are reportedly as young as age 16. The mandatory military training includes military discipline and procedures, weapons training, a survival exercise, and a 2- to 4- week war simulation, and some conscripts are forced to perform agricultural labor on government-owned farms. During their time at Sawa, students endure notoriously harsh conditions and corruption, including allegations of military commanders offering food and better treatment to female students in exchange for sexual acts. Further, high school students are forced to participate in *maetot*, a government-mandated month-long agricultural work program, for little to no pay. Failure to participate in the program results in immediate expulsion from school.

Without completion of (and official release from) national service assignments, Eritrean children face a future of indefinite national service. These factors underlie an ongoing exodus of unaccompanied minors from the country. Adolescent children, some as young as age 14, who attempted to leave Eritrea were sometimes detained or forced to undergo military training, despite being younger than the minimum age of 18 for compulsory military recruitment. In addition, there have been reports that *giffas*—house-to-house military roundups used to identify Eritreans who are trying, or perceived as trying, to evade or escape national service—have resulted in the imprisonment or forced conscription of children.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Eritrea’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Extend minimum age protections to all children working outside of formal employment relationships, including those who are self-employed.

Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children and ensure that all children are protected by hazardous work prohibitions, including children in the informal sector and those working outside of formal employment relationships.

Criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child for illicit activities.

Criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution, and the use, procurement, and offering of a child for pornography and pornographic performances.

Establish by law the age of 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military, with safeguards for voluntariness, and criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under the age of 18 by non-state armed groups.

Criminally prohibit practices similar to slavery or debt bondage/servitude/serfdom.

Establish by law free basic public education, and establish by law an age up to which education is compulsory that extends to 14 years, the minimum age for employment.

Enforcement

Cease the practice of imprisoning unhoused children and children discovered evading compulsory national service during military-led *giffas*.

Publish data related to labor law and criminal law enforcement.

Publish activities undertaken by agencies responsible for child labor law enforcement to address child labor on an annual basis, including activities by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and the Eritrean Police.

Coordination

Publish information on the Interagency Steering Committee on Trafficking and Migration’s efforts to coordinate government activities to address human trafficking on an annual basis.

Establish a key coordinating mechanism to address all worst forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Take actions to ensure that children under age 18 are not placed in military training or agricultural labor assignments as part of national service.

Cease government programs that force high school children to engage in agricultural labor and other public works as a requirement to enroll in school.

Publish information on actions taken to implement government policies relevant to child labor, including the Comprehensive National Child Policy.

Enact policies to address all forms of child labor using the framework outlined in the Comprehensive National Child Policy, including child labor in agriculture, manufacturing, the services industry, and armed groups.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Enhance efforts to make education accessible for all children, including children in rural areas, by building schools and increasing transportation options in rural areas.

Institute sufficient social programs to address child labor, including in agriculture, domestic work, street work, and the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Ensure that these programs and efforts are accessible to all victims of exploitation, including Sudanese children living along the Eritrea-Sudan border.

Publish information on actions taken to implement the Better Migration Management program and the Complementary Elementary Education Program on an annual basis.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Unhoused and unaccompanied children in Eritrea are particularly vulnerable to child labor. These children, especially those above the age of 14, are also disproportionately forced into military training or conscription by government officials. In addition, displaced Sudanese children with temporary residence living along the Eritrea-Sudan border are more likely to fall victim to child labor as they do not receive assistance from the government.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children, particularly in rural areas, face numerous barriers to education access, including a lack of access to teachers, as well as a lack of transportation to schools for some students, which may increase their vulnerability to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Eritrea has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Eritrea's existing laws do not fully meet international standards on the minimum age for work, as these protections do not apply to children working outside of formal employment relationships; on the commercial sexual exploitation of children, because the use of a child for prostitution is not criminally prohibited, nor is using, procuring, or offering a child for pornography or for pornographic performances; and on the minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment, as Eritrea does not have laws barring children from voluntarily joining state military service before the age of 18.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Articles 3 and 68 of the Labor Proclamation
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work		Articles 3, 35, and 69 of the Labor Proclamation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 69 of the Labor Proclamation
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 3 and 9 of the Labor Proclamation; Articles 565 and 570 of the Penal Code of 1957
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 565, and 605–607 of the Penal Code of 1957
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 604–607, 609, and 610 of the Penal Code of 1957
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 6 and 8 of the Proclamation on National Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 14 Years ‡		
Free Public Education		

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The Labor Proclamation’s minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside formal employment relationships, such as those who are self-employed, which does not conform to international standards requiring all children to be protected by the minimum age to work. In addition, Article 69 of the Labor Proclamation authorizes the Minister of Labor to issue a list of activities prohibited to children under age 18; however, the government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. Likewise, the Labor Proclamation’s hazardous work protections do not apply to children working outside formal employment relationships. Laws prohibiting slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor are insufficient because they do not criminally prohibit practices similar to slavery or debt bondage/servitude/serfdom.

Laws governing the use of children in illicit activities are not sufficient because the existing Penal Code does not explicitly criminally prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of a child for the production and trafficking of drugs. Current laws regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children are also insufficient because the use of a child for prostitution is not criminally prohibited, nor is the use, procuring or offering a child for pornography or for pornographic performances. While the Proclamation on National Service No. 82/1995 requires compulsory national service from all citizens ages 18 to 40, the law is silent on voluntary military service, and thus places no explicit limitations on the voluntary recruitment of children under age 18 into the national armed forces.

Eritrea does not appear to have any laws guaranteeing free basic education or setting the compulsory education age, increasing the risk of children’s involvement in child labor. However, several government policies provide free and compulsory basic education to all children below the age of 14, including the Education Sector Development Plan and the Comprehensive National Child Policy.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

It is unknown whether enforcement agencies in Eritrea took documented actions to address child labor in 2023.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MoLSW): Enforces labor laws and investigates labor abuses, including child labor, through its Labor Inspection Division.

Eritrean Police: Enforce laws and investigate referred cases of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the use of children in illicit activities.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Unknown
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Eritrea established a mechanism to coordinate some efforts to address child labor. However, Eritrea lacks a coordination mechanism to address all worst forms of child labor.

Interagency Steering Committee on Trafficking and Migration: Aims to prevent and address human trafficking among vulnerable groups, including children. Includes representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MoLSW, the national police, the Immigration and Nationality Department, the National Union of Eritrean Women, and the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students. Research was unable to determine whether the Committee took actions to address or prevent child labor during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor Eritrea established a policy related to child labor. However, it is unknown whether the government implemented the policy during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Comprehensive National Child Policy: Addresses underlying causes of child labor through studies and assessments on the nature and conditions of child labor, designs advocacy and public awareness campaigns on the worst forms of child labor, and empowers communities and the public sector to monitor and prevent child labor from occurring. The policy calls for the provision of free and compulsory basic education to all children, irrespective of gender, sex, ethnicity, religion, or disability. The policy outlines the creation of a National Action Plan for the elimination of child labor, but this plan has not been drafted, leaving children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Although reports suggest that components of the policy are being implemented, research was unable to identify activities undertaken to implement the policy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Eritrea funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors, including in agriculture, domestic work, street work, and commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p><small>† Program is funded by the Government of Eritrea. ‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</small></p>	<p>Complementary Elementary Education:† Program created by the government in partnership with UNICEF in 2007 that addresses the educational needs of out-of-school children ages 9 to 14 in remote and rural areas by condensing 5 years of elementary education into a 3-year program to allow students to either integrate into formal education at the secondary level or access vocational education. Although research suggests that the program was active during the reporting period, research was unable to identify activities undertaken to implement the program during the reporting period.</p>
	<p>Better Migration Management: EU-led program encompassing 11 countries in North, Central, and East Africa; aims to address the international labor market, including the trafficking of children. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the program during the reporting period.</p>
	<p>Education Sector Development Plan (2022–2026): Establishes free and compulsory education for all children in elementary school and middle school. Includes a strategy to ensure equitable access to education for all children, including in nomadic communities, through the provision of portable classrooms. The plan, originally set to expire in 2022, was renewed during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Trade unions are not allowed to operate freely in Eritrea, and the only legally recognized trade union is the government affiliated National Confederation of Eritrean Workers. The government has also arrested, detained, and intimidated labor activists and individuals who attempted to organize independently. These factors have created an environment where workers' rights are routinely violated, workers earn sub-standard wages, and child labor often persists.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

ESWATINI

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Eswatini made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Department of Social Welfare launched a child protection and information management system to enhance data collection and standardize operating procedures for child protection across different government agencies. However, significant gaps in the legal framework remain, including a lack of legislation regulating the labor conditions under *Kuhlehla* and other customary practices. In addition, children who complete primary education between ages 12 to 14 are vulnerable to child labor, as they are not required to be in school but also cannot legally work because they are under age 15, the minimum age for work. The government also has not published comprehensive statistics on their labor law enforcement efforts.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	11.7% (35,368)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	92.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	13.0%

Children in Eswatini are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in the agriculture sector.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Rearing and herding livestock, including bovines.



Services

Domestic work; street work, including working as vendors, porters, and car washers.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced labor in livestock herding, domestic work, farming, portering, and market vending; commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, including growing drugs.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Eswatini's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminalize the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children under 18 are comprehensive and include herding.

Increase the compulsory education age to 15 to align with the minimum age for work.

Establish by law 9 years of free basic public education to cover lower secondary education for all children, including non-citizens.

Adopt legislation that regulates the work performed through traditional practices like *Kuhlehla* and ensure that the law explicitly states the voluntary nature of participation in such work.

Ensure laws provide criminal penalties for use of children in prostitution.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Enforcement

Collect and publish comprehensive statistics on labor law enforcement efforts, including information about the labor inspectorate’s budget, number of investigations, number of violations found, and the number of penalties imposed and collected.

Provide adequate resources, including transportation and fuel, to labor inspectors and criminal investigators so they can fulfill their mandates.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 17 to 27 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 399,100 workers.

Collect and publish comprehensive statistics on criminal enforcement efforts, including information about training for law enforcement personnel, number of investigations, number of prosecutions, number of convictions, and the number of penalties imposed and collected.

Coordination

Ensure that all coordinating bodies, including the Combating of Child Labor Task Force, are active and have the necessary resources to be able to fulfill their mandates as intended.

Government Policies

Implement child labor-related policies, including ensuring that the Action Program on Combating Child Labor in Eswatini is active and working towards the elimination of child labor.

Social Programs

Ensure that children are able to access free basic education, including by eliminating school fees for lower secondary and upper secondary education, reducing barriers related to obtaining documents required for enrollment, hiring the necessary number of teachers for all areas, and ensuring that schools are free from sexual violence.

Publish updates on the implementation of the Free Primary Education Program on an annual basis.

Ensure a minimum quality of standard care in shelters for survivors of child trafficking.

Develop social protection programs to assist children engaged in child labor in domestic work and informal agricultural work, including herding.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Boys perform physically arduous tasks while herding in the grasslands and mountainous regions, and risk occupational injury and disease from exposure to dangerous tools and chemicals. Traffickers exploit Swati and Mozambican boys in forced labor in agriculture, including cattle herding within the country. Injuries sustained during livestock herding include open wounds, fractures, dislocations and sprains, fever, extreme fatigue, and snake bites. In addition, there are reports that orphaned and vulnerable girls from poor families have been lured into sexual exploitation through promises of employment in neighboring countries, particularly South Africa.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The government provides funding for free primary education from grade one through grade seven and subsidizes secondary education for a portion of the approximately 70 percent of Eswatini’s children who are orphaned or vulnerable; barriers exist to receiving subsidized education including challenges in applying and obtaining documentation. At the lower secondary and upper secondary levels, however, the cost of school fees is a barrier for students whose families lack sufficient funds to sustain their enrollment. Primary schools frequently charge fees in excess of the government grant, requiring families to pay out of pocket. Free primary education grants are also only available to citizens, leaving refugee and migrant children susceptible to exploitation. In addition, there is a shortage of teachers in numerous areas throughout the country and there are difficulties accessing transportation in remote areas, especially during the rainy season.

Furthermore, the rate of children unregistered at birth for personal identification numbers remains high, and there were instances where the lack of national identification resulted in children not receiving the assistance they needed to be admitted into schools.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Eswatini has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Eswatini's laws do not meet international standards on compulsory education, free public education, and prohibition of military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Articles 2, 234, and 238 of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act; Section 2, 97, 98, and 109 of the Employment Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 236 and 238 of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act; Article 29 of the Constitution
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 2, 97, 98, and 109 of the Employment Act; Articles 2, 233, and 236–238 of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Sections 144 and 145 of the Employment Act; Articles 2, 12, and 13 of the People Trafficking and People Smuggling (Prohibition) Act; Article 17 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 2, 3, and 13 of the People Trafficking and People Smuggling (Prohibition) Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Sections 42–46 of the Crimes Act; Sections 2, 13–15, 24, and 25 of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act; Articles 2, 12, and 13 of the People Trafficking and People Smuggling (Prohibition) Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 16 and 49 of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Sections 5 and 17 of The Ubutfo Swaziland Defense Force Order
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Sections 5 and 17 of The Ubutfo Swaziland Defense Force Order
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, 12/13 Years ‡	✗	Section 10 of the Free Primary Education Act
Free Public Education	✗	Section 3, 6, 7, and 10 of the Free Primary Education Act

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Section 10 of the Free Primary Education Act requires parents to send their children to school for the completion of primary education, which is typically around ages 12 or 13. As a result, children who complete primary education between ages 12 to 14 are vulnerable to child labor, as they are not required to be in school but also cannot legally work because they are under age 15, the minimum age for

unrestricted work. In addition, the Free Primary Education Act funds schooling for citizens for 7 years. The failure to provide free basic education, which is 9 years and includes lower secondary education under international standards, may increase the risk of children’s involvement in the worst forms of child labor. Laws related to commercial sexual exploitation of children do not meet international standards because the use of children in prostitution is not criminalized.

While there is some identification of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children based on the current legislation, the list is not comprehensive to all hazardous jobs in Eswatini. For example, the Employment Law does not cover herding, for which there is evidence of exposure to dangerous substances and temperatures. In addition, reports indicated that local chiefs required residents, including children, to participate in non-communal tasks such as seasonal weeding. This work was performed through the customary practice of *Kuhlehla*, a practice in which people render services to the local chief or king. The ILO has requested that the government issue legislation to regulate the nature and conditions of *Kuhlehla* and ensure that the law explicitly states the voluntary nature of participation in such work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Eswatini took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of financial and human resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Security: Enforces child labor laws and promotes relations between labor, government, and business through tripartite dialogue. Accepts walk-ins and written complaints from workers, as well as complaints from other government agencies. In 2023, coordinated with agencies working on child labor issues, including the Prime Minister’s Trafficking in Persons Office, Human Rights Commission, and Social Welfare Department in the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office.

Royal Eswatini Police Services: Investigates cases involving the worst forms of child labor and informs victims of sexual offenses, including commercial sexual exploitation, of available counseling and other support services. In March, 25 government officials, including representatives from the Royal Eswatini Police Services, attended a 5-day training organized by the International Organization for Migration Development Fund. This training included sessions on child migration and trafficking in persons.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **17** labor inspectors conducted **1,242** worksite inspections. It is **unknown** how many investigations were conducted into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, whether any prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Eswatini established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is confusion about mandates that reduces efficacy.

Combating of Child Labor and Anti-Human Trafficking Task Forces: The Combating of Child Labor Task Force is a multi-sectoral team comprising different ministries along with private members and NGOs. Responsible for overseeing the Action Program on Combating Child Labor in Eswatini and takes the lead on child labor issues throughout the country. In 2023, the Department of Social Welfare, a member of the Combating of Child Labor Task Force, launched the Primero Child Protection and Information Management System, which aims to enhance data collection and standardize operating procedures for child protection across different government agencies. Despite this effort, the Combating of Child Labor Task Force did not regularly meet in 2023. In addition, the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force formulates policies and programs to prevent and suppress human trafficking and people smuggling, including programs to help survivors and raise awareness of the issue, and shares information on human trafficking cases with the police, immigration officers, social workers, and prosecutors. However, resource constraints and a lack of coordination between the two task forces has impacted their effectiveness and resulted in confusion about their mandates.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Eswatini established a policy related to child labor. However, it is unclear if this policy is being implemented.

Action Program on Combating Child Labor in Eswatini (2021–2026):

Outlines key strategies that the government should use to prevent children from engaging in child labor and for withdrawing those already in child labor situations. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out to implement the plan during the reporting period.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Eswatini funded and participated in a program that includes the goal of preventing child labor. However, this social program is inadequate because it does not address the full scope of the child labor problem.

Free Primary Education Program:[†] Provides funding to ensure free primary education to children for a period of 7 years, starting from age 6 and ending at seventh grade. While the program was still active during the reporting period, there were reports that schools were charging additional fees, making the program less effective.

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Eswatini.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects



WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

In Eswatini, freedom of association and collective bargaining rights are limited, with authorities supporting pro-government unions and denying registration to independent unions. The Commissioner of Labor must approve union registrations. Further, workers in export processing zones (EPZ) are prohibited from forming unions. Finally, strikes are only permitted if disputes are unresolved. There have also been instances of police using excessive force against trade unionists during protests, leading to injuries and arrests. These actions have created an environment of fear that hinders workers' ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ETHIOPIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Ethiopia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government ratified a Directive to Implement the Reintegration of Victim Migrant Returnees, Number 969/2023, which assigns responsibilities to institutions and includes procedures to follow for the reintegration of human trafficking survivors, including children. The government also approved a new Education and Training Policy, which provides for free universal compulsory education from pre-school through the 12th grade. In addition, the government inspected over 140 recruitment agencies for child trafficking, resulting in the issuance of 178 sanctions and 72 revoked licenses. Regional education bureaus also collaborated with the United Nations Children’s Fund and non-governmental organizations to provide formal and non-formal education and educational materials to 184,993 children in emergency-affected regions. Despite these efforts, Ethiopia’s laws do not meet international standards because they do not criminalize the use of a child for commercial sexual exploitation, and they allow children ages 15 and 16 to engage in hazardous work. In addition, hazardous work protections do not extend to traditional weaving, an area of work in which there is evidence that children use dangerous machinery, equipment, and tools. Ethiopian law also does not include free basic education or a compulsory age for the completion of education, leaving children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Also, social programs to address child labor do not sufficiently target sectors with high incidences of child labor, including agriculture and domestic work. Finally, a boy was detained by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces for alleged association with armed groups; the United Nations Report on Children in Armed Conflict has verified that the captive child was subsequently killed.

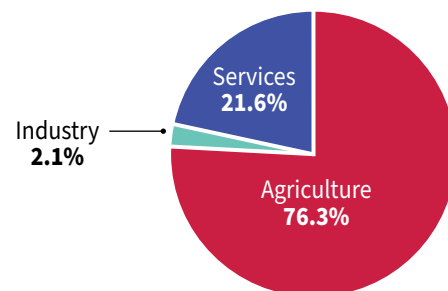


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	24.3% (6,761,640)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	42.6% (2,841,622)
Attending School	5 to 14	56.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	16.3%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Ethiopia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor in domestic work and in commercial sexual exploitation. Children also perform dangerous tasks in traditional weaving.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Planting and harvesting *khat* (stimulant plant), herding cattle, and fishing.



Industry

Mining† gold and quarrying.† Producing handicrafts, including traditional handwoven textiles.



Services

Domestic work and unpaid household services, including carrying heavy loads† of water and firewood. Street work,

including shoe shining, weight measurement, assisting taxi drivers, vending, portering, and begging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, forced begging, street vending, construction, and traditional weaving.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Ethiopia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminally prohibit the use of a child for commercial sexual exploitation.

Raise the minimum age at which children may perform dangerous tasks during vocational training to age 16, in line with ILO Convention 138.

Prohibit all types of hazardous work for children that require the use of dangerous machinery, equipment, and tools—including traditional weaving—in compliance with ILO Convention 138.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Establish by law free basic education.

Establish by law a compulsory education age that extends to the minimum age for employment of 15 years.

Enforcement

Ensure that children associated with armed groups are referred to social services providers and cease the practice of detaining children as adults.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 537 to 964 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 38.6 million workers.

Provide labor inspectors sufficient resources to conduct inspections in all sectors, including offices, transportation, fuel, personal protective clothing, and equipment for measuring hazardous conditions.

Publish labor law enforcement information, including labor inspectorate funding, penalties imposed and collected for child labor violations, and cases of worst forms of child labor identified and referred for criminal prosecution.

Significantly increase the capacity of labor inspectors by providing additional training on international child labor standards and strengthen coordination between national and regional enforcement agencies.

Increase funding for criminal enforcement agencies, provide criminal inspectors with training on laws related to the worst forms of child labor, and publish criminal law enforcement information, including the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, and perpetrators convicted for worst forms of child labor crimes.

Investigate both domestic and transnational child trafficking cases, raise awareness of the criminality of child trafficking and worst forms of child labor, including the recruitment of children for armed conflict. Investigate and prosecute all perpetrators through the judicial system.

Coordination

Clarify individual mandates for participants in the National Steering Committee to enhance inter-committee communication, coordination, and collaboration.

Provide adequate funding to coordinating bodies so that they may effectively coordinate activities related to the worst forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Development Program, National Technical & Vocational Education & Training Strategy, and National Youth Policy.

Publish activities undertaken to implement key policies related to child labor on an annual basis, including the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Social Programs

Repair and reopen school buildings, remove all armed groups from educational facilities, and protect the peaceful gathering of students and teachers for schooling.

Increase education access for all children by removing fees for uniforms, supplies, and food; ensure student safety en route to and from school; ensure a sufficient number of teachers, and sanitation facilities, especially for girls; and end the use of corporal punishment. Finally, accommodate language needs for children, especially the internally displaced children, who may not speak the local language.

Provide training to teachers and ensure that schools are accessible so students with disabilities are able to attend classes.

Ensure that the social services necessary to prevent and eradicate child labor, such as rehabilitation and reintegration centers, are available throughout the country, and develop or expand social protection programs to address child labor in all sectors, including in agriculture and domestic work.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

An estimated 200,000 children are living and working in the streets of Ethiopia, with a further 1 million children at risk of being on the street. Children living on the street are at significant risk of exploitation and abuse and are sometimes recruited by private businesses for child labor and criminal groups to commit illegal activities. Further, ongoing internal armed conflict, drought, and flooding has created an estimated 2.73 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and an additional 924,000 refugees throughout the country in 2023, including children. Internally displaced children are at higher risk of engaging in child labor due to a lack of educational and economic opportunities.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Internal armed conflict or natural disasters prevent an estimated 3.6 million children from obtaining an education in Ethiopia. Research indicates that approximately 9,382 schools have been partially or entirely damaged, and 4,262 schools have been forced to close due to these crises. Specifically, children in the Amhara, Afar, Tigray, and Oromia regions face abduction, kidnapping, sexual violence, unexploded military munitions, and recruitment by armed groups on their way to and from school. The United Nations verified 12 armed attacks on schools, as well as military appropriation of educational facilities by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and the Tigrayan forces. In addition, children throughout the country face other barriers to education, including the requirement to pay for uniforms and supplies, a lack of teachers, gender-based violence on the way to and from school, lack of sanitary facilities for menstruation, long distances to schools, and corporal punishment in schools. While students with disabilities are not denied access to education, they do face additional barriers, including insufficient infrastructure and lack of trained teachers and professionals to support them. Finally, language barriers present obstacles for children, especially IDP children, who may not speak the local languages.







LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Ethiopia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Ethiopia’s laws do not meet international standards on prohibitions against hazardous work because the law allows children aged 15 and up to engage in certain forms of hazardous work during a government-approved and inspected vocational training course.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 4.1, 89.1, 89.2, 90, and 186(e) of the Labor Proclamation 1156/2019
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 15 Years		Article 36.1(d) of the Constitution; Article 89 of the Labor Proclamation 1156/2019
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 89.3, 89.4, and 186.1 of the Labor Proclamation 1156/2019; Directive on the Restating of Activities Prohibited for Young Workers No. 813/2021
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 18.3 of the Constitution; Articles 596, 597, and 637 of the Criminal Code; Articles 2–4 and 6 of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178-2020
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 18.2 of the Constitution; Articles 597 and 635–637 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3.1–3.5 and 4.1 of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178-2020
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 634–636 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3.1–3.5 and 4.1 of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178-2020
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 525 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3.1–3.5 and 4.1 of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178-2020

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years ‡		Article 270 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1–4.3 of the Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants
Compulsory Education Age		
Free Public Education		

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In May 2023, the government ratified the Victims of Trafficking Reintegration Directive No. 969/2023, which assigns responsibilities to institutions and includes the procedures that institutions should follow for the reintegration of human trafficking survivors. This directive lays out procedures for the repatriation and reintegration of children and families of Ethiopian nationality who are survivors of human trafficking. While Ethiopia has a hazardous work list, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children does not include traditional weaving, an area of work in which there is evidence that children use dangerous machinery, equipment, and tools. Moreover, Article 89.5 of the Labor Proclamation allows children aged 15 and up to engage in certain forms of hazardous work during a government-approved and inspected vocational training course. This contradicts ILO Convention 138, which prohibits hazardous work for all children under the age of 16. Lastly, while the Ministry of Education has a policy encouraging public funding of education, Ethiopian laws do not guarantee free public education or set a compulsory age for education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Ethiopia took actions to address child labor. However, inadequate funding for law enforcement agencies hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS): Conducts labor inspections of formal worksites through its federal and regional Bureaus of Labor and Skills. Through its National Referral Mechanism, MOLS coordinates the referral of survivors to social services providers. In 2023, MOLS conducted a full internal audit of the Bureau of Labor and Industry, Economy, and Development’s supervision of recruitment agencies, which serve as a major channel for internal and international child trafficking in Ethiopia. Monitoring inspections were also made at over 140 recruitment agencies, which led to 178 sanctions and 72 licenses revoked.

Criminal Enforcement Agencies: The Ethiopian Ministry of Justice prosecutes criminal violations of child labor laws, including through its Special Investigative Unit for Women and Children. The Ethiopian Federal Police Commission also enforces criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It addresses child trafficking and assists vulnerable children through its Special Child Protection Units in Addis Ababa. Cases are referred to the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, which develops and implements programs to protect vulnerable children, maintains rehabilitation centers, and coordinates foster families for children rescued from the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **537** labor inspectors conducted **46,603** worksite inspections, finding **122 child** labor violations. The government identified **102** suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor identified; however, it is **unknown** whether investigations were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Ethiopia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, overlapping mandates, limited budgets, and ineffective collaboration among key agencies hindered coordination efforts.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: The committee develops action plans and coordinates activities to address the worst forms of child labor. In 2023, the committee met twice, and its working group met quarterly.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Ethiopia established policies related to child labor. However, no activity to implement the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor was reported.</p> <p><i>† The government approved the policy during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2021–2025): Includes guidelines on child labor identification, withdrawal, reintegration, and education. Overseen by the National Steering Committee on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and created with input from government ministries, the ILO, the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions, the Confederation of Ethiopian Employers Federation, and other NGOs. MOLS did not provide any update on the status of this national action plan for the reporting period.</p> <p>Five-Year Strategic Plan for Migration Management (2021–2025): Aims to prevent and suppress trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants; supports safe, humane, and orderly migration; and supports efforts to reduce child labor as it occurs in the context of human trafficking and migration. In 2023, the government continued to carry out activities under this plan and partnered with the International Organization for Migration to conduct a midterm evaluation of the National Strategic Plan, with the final report expected to be presented in mid-May 2024.</p> <p>Education and Training Policy 2023:[†] Promotes universal free, compulsory education from pre-K to 12th grade. This plan was approved in 2023.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)**Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Ethiopia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors, including in agriculture and street work.

† Program is co-funded by the Government of Ethiopia.

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

Freedom Fund: Works to reduce the prevalence of children in domestic work with cooperation from the Government of Ethiopia and the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. In 2023, the project conducted outreach activities with over 6,500 employers, which resulted in improved treatment of children in domestic work. The project also set up referral systems in 2 bus stations and trained over 200 transport workers to detect cases of child trafficking. As a result, over 100 children were identified and referred to relevant services. In addition, over 550 child domestic workers received care and support at shelters, with 262 children successfully reunited with their families. Services provided included vocational training for 205 children, catch-up classes for 535 children at risk of domestic servitude, and training for 361 enforcement officials on how to protect child domestic workers and enforce the rule of law.

Multilateral Projects: The Ethiopia General Education Quality Improvement Program for Equity (2017–2025)† is a \$583 million World Bank-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education and development partners to improve education quality and access. In 2023, the project increased primary education enrollment rates and improved the girl-to-boy ratio in grade 8. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) funded initiatives, including Child-to-Child and Accelerated School Readiness programs, which extended educational opportunities to internally displaced children. In June 2023, Ethiopia and the World Bank signed a \$400 million agreement to establish the Human Capital Operation, a program focused on providing nutrition and education in drought-affected areas and refugee-hosting communities, expected to impact 7 million Ethiopians and 800,000 refugees. UNICEF, the Swedish International Development Agency, and MOLS also jointly funded the Urban Productive Safety Net Program, which aims to address nutritional and educational outcomes in Amhara and Addis Ababa through cash transfers and linking participants to basic social services. In October 2023 alone, Regional Education Bureaus collaborated with UNICEF and NGO partners to provide over 68,000 children in emergency-affected regions with formal or non-formal education. Additionally, a total of 184,993 children benefitted from the provision of educational materials.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

**WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Anti-union practices among employers are common in Ethiopia, and the government has placed restrictions on the right to strike and to collective bargaining. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses may go undetected.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



FALKLAND ISLANDS (ISLAS MALVINAS)

NO ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), in 2023, the government made no advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. In addition, although labor inspections are a key tool for identifying child labor violations and their absence makes children more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, there is no functioning labor inspectorate in the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) to enforce labor laws. Moreover, the minimum age of 14 for work and 16 for hazardous work are not in compliance with international standards, and the law does not prohibit adults from using, procuring, and offering a child for the production and trafficking of drugs.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas).



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Falkland Islands' (Islas Malvinas) implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Raise the minimum age for hazardous work from 16 to 18 and ensure that national law determines prohibited work activities for children.

Criminally prohibit the harboring and receipt of trafficked children.

Criminalize the use, procurement, and offering of a child for pornographic performances.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Enforcement












Establish a labor inspectorate to enforce labor laws, including laws pertaining to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Each United Kingdom (UK) overseas territory has its own constitution, which sets out its system of government and its relationship with the UK, and provides for a governor or commissioner, an elected legislature, and ministers that are responsible for domestic affairs, such as internal security (police), immigration, education, and healthcare. The Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) has its own Constitution, and the legislative framework consists of Ordinances made by the Falkland Islands Legislative Assembly and applied enactments from the United Kingdom which the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) has chosen to apply or which are directly applied. Under Article 35(4) of the ILO Constitution, when the UK ratifies a Convention, the Territory must consider if it will accept the Convention. If the Convention is accepted, it is considered applicable to that Territory. While the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (ILO C. 182) have been extended to and accepted by the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), it has not ratified other key

international conventions concerning child labor, including ILO C. 138, UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, the laws of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) do not meet international standards on prohibitions related to hazardous work, the use of children in illicit activities, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Section 3 of the Employment of Children Ordinance
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 16 Years		Section 3 of the Employment of Children Ordinance; Sections 2, 3, and 4A of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Section 3 of the Employment of Children Ordinance; Section 3 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Section 117 of the Crimes Ordinance of 2014; Chapter 1, Section 4 of the Constitution Order
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Section 87 of the Crimes Ordinance of 2014; Part 1, Sections 57–60 of the Sexual Offenses Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 259–263 of the Crimes Ordinance of 2014; Part 1 of the Sexual Offenses Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 17 Years		Article 10 of the Falkland Islands Defense Ordinance
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Part I, Section 7(3) of the Education (Governance and Accountability) Ordinance; Chapter 1, Section 12 of the Constitution Order
Free Public Education		Chapter 1, Section 12 of the Constitution Order

*Country has no conscription

The minimum age of 14 for work and the minimum age of 16 for hazardous work are not in compliance with international standards. In addition, the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. The Government of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, other than industrial undertakings. Laws do not define harboring or receipt of a child as a form of human trafficking and therefore laws against child trafficking do not meet international standards. International standards against commercial sexual exploitation of children are not met because the law does not criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child for pornographic performances. The law also does not prohibit adults from using, procuring, or offering a child for the production or trafficking of drugs. In addition, there is no existing law that criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) has established an institutional mechanism for the enforcement of laws related to the worst forms of child labor. However, the absence of a labor inspectorate may impede the enforcement of child labor laws.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

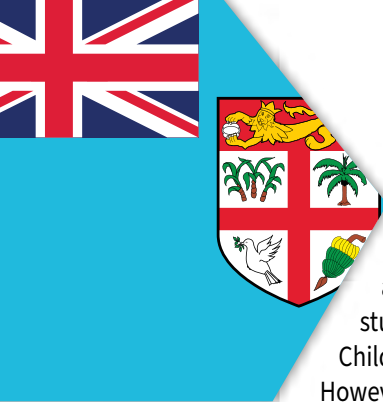
Royal Falkland Islands Police: Enforce the laws of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), including those protecting children against abuses. Participate in the Safeguarding Children Board and lead the Board’s trainings on understanding child sexual exploitation.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a child labor problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a child labor problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) has established a social program that includes a goal of preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Early Help Service: Administered by Social Services Department. Provides material and financial assistance to vulnerable households with children.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



FIJI

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Fiji made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government allocated \$45 million to launch the “Back to School Support” program, which directly provides \$200 to each student to spend on school-related items. The government also increased the budget for the Ministry of Women, Children, and Poverty Alleviation by approximately \$18 million to support the Ministry’s various social programs. However, despite these efforts to address child labor, Fiji’s light work provisions are not specific enough to prevent children from being involved in child labor. Furthermore, research was unable to determine whether the government has established a policy to reduce and eliminate child labor or whether Fiji’s coordinating body was active during the reporting period.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	29.3% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	97.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	50.0%

Children in Fiji are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture and fishing.†



Services

Engaged in begging, domestic work, street work, including vending and washing cars. Also working in garages, retail shops, and roadside stalls; garbage scavenging;‡ and collecting scrap metal.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Also forced labor in domestic work and use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Fiji’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law’s light work provisions specify the activities in which light work may be undertaken for children aged 13 to 15.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Ensure labor inspectors receive adequate training to fully understand child labor and forced labor laws, including indicators of forced labor.

Publish labor law enforcement information, including the amount of funding allocated for the labor inspectorate, if training for new labor inspectors was provided, if unannounced inspections were conducted, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of child labor penalties imposed.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies, including the Fiji Police Department, receive adequate anti-trafficking training.

Publish criminal law enforcement information, including whether investigations into worst forms of child labor violations were conducted and whether penalties were imposed.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies, such as the Fiji Police Department, investigate worst forms of child labor violations in high-risk sectors, including commercial sexual exploitation in hotels and on private yachts.

Coordination

Publish activities undertaken by the National Coordinating Committee on Children to ensure it is able to carry out its intended mandates.

Government Policies

Publish activities undertaken to implement the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking.

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work.

Social Programs

Institute a program to provide support services for children removed from the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and forced domestic work; and provide them with social services such as housing, medical care, psychological support, and job skills training.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, by ensuring that school lunch, uniforms, footwear, and supplies are provided for children whose families cannot afford these essentials.

Improve access to education for children in remote areas by establishing schools nearer to these communities or by improving access to adequate technology to allow for remote learning.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Some families living in rural villages or on Fiji’s outer islands follow a traditional practice of sending children to live with relatives in larger cities where education is more easily accessible. However, this practice puts some children at risk of domestic servitude and labor trafficking, including being coerced to engage in sexual activity in exchange for food, clothing, shelter, or school fees.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Despite the government launching the “Back to School Support” program, which directly provides \$200 to each student to spend on school-related items, financial barriers inhibit low-income parents from sending their children to school due to the cost of supplies, including stationery, footwear, uniforms, and meals. In remote areas, children often have difficulty accessing schools and face telecommunication and internet connectivity issues. Finally, the impact of natural disasters, such as floods, on critical infrastructure like roads and school buildings can limit students’ access to online learning materials.













LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Fiji has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Fiji’s laws do not meet the international standard on light work because its light work framework does not prescribe activities that are permissible for children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 92 of the Employment Relations Promulgation
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 40 of the Employment Relations (Administration) Regulations; Hazardous Occupations Prohibited to Children Under 18 Years of Age Order

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Hazardous Occupations Prohibited to Children Under 18 Years of Age Order
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 6 and 91 of the Employment Relations Promulgation; Article 21 of the Immigration Act; Articles 103, 118, and 119 of the Crimes Decree
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 91 and 256 of the Employment Relations Promulgation; Articles 2, 17–20, 22, and Schedule 2 of the Immigration Act; Articles 114, 117, and 120 of the Crimes Decree
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 91 of the Employment Relations Promulgation; Articles 225–227 of the Crimes Decree; Article 62A of the Juveniles (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 91 of the Employment Relations Promulgation; Article 58 of the Juveniles Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years		Article 7 of the Royal Fiji Military Forces Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	 *	Article 7 of the Royal Fiji Military Forces Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Compulsory Education Orders 1997, 1998, and 1999; Compulsory Education Regulations 1997, Art. 3
Free Public Education		Part 9 of the Fiji Education Act 1978

*Country has no conscription

The Employment Relations Promulgation specifies the conditions under which children ages 13 to 15 may engage in light work, but it does not include a list of activities that are permissible. Additionally, Article 7 of the Royal Fiji Military Force Act permits the commander to recruit children as young as 16 into the military and does not provide safeguards to ensure voluntary recruitment. Military recruitment of children by non-state armed groups is also not prohibited. Finally, although in practice free education is provided to children in Fiji, Part 9 of the Education Act of 1978 allows fees to be charged.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Fiji took actions to address child labor. However, the government did not publish data on its labor and criminal law enforcement activities.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment, Productivity, and Industrial Relations (MEPIR): Enforces and ensures compliance with child labor laws and monitoring the status of child labor employment. Under the Employment Relations Promulgation, MEPIR labor inspectors can conduct workplace inspections to identify child labor law violations and issue penalties for breaches of child labor laws. Maintains a 24-hour phone line to accept reports of child labor and refers children to social services when appropriate. MEPIR did not provide data on child labor cases and inspections for this report.

Fiji Police Force: Investigates criminal violations related to child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation. Operates an Anti-Human Trafficking Unit to investigate all forms of trafficking activities.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, 36 labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Fiji established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the government did not report specific activities undertaken during the reporting period.

National Coordinating Committee on Children: Coordinates child labor and child safety enforcement efforts. Comprises the Fiji Police Force, the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the Solicitor General’s Office, the Department of Social Welfare, MEPIR, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and NGOs that work on child labor issues.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Fiji established a policy related to child labor. However, this policy does not cover all worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic service.

‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2021–2026): Sets yearly targets to achieve the goals outlined in the Human Trafficking Strategy. Includes a special focus on assisting child survivors of trafficking and other objectives such as strengthening counter-human trafficking mechanisms, protecting survivors, suppressing criminal networks, prosecuting traffickers, and sharing intelligence to address the sexual exploitation of children.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Fiji funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors, including in commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and domestic servitude.

* Program was launched during the reporting period.
 † Program is funded by the Government of Fiji.
 ‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Education Assistance Programs:† Funding for education, including the Free Education Grant which ensures that all children with Fiji citizenship have access to free and compulsory primary education, increased in the reporting period. Additionally, the government launched the Back-to-School Support* plan, which provides \$200 for students to spend on school-related items and allocated \$45 million in the 2023–2024 budget to support the initiative.

Social Programs Provided by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA):† MWCPA provides support for Fiji’s Poverty Benefit Scheme, the Child Protection and Disability Allowance Programs, the Social Pension Scheme, and the Food Voucher Scheme. The MWCPA was allocated a budget of \$88 million for its activities in the fiscal year 2022–2023, an increase of approximately \$18 million from the previous fiscal budget.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

GABON

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Gabon made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The transition government, which took power in August 2023, drafted revisions to the Penal Code that would increase penalties for child trafficking, eliminated school fees through secondary school, and increased exponentially the budget allocation for education to improve access to free public education. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Gabon is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because the government failed to provide evidence it conducted worksite inspections during the reporting period. Labor inspections are a key tool for identifying child labor violations, and their absence makes children more vulnerable to child labor. Gabon's 2021 Labor Code decreased the minimum age for some forms of hazardous work from age 18 to 16 without providing the necessary safeguards to ensure children ages 16 and 17 performing dangerous tasks are protected. Gabonese laws regarding minimum age for work also only apply to children in formal employment relationships, which does not conform to international standards that require all children to be protected by the minimum age for work. In addition, Gabon does not have a policy that addresses all relevant forms of child labor and lacks social programs to address the full scope of the problem, including child labor in domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	22.3% (83,073)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	94.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	23.3%

Children in Gabon are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in domestic work.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in fishing.



Industry

Quarrying† and manufacturing of construction materials.



Services

Domestic work; street work, including windshield cleaning, street vending, and cleaning market spaces at night; garbage scavenging; working as microbus transportation assistants† and as mechanics.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in markets, restaurants, handicraft shops, quarries, mining, farming, animal husbandry, fishing, domestic work, begging, and as mechanics. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as the result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Gabon’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that minimum age protections are extended to all children regardless of employment relationship.

Ensure that children under age 18 who are engaged in hazardous work receive adequate training in the type of work being done and that the health, safety, and morals of the child are protected in accordance with international standards.

Ensure that the legal framework for light work establishes a minimum age no younger than age 13, determines activities that are considered light work, and specifies the conditions under which light work may be undertaken.

Establish criminal prohibitions for the recruitment of children under age 18 for use in armed conflict by non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Conduct worksite inspections, including routine and unannounced inspections in both the formal and informal sectors, to identify child labor violations.

Publish complete information on civil law enforcement efforts to address child labor, including the funding level for the labor inspectorate, the number of labor inspectors employed, the number of inspections conducted, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of penalties imposed and collected.

Employ at least 49 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage for the labor force of approximately 740,000 people.

Ensure sufficient funding is allocated to the labor inspectorate, labor inspector salaries are paid regularly, and inspectors have the material resources they need to fulfill their mandate.

Ensure that labor inspectors are not tasked with conciliation or arbitration duties so that they can carry out their primary duties of inspection and monitoring throughout the country.

Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints from the public.

Ensure that the government conducts an adequate number of criminal investigations into alleged child labor crimes and publish data on criminal law enforcement efforts.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement bodies, including the courts, have sufficient resources and training to investigate, prosecute, and impose penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure the Interministerial Committee for the Fight Against Child Trafficking has the funding, capacity, and mandate to operate as intended and coordinate efforts to address the worst forms of child labor in Gabon.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, including forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.

Social Programs

Ensure that children have access to education by increasing the number of teachers and schools in rural areas.

Expand efforts to ensure all children have access to identity documentation, including by expanding birth registration opportunities for children born in rural areas and providing opportunities for undocumented migrant children to obtain identity documentation.

Expand programs to address the scope of the country’s child labor problem, including in domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

Ensure that the government provides adequate support to survivors of child labor, including sufficient shelter space and services.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Undocumented migrant children who come to Gabon from other African countries, including Benin, Togo, Cameroon, Mali, Guinea, and Nigeria, are at increased risk of child labor. Whether they are travelling with their families or alone, their lack of identity documentation makes them vulnerable to exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While public education in Gabon is free, there are insufficient teachers and schools to serve all children, especially in rural areas. In addition, children living in rural areas where government officials do not operate may not receive birth certificates, which are required for school enrollment.





LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Gabon has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Gabon's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work, since protections only cover children in formal employment relationships; on hazardous work since the country fails to ensure that the health, safety, and morals of children aged 16 and 17 are protected; or on the prohibition of the recruitment of children for use in armed conflict by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 7, 214, and 233 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Decree Establishing Individual Exceptions to the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 16 Years		Article 214 of the Labor Code; Articles 1-3 and 5 of the Hazardous Work List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2, 3, and 5 of the Hazardous Work List
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 225 to 225-6 of the Penal Code; Articles 3, 12, and 13 of the Law Preventing and Fighting Against Child Trafficking; Articles 4 and 5 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 3, 11–14, and 20 of the Law Preventing and Fighting Against Child Trafficking; Articles 225 to 225-7 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 225 to 225-6, 260, 261, 263, and 281-3 to 281-5 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 281-1 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years		Article 97 of the Child Code; Article 185 of the Order on the Particular Status of Members of the Military
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 97 of the Child Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 1 of the Constitution; Article 2 of the Law on General Education; Article 340-6 of the Penal Code
Free Public Education		Articles 1.18 and 1.19 of the Constitution; Article 2 of the Law on General Education

* Country has no conscription

Although Gabon’s Labor Code prohibits employment of children under age 16, minimum age protections do not apply to children outside of formal work relationships, which does not conform to international standards that require all children be protected under the law. In addition, the minimum age of 16 for hazardous work is not in compliance with international standards because Gabon fails to ensure that children receive adequate training and fails to protect the health, safety, and morals of the child in accordance with international standards. Furthermore, Gabon’s light work provision permits children under age 16 to perform light work with parental permission, but it does not set a minimum age, determine the activities in which light work may be permitted, or specify the conditions in which light work may be undertaken.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, criminal law enforcement agencies in Gabon took actions to address child labor. However, the absence of worksite inspections conducted at the national level and insufficient resource allocations to both civil and criminal enforcement agencies hindered the enforcement of child labor laws.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Fight Against Unemployment: Responsible for receiving, investigating, and addressing child labor complaints. Includes special inspection units for mining and agriculture. According to the Labor Code, local labor inspectors are required to submit periodic reports on their activities, and the central authority is required to publish annual labor inspection reports. However, the government has yet to collect the required statistics and publish such a report.

Ministry of the Interior’s Police Force: Enforces laws, investigates violations of the worst forms of child labor, and refers cases to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. Refers survivors of child trafficking to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, which connects them to government-supported, NGO-operated shelters for vulnerable children to receive medical and psychosocial services, legal assistance, and education. Enforcement was hindered by a lack of financial resources, including for judicial personnel.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	No
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, an **unknown** number of labor inspectors conducted **0** worksite inspections, thereby finding **0** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

While a labor inspectorate does exist in Gabon, the government again failed to provide evidence it conducted worksite inspections during the reporting period. Research suggests that irregular pay undermines inspectors’ ability and willingness to perform their duties. Without an active practice of conducting worksite inspections, Gabon allows employers to exploit child laborers with impunity.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Gabon established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the mechanism’s inactivity has hindered the efficacy of the government’s coordination efforts.</p>	<p>Interministerial Committee for the Fight Against Child Trafficking: Created in 2001 to serve as the key reporting, referral, and coordinating mechanism for cases involving the worst forms of child labor. Includes representatives from all relevant ministries, including Justice, Interior, Family, Foreign Affairs, and Labor, as well as local NGOs. Due to its inactive status since 2019, the Ministries of Justice and Health have been coordinating the government’s child labor efforts on a <i>de facto</i> basis.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Gabon established a policy related to child labor. However, the policy does not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.</p>	<p>United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperative Framework for Gabon (UNSDCF) 2023–2028: Comprehensive framework for advancing sustainable development goals. Adopted in 2022 and includes the aim of improving access to education for the most vulnerable children by increasing government spending on education, increasing the proportion of schools with separate sanitation facilities, and ensuring a safe learning environment. In 2023, the transition government substantially increased the education budget for the next fiscal year, announced the elimination of all school fees through secondary school, and capped the price of uniforms.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Gabon participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem.</p>	<p>Shelters for Children in Need: Provide social services to survivors of child trafficking. Children receive medical care, literacy training, and reintegration support. The government provides in-kind assistance, including government social workers and medical supplies, to shelters run by civil society organizations. However, research indicates that shelter space and funding are insufficient to accommodate all victims of the worst forms of child labor.</p> <p>UNICEF Programs: Include support for birth registration, education access, child protection, and population data collection and analysis. In 2023, with the support of UNICEF, the government received technical assistance in data collection on child poverty to improve service planning and provision, substantially increased budget allocations for education, and issued birth certificates to children in 5,621 stateless families.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

THE GAMBIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, The Gambia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, in partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund and the Education Above All Foundation, launched the Zero Out of School Children project, which aims to ensure that out-of-school children and adolescents have access to quality primary education. The government also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Nigeria to coordinate efforts to address human trafficking, including child trafficking, through legal, enforcement, and prevention and awareness activities. Finally, the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons established a national hotline and expanded their investigation team. However, gaps remain in the country’s legal framework, including that the minimum age for work of 18 years old is higher than the compulsory education age of 16 years old. The Gambia also lacked resources to conduct adequate enforcement efforts and has insufficient social programs to address child labor.

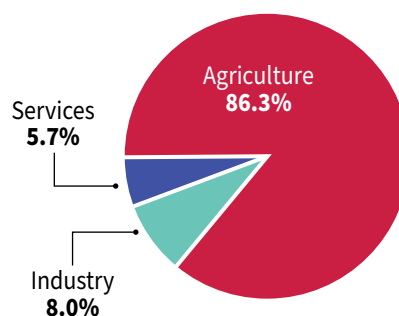


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	23.0% (154,677)
Boys		23.2%
Girls		22.9%
Urban		9.7%
Rural		38.5%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	36.4% (62,331)
Boys		34.3%
Girls		38.4%
Urban		22.0%
Rural		57.8%
Attending School	5 to 14	72.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	17.8%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in The Gambia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in forced begging.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including protecting crops against animals.



Industry

Working in carpentry, masonry, sewing, plumbing, and in metal welding workshops.†



Services

Domestic work and street work, including begging and vending. Scavenging at dump sites, markets, and

car parks. Working as attendants to commercial vehicles in the transportation sector, and working as auto mechanics.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging by Koranic teachers. Forced labor in domestic work and street vending.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in The Gambia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law’s light work and child apprenticeship provisions specify the activities and conditions in which work may be undertaken and prescribe the number of hours per week such work may be undertaken.

Establish by law a compulsory education age of 18 years old to align with the minimum age for work, which is 18 years.

Enforcement

Ensure that agencies responsible for labor law and criminal law enforcement—including the Department of Labor and the Children’s Court—are active, have adequate resources and funding to fulfill their mandates, and conduct inspections in all sectors, including at private homes and farms.

Publish information on labor inspectorate funding, whether unannounced or routine inspections were conducted, whether penalties imposed for child labor violations, whether criminal investigations for worst forms of child labor crimes were conducted, and whether penalties were imposed for worst forms of child labor crimes.

Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating routine inspections rather than performing inspections solely based on complaints received and ensure these inspections target sectors in which child labor is known to occur.

Employ at least 23 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 936,600 workers.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement officers receive training related to child labor and ensure training covers all worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and the use of children in illicit activity.

Ensure that criminal penalties for the worst forms of child labor are consistently applied to deter violations.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Coordination Committee on Child Labor is active and able to carry out its intended mandate of coordinating child labor enforcement processes, including prosecutions of the worst forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Ensure activities are undertaken to implement the Code of Conduct of The Gambia Tourism Authority for the Protection of Children and The Gambia’s Memorandum of Understanding with Senegal and publish results from activities implemented during the reporting period.

Adopt, implement, and publish the National Child Labor Policy, and ensure it addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor.

Provide public copies of policies addressing child labor, including the Ethical Recruitment Policy Guidelines, Pre-Departure Training Manual, and the Labor Migration Strategy.

Social Programs

Ensure that children can complete compulsory schooling by subsidizing or defraying the cost of supplies, uniforms, transportation, and other fees.

Enhance opportunities for children to access education by providing adequate classroom facilities, clean water, and sanitation; ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities; increasing the number of teachers in rural areas; and ensuring language barriers do not limit instruction.

Ensure students receive consistent instruction by providing support to teachers to decrease absenteeism.

Ensure activities are undertaken to implement key social programs, including the Conditional Cash Transfer Program, and publish results of activities implemented during the reporting period.

Expand existing social programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including all worst forms of child labor. Specifically, ensure social programs address children in agriculture, domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and in street work.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Refugee children born in The Gambia are at risk of statelessness, as Gambian law only grants citizenship to children with a Gambian parent, not all children born in the country. Individuals without birth registrations, especially children of single mothers and those in rural areas, are vulnerable to exploitation, including child labor. Senegalese children trafficked to The Gambia are exploited for domestic labor, commercial sexual exploitation, fishing, and street work such as begging or shoe shining. Although the number of children enrolled in Koranic schools called *daaras* is unknown, these children are vulnerable to forced begging, street vending, and agricultural work.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The Constitution and Gambian law mandate free compulsory primary and lower-secondary education. Families, however, are often responsible for supplies and uniforms, exam fees, and contributions to school funds. In addition, inadequate classroom infrastructure, low numbers of teachers in rural areas, lack of transportation, teacher absenteeism, and limited access to clean water and toilets in schools create barriers for children to access education, increasing their vulnerability to child labor and exploitation. A UNICEF study found that 14 percent of teachers were absent from school at least once a week, with even higher rates reported in rural schools. Children with disabilities face significant barriers in accessing education, including the absence of special education programs outside of urban centers. Beginning in grade four, teachers are required to teach in English, which can limit learning for students who speak local languages. Teachers reported that students who spoke a language they did not speak were absent more frequently.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Gambia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, The Gambia’s laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work as the compulsory education age of 16 is lower than the minimum age for work at 18.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Articles 2 and 54 of the Labor Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 2 and 44 of the Children’s Act; Articles 55 and 59 of the Labor Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 42, 44, and 45 of the Children’s Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 20 of the Constitution; Articles 2, 39–41, 47, and 58 of the Children’s Act; Articles 2 and 28 of the Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2, 30, and 39 of the Children’s Act; Articles 2, 28, 29, 38(c), and 56 of the Trafficking in Persons Act; Article 13 of the Tourism Offenses Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 26, 29–32, and 34 of the Children’s Act; Articles 7–9 of the Tourism Offenses Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 31 and 37 of the Children’s Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 59 of the Children’s Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 59 of the Children’s Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 31(c) of the Children’s Act
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years ‡		Article 18 of the Children’s Act
Free Public Education		Article 30 of the Constitution; Article 18 of the Children’s Act

‡ Age calculated based on available information.

The Gambia permits children as young as age 16 to engage in light work, and children as young as age 12 to work as a child apprentice in the informal sector. While the Children’s Act generally prohibits children from working in conditions that would be harmful to their health, education, or development, the Act does not determine the activities in which light work or apprenticeships may be permitted, prescribe the number of hours per week for light work or apprenticeships, or specify the conditions in which light work or apprenticeships may be undertaken. The Children’s Act provides for compulsory basic education. However, the law does not explicitly specify at what age basic education begins or how many years basic education lasts. In addition, while children in The Gambia are required to attend school up to age 16 based on current policy, this standard makes children ages 16 through 18 vulnerable to child labor, as they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in The Gambia took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor: Receives complaints about child labor. Conducts labor inspections in the formal sector, mediates disputes between employers and labor representatives, and refers serious cases to the labor courts and the Industrial Tribunal. The Inspectorate Unit is understaffed and lacks resources such as vehicles that inhibit carrying out routine inspections.

Children’s Court: Adjudicates criminal, civil, and care and protection cases involving children. Coordinates with social welfare officers from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) for the referral and care of children. Research did not find information on whether the Children’s Court took actions to address child labor during the reporting period.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

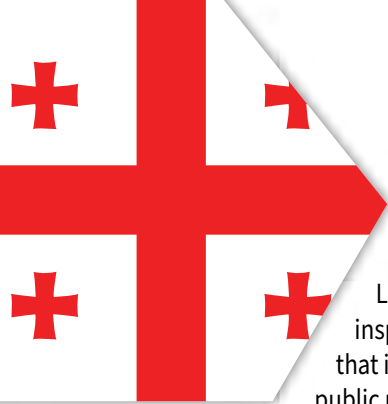
It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>The Gambia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unknown whether the coordinating mechanism was active and carried out activities during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Coordination Committee on Child Labor: Coordinates child labor enforcement processes, including prosecutions of the worst forms of child labor. Led by DSW and supported by UNICEF, comprises representatives from Department of Labor, UNICEF, DSW, National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP), Action Aid, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Gambia Teachers Union, Young People in the Media, and the Inspector General of Police.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The Gambia established policies related to child labor. However, not all policies were active during the reporting period.</p> <p>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2021–2025): Directs governmental efforts to address human trafficking. Includes strategies to improve legal framework, training of law enforcement and social services personnel, prevention and awareness, and protection for human trafficking survivors. During the reporting period, NAATIP took steps to implement the plan, including establishing a National Hotline for Victims of Trafficking.</p> <p>Regional Memoranda of Understanding (MoU): Includes MoUs with both Senegal and Nigeria to coordinate efforts to address human trafficking. The MoU with Senegal commits both countries to information sharing; improved anti-trafficking in persons laws; and prevention, protection, and assistance activities. In 2023, The Gambia signed a new MoU with Nigeria and launched a technical working group to address human trafficking, including commitments to share information, to conduct joint investigations, the coordination of reintegration for victims, and a new approach in judicial cooperation.</p> <p>Code of Conduct of The Gambia Tourism Authority for the Protection of Children: Raises awareness of commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry and among tourists. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Code of Conduct of The Gambia Tourism Authority for the Protection of Children during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Gambia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs do not fully address all worst forms of child labor.</p> <p>* Program was launched during the reporting period. † Program is funded by the Government of The Gambia. ‡ The government had other programs that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>Blue Heart Campaign:†* NAATIP program, in partnership with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, to provide support for trafficking in persons survivors, including children. Launched in July 2023 and provided training to police inspectors and social and health workers on identification, assistance, and referrals for survivors.</p> <p>Conditional Cash Transfers to Islamic Religious Schools (Majaalis):‡ Ministry of Education program in partnership with the Institute for Social Reformation, an Islamic NGO based in The Gambia, that gives Koranic schools approximately \$2 monthly for each student if Koranic teachers do not force students to beg. Provides curriculum standards to Islamic schools. Each month, a joint team of ministry officials and Institute for Social Reformation and Action representatives travels to each Koranic school participating in the program. Research was unable to determine whether the program was in operation during the reporting period.</p> <p>Government-Run Shelters and “One-Stop” Centers:‡ Includes DSW-run shelter, which has a 50-person capacity, supports vulnerable persons including trafficking survivors and children at risk of trafficking. During the reporting period, more “one-stop” centers were established.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



GEORGIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Georgia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Labor Inspectorate conducted 5,847 primary and subsequent worksite inspections, compared to 845 worksite inspections in 2022. The government also increased financial support by over 20 percent for social programs that identify and provide assistance to homeless children in Georgia. In addition, the government adopted a new public procurement law that includes provisions on addressing human trafficking, including child trafficking, and the Prosecutor General and the Labor Inspectorate increased outreach to private entities and held information sessions on preventing human trafficking and child labor. However, Georgia’s minimum age for work law does not meet international standards because it does not apply to children working in the informal sector. In addition, the Criminal Code does not explicitly prohibit the use of children in illicit activities. Furthermore, lack of effective coordination between the entities involved in addressing human trafficking hinders efforts to adequately assist child victims.

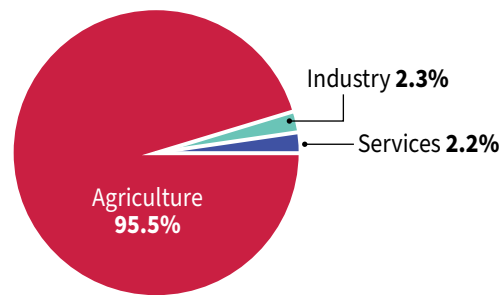


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	2.9% (13,547)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	96.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	3.7%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Georgia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, as well as forced begging, street vending, and coerced criminality, such as theft.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and seasonal agricultural work.



Industry

Construction; working in food production factories.



Services

Street work, including begging, vending, carrying cargo, and collecting scrap metal. Domestic work; working in hospitality (in restaurants and hotels, and at beaches and

resorts), wholesale and retail, small advertising services, and food delivery services.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging and street vending. Coerced criminality, such as theft.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Georgia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the minimum age for work applies to all children, including those in informal work.

Increase the compulsory education age from 15 to 16 to align with the minimum age for work.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Ensure that the law's light work provisions are sufficiently specific, including the list of activities in which light work is permissible for 15-year-old children, to prevent them from involvement in child labor.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of children in illicit activities, including the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Continue to increase communication among the Ministry of Internal Affairs' specialized investigators across the country, including with investigators from Adjara region, to ensure coordinated human trafficking investigations.

Coordination

Establish coordinating mechanisms to prevent and eliminate all forms of child labor, including in agriculture and other forms of informal work.

Increase coordination among the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office, the Agency for State Care, and other government agencies when assisting child victims of human trafficking.

Increase transparency of the Interagency Anti-Trafficking Coordination Council and regularly and timely publish assessments of the government's anti-trafficking efforts.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant forms of child labor, including child labor in agriculture and other forms of informal work.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor, including in the informal sector and in agriculture, to inform policies and programs.

Improve access to education for all vulnerable groups of children, including street children, children with disabilities, those who live in rural areas, and migrant children.

Collect and publish data on children with disabilities who do not attend school, ensure accessibility of infrastructure and teaching materials, and ensure a sufficient number of staff and teachers with skills in inclusive education.

Continue efforts to provide migrant children and those from Roma communities with identity documents and to improve access to education for these children.

Strengthen measures in the educational system to identify, track, and prevent truant children from leaving school, and enforce mandatory school attendance requirements to ensure that children are not engaged in child labor.

Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the country's child labor problem, especially for street children, and increase resources available at the local level.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Children from low-income families, children living in poverty, and homeless children are vulnerable to forced labor and labor exploitation in Georgia. In rural areas, children are more likely to be exploited in seasonal agricultural work, while in urban areas, especially in Tbilisi, children living and working in the streets remain the most vulnerable group to being subjected to forced labor and other forms of labor exploitation. Reports indicate that some street children, who are Georgian citizens, including Roma children, internally displaced children from South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and migrant children entering Georgia from neighboring countries—Azerbaijan in particular—are subjected to forced begging by family members or family acquaintances. In addition, in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are occupied by Russian forces and not under control of the central government, lack of information limits an assessment of children who may be at higher risk for labor exploitation.

 **BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**



Children from disadvantaged and marginalized groups in Georgia, such as street children, children with disabilities, those who live in rural areas, and migrant children face barriers in accessing education. Reports note that children with disabilities face barriers to attending school, including inaccessible infrastructure, lack of qualified staff and teachers, and inaccessible or insufficient classroom material. There is limited data on children with disabilities, including dropout rates. In addition, migrant children and some Roma children may not attend school due to a lack of identity documents, which enable access to education. However, UNICEF notes that some migrant and Roma families continue to destroy identification and other documents in an effort to avoid interaction with state officials. Furthermore, some children systematically miss or drop out of school due to their involvement in seasonal work, household labor, or seasonal labor migration. School employees, such as teachers and administrative personnel, do not always record absenteeism by students or the reasons for it. As a result, many cases of potential child labor are not recorded or investigated. Absenteeism and dropout rates are higher among Roma children, in part due to language and cultural barriers. However, the government operates some mixed language schools with Georgian, Russian, and Azeri or Armenian languages.

 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Georgia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Georgia’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because they do not apply to the informal sector, nor do they prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the use, procuring, or offering of children for the production or trafficking of drugs.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 4 of the Labor Code of Georgia
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 4 of the Labor Code of Georgia; Articles 2 and 5 of the Law on Occupational Safety
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 4(4) of the Labor Code of Georgia; Articles 2 and 5 of the Law on Occupational Safety; Resolution 381 Approving the List of Dangerous, Heavy, Harmful, and Hazardous Works
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 30 of the Constitution of Georgia; Articles 143/1, 143/2, and 143/3 of the Criminal Code of Georgia; Article 3 of the Law of Georgia on Combating Human Trafficking; Article 55 of the Code on the Rights of the Child
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 143/1, 143/2, and 143/3 of the Criminal Code of Georgia; Article 3 of the Law of Georgia on Combating Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 143/1, 143/2, 143/3, 253–255, 255/1, and 255/2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia; Article 56 of the Code on the Rights on the Child
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 171 of the Criminal Code of Georgia
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 10 of the Law of Georgia on Military Duty and Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 9 and 21 of the Law of Georgia on Military Duty and Military Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 410 of the Criminal Code of Georgia; Article 59 of the Code on the Rights of the Child

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Articles 2 and 9 of the Law of Georgia on General Education
Free Public Education		Article 22 of the Law of Georgia on General Education

‡ Age calculated based on available information.

In 2023, Georgia adopted a new law on Public Procurement that includes provisions on addressing human trafficking. This law will come into force from 2025 and will exclude companies from participating in public procurements for a period of 3 years if any person from these companies, who is a member of the board of directors or supervisory board of that entity, or a person representing the entity, has previous record of conviction for human trafficking, including child trafficking, or for using the services of a trafficking victim. However, provisions in the Labor Code related to the minimum age for work are not in compliance with international standards because they do not apply to the informal sector. In Georgia, some employers hire children informally specifically because they are not covered by the Labor Code. Georgia’s law on education allows children to leave school at age 15. These children are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor because they are no longer required to be in school but are not legally permitted to work full time until they are 16 years old. Article 4 of the Labor Code specifies conditions under which children ages 14 and 15 may perform light work, and Article 14 prescribes the number of hours that may be worked, but the law does not specify the activities in which light work is permissible. Article 4 of the Labor Code stipulates that children under age 14 are allowed to work only in sports, the arts, and cultural activities, as well as some advertising activities. Lastly, Georgia’s laws do not criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the use, procuring, or offering of children for the production or trafficking of drugs.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Georgia took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient communication between the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ specialized investigators across the country, including investigators from the Adjara region, may have hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia (POG): An independent entity, separate from the Ministry of Justice, which prosecutes criminal cases involving child exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking. The 2022–2027 Prosecutor’s Office Strategy ensures a victim-centered approach when identifying and effectively prosecuting child trafficking and labor exploitation. In 2023, the witness and victim coordinators from the POG provided support to five child witnesses/victims of human trafficking, including attending investigative proceedings with the victims and providing assistance in receiving available services from the Agency of State Care. Maintains five specialized prosecutors dedicated to human trafficking cases. Manages an interagency working group on child labor trafficking issues under the framework of the POG operational strategy. In 2023, the Prosecutor General and the Labor Inspectorate held joint information sessions on human trafficking prevention for private entities in Tbilisi and Batumi.

Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons, Labor, Health, and Social Affairs (MoLHSA): The Labor Inspectorate under MoLHSA operates as a semi-autonomous legal entity of public law. It enforces labor laws related to forced labor, labor exploitation, and occupational safety and health norms through routine targeted and unannounced inspections. Labor inspectors may inspect any facility or economic activity, including private farms and private residential houses where economic activity takes place. The Labor Inspectorate has a group of specialized labor inspectors to identify instances of forced labor and human trafficking for labor exploitation. Operates branch offices in Batumi and Kutaisi to increase its operational presence in Western Georgia. In addition, under a Memorandum of Cooperation, the Labor Inspectorate and the Ministry of Internal Affairs can carry out joint inspections to counter trafficking of minors and identify children working on the street. Receives complaints through the Child Protection and Social Programs sub-department and refers complaints of child labor violations to criminal law enforcement agencies for investigation. Operates a hotline in eight languages (Georgian, English, Russian, Turkish, Azeri, Armenian, Arabic, and Persian). In 2023, the Labor Inspectorate held 35 informational meetings for over 1,700 employers and employees to raise awareness on labor issues, including child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **105** labor inspectors conducted **5,847** worksite inspections, finding **23** child labor violations. The government also conducted **5** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **5** prosecutions, and convicted **5** perpetrators. The Russia-occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are not under the control of Georgian central authorities, who are prevented from carrying out inspections and law enforcement there.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Georgia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it lacks sufficient scope to address all forms of child labor, including in agriculture and other forms of informal work.

Interagency Anti-Trafficking Coordination Council for the Implementation of Measures Against Human Trafficking (A-TIP Council):

Coordinates government efforts against human trafficking, including efforts to protect and rehabilitate survivors. Drafts national action plans and other strategic government programs to address human trafficking, and publishes biannual statistics on human trafficking, including sexual and labor exploitation of minors. Refers child survivors to shelters to receive social services. Chaired by the Minister of Justice and comprises representatives from state agencies and non-state entities. The A-TIP Council was active during the reporting period and worked on human trafficking crime identification, identification challenges, and prevention areas.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Georgia established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all forms of child labor, including in agriculture and other forms of informal work sectors in which child labor is known to occur.

National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (2023–2024): † Aims to prevent human trafficking with improved detection mechanisms and effective criminal prosecution; promotes reintegration of survivors, including child survivors, into society; and improves interagency coordination to eliminate trafficking. In 2023, the government conducted numerous trainings for government entities on trafficking victim identification, interagency cooperation, and adopting a victim-oriented approach when working with victims of human trafficking, including children.

Code on the Rights of the Child: Seeks to establish and implement measures to protect children from violence and hazardous child labor. In 2023, the Permanent Parliamentary Council for the Protection of Children’s Rights, responsible for monitoring the Code’s implementation, met with the Consultative Office under the Public Defender of Georgia, responsible for monitoring and protection of children’s rights, and discussed methodologies of work of these two bodies.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.
‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Georgia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are not sufficient to address the full scope of the country’s child labor problem, including children working on the streets.

Programs Administered by the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:[†] Agency for State Care, a legal public entity housed under the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons, Labor, Health, and Social Affairs, administers social benefits, including targeted social assistance for survivors of child labor and human trafficking, as well as for disabled and orphan populations. Operates six shelters for children living and working on the street. Operates six crisis centers and three anti-trafficking shelters in Tbilisi and Batumi that provide victim assistance programs for human trafficking victims. In 2023, the government identified six child victims of forced labor; four of these children were referred to and received assistance at the crisis centers. Operates eight mobile groups to identify street children. In addition, operates two hotlines for potential victims of human trafficking with assistance available in eight languages. In 2023, the government increased support to the Social Rehabilitation and Childcare and Youth Support Program to \$24.6 million from \$19.3 million in 2022. The program continued to identify and provide psychosocial rehabilitation and integration assistance to homeless children at high risk of abandonment or separation, and provide placement of abandoned children into foster care, guardianship, or small group homes.

Programs Overseen by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport (MoES):[†] MoES oversees national primary education curriculum and vocational training programs. Funds programs that promote the inclusion of vulnerable children in education. Initiatives include a program designed to increase participation in school by street children, children forced into begging, and children who are seasonal agricultural workers, and a program to distribute free textbooks to public school students and fund transportation for school children in remote areas. Provides lessons in Georgian language to refugee and asylum-seeking children before entering school and ensures they have access to Georgian schools. Runs a program to increase the number of Georgian language teachers in communities with a high number of ethnic minorities. Conducts anti-trafficking activities in elementary schools, high schools, and institutions of higher education. Follows the government’s Unified Strategy of Education and Science (2022–2030), aiming to ensure equal access to education for all children, including children with disabilities, minorities, marginalized children, and those who are at risk of dropping out.

Targeted Social Assistance Program and Child Benefit Program:[†] Social Services Agency-administered ongoing social assistance programs designed to eliminate poverty, especially child poverty. Provides a variety of services, including support for impoverished families and daycare for vulnerable children.

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Georgia.
[‡] The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



GHANA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Ghana made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased the number of labor inspections by approximately 12 percent, from 1,108 in 2022 to 1,290 in 2023. It also launched the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labor, building on the previous national action plans to address child labor. In addition, it conducted multiple trainings on child protection and human trafficking issues that reached over 1,500 participants in local communities. However, Ghana does not criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. In addition, resource constraints, including funding to agencies, severely limited the government’s ability to adequately enforce labor laws and implement social programs.

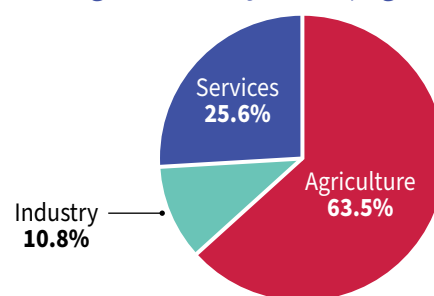


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	4.1% (335,541)
Boys		4.3%
Girls		4.0%
Urban		2.5%
Rural		5.9%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	15.6% (345,662)
Boys		15.9%
Girls		15.2%
Urban		11.8%
Rural		19.9%
Attending School	5 to 14	92.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	3.7%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Ghana are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in cocoa, fishing, and gold.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Producing cocoa, including land clearing, using machetes and cutlasses for weeding, breaking cocoa pods, collecting cocoa pods with a harvesting hook, exposure to pesticides;† producing rice; fishing, including for tilapia; preparing bait, nets, and fishing gear; launching, paddling, and draining canoes; diving for fish; casting and pulling fishing nets and untangling them underwater; sorting, picking, cleaning, smoking, transporting, and selling fish; cleaning and repairing nets; building and repairing boats; herding livestock, including bovines; and hunting.



Industry

Quarrying† and small-scale mining,† sometimes for gold, including digging in deep pits, the use of mercury,† and operating machinery;† textiles; manufacturing;† construction and carrying heavy loads; and work in slaughterhouses.



Services

Domestic work; transporting heavy loads as *kayayei*;† work in transportation;† street work,† including begging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; forced labor in begging; forced labor in agriculture, including cocoa; forced herding, fishing, artisanal gold mining, domestic work, and street work, including vending and carrying heavy loads; forced ritual servitude for girls known as *trokosi*, including in domestic work for priests.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Ghana's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use of children in all illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Update the hazardous work list for children to cover all hazardous types of work outlined in ILO C. 182.

Enforcement

Significantly increase the number of labor inspectors from 179 to 969 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of 15.5 million people.

Strengthen and fully fund the mechanism to track cases of child labor for referral between law enforcement and social services providers.

Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators have adequate resources, including office space, transportation, and supplies, to adequately carry out their mandates.

Ensure that prosecutors who have received sufficient legal training oversee and lead the prosecution of cases involving the worst forms of child labor, that an adequate number of state attorneys are available to prosecute cases, and that these cases are prosecuted according to the law.

Improve communication and coordination among criminal enforcement agencies to prosecute cases of the worst forms of child labor and provide adequate victim support.

Ensure that the Trafficking in Persons Information System is used and publish any related activities.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement government policies related to child labor and that data on these activities are published on an annual basis, including the Hazardous Child Labor Activity Framework.

Provide necessary resources for the government to implement the mandates of the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Human Trafficking in Ghana.

Social Programs

Improve access to education by eliminating school-related fees, increasing the number of classrooms, improving access to schools, providing sanitation facilities, and prohibiting sexual harassment and physical violence in schools.

Ensure that opportunities such as vocational training are available to secondary school students enrolled in the dual-track system.

Expand the availability of government-supported shelter services for child survivors and ensure that all shelters are operational.

Replicate and expand the Child Labor Monitoring System, and establish additional programs to address child labor in the cocoa, fishing, and mining sectors.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Many children who are subjected to human trafficking in Ghana are exploited for agricultural labor in cocoa production, domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, gold mining, and fishing. Children living around Lake Volta are at higher risk of forced labor in fishing. In addition, girls from rural northern regions in Ghana travel to urban centers to work as *kayayei*, or female porters, carrying heavy loads on their heads in markets, and are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

According to the Constitution and the Education Act, primary education in Ghana is free from kindergarten through grade 12, though only compulsory through grade 9, and a birth certificate is not needed for enrollment. The dual-track system, introduced in 2018, allows secondary school students to attend school in alternating semesters and take advantage of opportunities such as vocational training when they are not in school. Although this has significantly increased the overall number of children attending school, reports suggest that opportunities to attend vocational training are often not readily available or affordable. As a result, these children are vulnerable to child labor during the times when they are not in school. In addition, factors such as a shortage of classrooms, administrative fees, expenses for school supplies and uniforms, long distances to schools, the absence of sanitation facilities, and poor educational infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, severely limit access to education for many children.





LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Ghana has not ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Sections 89 and 92 of the Children’s Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Sections 91 and 92 of the Children’s Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 28.1d, 28.2, and 28.5 of the Constitution; Article 7 of the Labor Regulations Legislative Instrument; Sections 91 and 92 of the Children’s Act; Article 58 of the Labor Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 16.1 and 16.2 of the Constitution; Articles 116 and 117 of the Labor Act; Sections 1–3 and 42 of the Human Trafficking Act; Sections 1 and 2 of the Human Trafficking Prohibition Legislative Instrument
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Sections 1 and 2 of the Human Trafficking Act; Sections 1 and 2 of the Human Trafficking Prohibition Legislative Instrument; Articles 21–25 of the Labor Regulations Legislative Instrument
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Sections 101A, 107, 108, 110, 111, 274–277, and 279–283 of the Criminal Offenses Act; Article 7(2) of the Labor Regulations Legislative Instrument; Section 136 of the Electronic Transaction Act; Sections 62–66 of the Cybersecurity Act; Sections 1–3 and Section 42 of the Human Trafficking Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✗	
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Ghana Armed Forces General Eligibility (Recruits)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓*	Ghana Armed Forces General Eligibility (Recruits)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 2.2 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 25.1.a of the Constitution; Articles 1.1, 1.2, and 2.2 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

**ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR**

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Ghana took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of funding and inspectors may have hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations (MELR): Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor. Conducts national dialogue and a workshop on Child Labor-Free Zones to discuss child labor in the cocoa industry.

Ministry of the Interior: Through its Ghana Police Service, investigates and prosecutes cases related to the worst forms of child labor, and operates a 24/7 hotline for reporting crimes. Within the Ghana Police Service, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit and Anti-Human Trafficking Unit investigate cases and provide support to survivors. Through its Ghana Immigration Service, combats human trafficking through Anti-Human Smuggling and Trafficking Units.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **179** labor inspectors conducted **1,290** worksite inspections, finding **54** child labor violations. The government also conducted investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **9** prosecutions, and convicted **7** perpetrators.

**COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS****Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Ghana established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Steering Committee on Child Labor: Coordinates government efforts to address the worst forms of child labor, and oversees implementation of the National Plan of Action Phase II on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, which includes implementation of the Ghana Child Labor Monitoring System. Led by MELR's Child Labor Unit and includes representatives from other ministries, employers' and workers' organizations, and civil society. In 2023, the government administered multiple trainings on child protection and human trafficking issues that reached over 1,500 participants in local communities.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Ghana established policies related to child labor. However, research was unable to determine if these policies were active during the reporting period.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Hazardous Child Labor Activity Frameworks: Includes the Hazardous Child Labor Activity Framework and the Hazardous Child Labor Activity Framework for the Cocoa Sector. Developed in consultation with workers’ and employers’ organizations to identify hazardous activities that should be prohibited for children. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement these policies during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Human Trafficking in Ghana: Aims to address human trafficking by proactively preventing cases, protecting survivors, and prosecuting offenders while partnering with stakeholders. The government relied heavily on NGOs to implement this policy, and in 2023, awareness-raising trainings on migration and human trafficking in local communities were carried out.</p> <p>Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labor:† Aims to reduce the number of children engaged in labor by 10 percent and direct national efforts towards achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals related to forced and child labor.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Ghana funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in the cocoa sector.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Ghana.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Projects in the Cocoa Sector: Aim to increase sustainability in the cocoa sector, improve farmer livelihoods, increase access to education opportunities for children, and address the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-growing areas. While private industry continued to implement the Cocoa and Forests Initiative during the reporting period, the scope of existing programs, including in cocoa, is insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem in Ghana. The industry-funded NORC report released in October 2020 found that programs like the child labor monitoring and remediation system, access to quality education, and programs to increase farmer yields and household income need to be scaled and expanded to impact more families.</p> <p>Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MOGCSP) Programs:† Programs that aim to support vulnerable children. Include: the Program to Assist <i>Kayayei</i>, which provides rehabilitation and reintegration support; the temporary program “Get Off the Street,” which aims to remove children from the street and reintegrate them into family and educational settings; the Human Trafficking Fund, which aims to provide financial support to victims; and the conditional cash transfer program, which aims to provide monetary support to poor households with orphans and vulnerable children on the condition that these children attend school. During the reporting period, MOGCSP continued its advocacy efforts through television and radio campaigns on topics related to child labor and human trafficking.</p> <p>Educational Programs:† Ministry of Education-funded programs under the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education that aim to increase school attendance and enrollment. MOGCSP’s Ghana School Feeding Program aims to reduce malnutrition and improve attendance among students, its Capitation Grant Scheme helps defray the cost of basic education for students in public primary schools, and its Ghana Education Service—Girls’ Education Unit places girls’ education officers at the regional and district levels and mobilizes communities to enroll more girls in school. In 2023, the Ghana School Feeding Program fed 3,448,065 pupils in 10,832 public schools.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



GRENADA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Grenada, in 2023, the government made minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. In their most recent budget, the government removed some education fees and funded programs to help defray other costs, such as school feeding programs and assistance for uniforms and books. However, despite these initiatives to address child labor, the law requires the use of force, threats, abuse of power, or other forms of coercion to classify an act as child trafficking, and therefore does not meet international standards. Grenada also has not identified in their legal framework hazardous activities prohibited for children or criminally prohibited the use, procuring, or offering of a child for all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Grenada.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Grenada’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, after consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.

Ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is age 18.

Ensure that the law’s light work provisions specify the activities in which light work may be undertaken and limit the number of hours for light work.

Ensure that the law criminalizes all forms of child trafficking, including in cases that do not include the use of force, threats, abuse of power, or other forms of coercion.

Enact legislation prohibiting the use, procuring, or offering of a child for all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Grenada, including non-citizens.

Enforcement

Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including information on inspectorate funding, worksite inspections, and routine targeted inspections.











Ensure that labor inspectors receive trainings on laws and the enforcement of laws related to child labor.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Grenada has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Grenada’s laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 32 and 35 of the Employment Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 40 of the Employment Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 25 of the Employment Act; Article 4 of the Constitution; Articles 2 and 9–12 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2, 9–11, and 14 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 137(29) and 188 of the Criminal Code; Articles 2 and 12 of the Electronic Crimes Bill; Articles 2 and 10 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 22 and 23 of the Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles 2 and 15 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 16 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

The government has not identified by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children; however, night work is prohibited for those under age 18. Although Grenada’s Employment Act and Education Act allow holiday employment for children over 14 years of age, this does not meet international standards as it does not determine the activities for which light work may be permitted or limit the number of hours for light work. Despite establishing heightened penalties for traffickers of children, the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act does not sufficiently prohibit the trafficking of children because it requires the use of force, threats, abuse of power, or other forms of coercion to classify an act as human trafficking. The Criminal Code, Electronic Crimes Bill, and Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act also do not criminally prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of a child for all forms of commercial sexual exploitation. Moreover, laws providing for free basic education do not meet international standards because they permit schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Grenada but are not citizens.

 **ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR**

In 2023, it is unclear whether labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Grenada took actions to address child labor. In addition, labor inspectors did not receive training on laws and the enforcement of laws related to child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor: Enforces laws related to child labor through its Labor Commission, which generates a list of workplaces to inspect. Inspections are conducted at random as well as based on complaints, and unannounced inspections can be conducted in any sector, including the private sector and on farms. Although labor inspectors are not authorized to assess penalties, they inform the Royal Grenada Police Force (RGPF) if a child labor violation is found. The RGPF then conducts a criminal investigation, and charges can be laid against violators through the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

Royal Grenada Police Force (RGPF): Investigates crimes and enforces laws related to child labor. If child labor is confirmed, the RGPF is notified and works with the Child Protection Authority and Ministry of Social Development, Housing & Community Empowerment to have the child removed from the home, if needed. Upon finding sufficient evidence of a criminal violation, submits findings for possible prosecution by the DPP. Helps the Child Protection Authority and the Ministry of Social Development, Housing & Community Empowerment provide emergency services to children.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, **5** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **0** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **0** prosecutions, and convicted **0** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, the Government of Grenada has established a social program that may contribute to preventing child labor.

† Program is funded by the Government of Grenada.

Education Funding Programs:† In 2023, the government committed to ensuring there are no barriers to accessing education through enhanced educational training, infrastructure development, vocational training, curricular reform, technological integration, and through removed fees and the introduction of grants, including to preschools. The government also assists parents with the cost of uniforms, books, and food through a school feeding program for parents who are unable to afford it. Programs include the Support for Education and Empowerment Development (SEED Program), which supports vulnerable families through monthly cash disbursements. In 2023, an estimated 7,575 people received financial assistance through SEED.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



GUATEMALA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Guatemala made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government hired 15 new labor inspectors and created an electronic child labor referral case management platform to improve the systematic recording of information about children found in situations of child labor and improve their access to social programs. It also approved the new Roadmap for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor in all its Forms; and the Protection of Adolescent Workers, a policy designed to improve inter-institutional coordination and strengthen actions and mechanisms to prevent and eradicate child labor in the country. However, an insufficient number of labor inspectors limits the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare’s ability to address child labor. In addition, existing social programs are insufficient to reach all children engaged in exploitative labor, particularly those engaged in domestic work or agriculture.

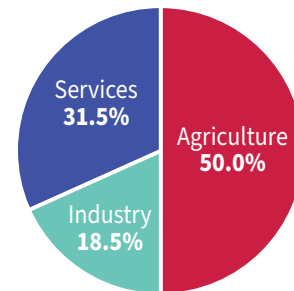


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	16.3% (306,555)
Boys		22.2%
Girls		10.4%
Urban		10.0%
Rural		19.6%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	31.7% (320,730)
Boys		47.2%
Girls		16.8%
Urban		21.4%
Rural		38.5%
Attending School	10 to 14	88.0%
Combining Work and School	10 to 14	11.8%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Guatemala are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, including in the production of coffee.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including in planting and harvesting coffee, broccoli, corn, and sugarcane. Ranching, forestry, and fishing.



Industry

Construction. Manufacturing gravel (crushed stone)† and fireworks.†



Services

Domestic work and house-sitting. Street work,† including vending,† performing,† cleaning windshields and windows,† begging and shoe shining.† Making corn tortillas. Working as store clerks in small family-owned corner stores (*abarroterías*) and as servers in restaurants (*comedores*). Vehicle and motorcycle repair. Garbage scavenging† and working in garbage dumps.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, street begging and vending, and manufacturing food products. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, and stealing and transporting contraband as a result of criminal and gang recruitment, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Guatemala’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Eliminate the exception allowing some children under age 14 to work, or establish a light work framework for children aged 12 to 14 outlining restrictions on working conditions, type of work, and number of hours of work permitted.

Clarify whether Ministerial Agreement 260-2019 raises the minimum working age to 15, if it did not then raise the minimum age for work from age 14 to 15 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Ensure that inspectors conduct more on-site investigations of worksites, including in the informal sector, an area in which child labor is known to occur.

Improve the quality of inspections by ensuring that inspectors receive effective training, dedicate the necessary time to carry out more comprehensive inspections, routinely carry out unannounced labor inspections, and can communicate with indigenous language speakers, including those who may be underage.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 169 to 478 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 7.2 million workers.

Collect fines for labor violations and ensure that conciliations are properly conducted and in accordance with the labor code.

Improve effectiveness of child labor complaint and referral mechanisms to ensure timely responses to complaints.

Ensure that hearings and trials addressing human trafficking and gender-based violence in specialized courts are scheduled in a timely manner and that judges and officials are trained in trafficking in persons concepts.

Ensure that criminal investigators have sufficient resources and staff to conduct quality criminal investigations in all geographical areas of the country, such as assigning a budget specifically to the Special Prosecutor’s Office Against Human Trafficking.

Coordination

Institutionalize relationships between civil society representatives and government agencies that provide services to survivors of child labor.

Ensure that the Secretariat Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons has the resources, authority, and political support necessary to combat human trafficking nationwide.

Social Programs

Remove barriers to education for all children, including girls and indigenous children, children with disabilities, and children living in rural areas, by recruiting and training more qualified teachers, providing instruction in indigenous languages, building additional schools with appropriate facilities, increasing security, providing textbooks to all public schools, and removing school fees and transportation costs.

Provide children removed from child labor situations with adequate social services and provide high standards of safety and care for children in government-run shelters.

Ensure that social programs are implemented, well-funded, able to carry out their objectives, reach populations outside urban centers, address child labor in agriculture and domestic work, focus on vulnerable groups such as girls, LGBTQIA+ persons, and indigenous individuals, and report on yearly activities.

Regularly monitor the effectiveness and impact of social programs such as awareness campaigns beyond the number of citizens reached.

Ensure the safety of NGO officials, human rights workers, judges, and labor activists so they can continue their work to implement social programs that address and prevent child labor.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Reports indicate that indigenous, Afro-descendant, Garifuna, and migrant children are particularly vulnerable to child labor due to experiencing higher levels of poverty, language barriers, and poor quality and lack of coverage of public education. Indigenous children account for more than half of child laborers in Guatemala, and children in rural areas are more likely to work than children in urban areas. Most of these children are engaged in agricultural activities. Girls, LGBTQIA+ persons, and indigenous Guatemalans are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. Departments with high numbers of commercial sexual exploitation victims include Alta Verapaz, Escuintla, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Quiché, and Quetzaltenango. In addition, some children are forced to engage in street begging and vending in Guatemala City and along the border with Mexico.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although education is free in Guatemala, there is an insufficient number of primary and secondary schools to accommodate all children. A lack of teachers, transportation, textbooks, and sanitary facilities at public schools, as well as the long distances some children must travel to get to school, also create barriers to education. Other barriers to education include sexual violence, insecurity, crime and violence in the school’s surrounding areas, and the risk of suffering violence during travel to school. The education system is unable to address the needs of students with disabilities, and the few existing education programs for children with disabilities rely mainly on non-profit support. In addition, girls in rural areas have lower enrollment rates in secondary school than boys, while indigenous children in general have lower enrollment rates compared to other children. Furthermore, there are not enough qualified teachers to provide instruction in the predominant native languages, and classroom materials available in these languages are insufficient.





LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Guatemala has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Guatemala has established laws and regulations related to child labor. However, its legal framework lacks sufficient light work protections for children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Articles 31, 148 and 272 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Government Accord 112-2006; Ministerial Agreement Number 260-2019
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 148 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of Government Accord 250-2006; Article 32 of Government Accord 112-2006
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 4 of Ministerial Accord 154-2008
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 202 and 202 <i>ter</i> and <i>quater</i> of the Penal Code; Articles 2 and 51 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 202 <i>ter</i> and <i>quater</i> of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 191–194, 193 <i>bis</i> and <i>ter</i> , and 195 <i>bis</i> and <i>ter</i> of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 27, 306, and 307 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Articles 2 and 57 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 68 and 69 of the Constitutive Law of the Guatemalan Army
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 57 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents; Article 245 of the Constitution

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 74 of the Constitution; Article 33 of the National Education Law; Ministerial Agreement 1055-2009
Free Public Education		Article 74 of the Constitution; Article 1 of Government Agreement 226-2008; Article 33 of the National Education Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information.

Although Articles 32 and 150 of the Labor Code allow the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MTPS) to authorize children under age 14 to work under exceptional circumstances—including if MTPS determines that children must work to support their family due to poverty—the law does not define the total number of hours, kinds of tasks, or age range applicable for this exception, which is inconsistent with international standards on light work. Nonetheless, the MTPS indicated that no such exceptions have been granted since 2016. In addition, the MTPS previously approved Ministerial Agreement Number 260-2019, “Procedure for the effective application of Convention 138 of the International Labor Organization, regarding the Convention on the Minimum Age for Admission of Employment,” which sets forth procedures for protecting adolescents between ages 15 and 18 from the worst forms of child labor. However, the agreement does not explicitly cover children aged 14, who are allowed to work under Guatemala’s Labor Code or children under age 14 who are allowed to work in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, it is unclear if this mechanism effectively raises the minimum age for work to age 15. In addition, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of their compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Guatemala took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient inspection planning and training of criminal investigators hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare’s (MTPS) Inspection Division (IGT): Enforces child labor laws, including prohibitions on the worst forms of child labor, by inspecting businesses and responding to child labor complaints. Refers children found engaged in child labor to government social services, complaints of child labor to the MTPS Adolescent Workers Protection Unit, cases of the worst forms of child labor to the Secretariat Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (SVET), and unresolved cases to labor courts for review and sanctions, as appropriate. However, reports indicate labor inspectors do not routinely conduct unannounced inspections, rarely inspect informal workplaces, where child labor violations are most likely to occur, and conduct site visits in Spanish only, which may hinder the effectiveness of inspections when encountering indigenous language speakers. In 2023, the MTPS created a child labor referral electronic case management platform to improve the systematic recording of information about children found in situations of child labor and improve their access to services by referring them to available public and private social programs.

Public Ministry, Special Prosecutor’s Office: Receives cases of the worst forms of child labor from labor inspectors. Investigates cases of human trafficking and forced labor through the Special Prosecutor’s Office Against Trafficking in Persons. However, law enforcement agencies lack sufficient resources to carry out investigations, such as vehicles, fuel, training, and criminal investigators, particularly outside Guatemala City. Reports also indicate judges are often unable to schedule hearings and trials in a timely manner, and officials often lack sufficient training to properly identify human trafficking cases and file criminal charges.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **169** labor inspectors conducted **29,080** worksite inspections, finding **36** child labor violations. The government also conducted **195** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **202** prosecutions, and convicted **34** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Guatemala established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there remains a lack of coordination between government agencies and civil society organizations that work on child labor issues.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other mechanisms that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Inter-Institutional Coordinating Entity Against Labor Exploitation and Child Labor (CICELTI): Coordinates efforts to address child labor and aims to identify victims of human trafficking, make anti-trafficking in persons institutions more effective, and provide support to survivors to prevent them from being targeted again. Reports indicate that challenges remain related to the provision of social services for children due to the lack of coordination between government agencies and a lack of coverage outside the Department of Guatemala. In 2023, CICELTI received 202 complaints, of which 94 were related to trafficking in persons and 7 to the worst forms of child labor. This led to CICELTI participating in 24 operations resulting in the rescue of 30 children.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Guatemala established policies related to child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Roadmap for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor in all its Forms and the Protection of Adolescent Workers (2022–2025):† Established in January 2023. Serves as the national strategic framework to guide government action aimed at preventing and eradicating child labor and its worst forms in the country. In 2023, under this policy the government carried out diverse activities to raise awareness about child labor, provided training to labor inspectors, and created the electronic child labor referral case management platform.</p> <p>Comprehensive Health Care Protocol with Cultural Relevance for Children and Adolescents in Situations of Child Labor and its Worst Forms: Requires public health workers to enter information into a database about any child whose injuries may have been labor related. Implemented by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS). In 2023, the government continued implementing this policy.</p> <p>Public Policy on Human Trafficking and the Comprehensive Protection of Victims (2014–2024): Aims to guarantee protection for and comprehensive attention to human trafficking survivors, and promote prevention, detection, prosecution, and sanction of this crime. Includes a National Plan of Strategic Action that directs the government’s actions on preventing and addressing human trafficking. In 2023, as part of this policy the government provided services to 212 child trafficking victims, referring 164 of them to shelters, and continued to operate one specialized shelter for child trafficking victims.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p>	<p>Business Network for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in Guatemala (Red Empresarial): Aims to promote the prevention and eradication of child labor. Members include the Ministries of Education and Agriculture, MTPS, the Thematic Working Group for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor, the ILO, UNICEF, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and representatives from the private sector. Reports indicate that this program was active in 2023, and continued to implement a variety of health, nutrition, education, and awareness programs in agricultural sectors.</p>
<p>In 2023, Guatemala funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs do not address the problem of child labor in all sectors, including in agriculture and domestic work.</p>	<p>Ministry of Development’s Social Poverty Reducing Programs: † Conditional Cash Transfer for Education and Health Program (<i>Mi Bono Social</i>) that provides cash assistance to families with school-age children, conditioned on children’s school attendance. Similarly, the Conditional Cash Transfers for Food Assistance Program (<i>Mi Bolsa Social</i>) provides food assistance to poor families, with the requirement that their children attend school. Social Dining Hall (<i>Mi Comedor Social</i>) provides access to food for people in situations of poverty, crisis, and emergency, including children. In 2023, the Ministry of Education spent about \$405 million to continue the school feeding program through the distribution of fresh and non-perishable food to over 3.1 million public school students.</p>
<p>† Program is funded by the Government of Guatemala. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Mobile Units for the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (UNIVET): Established by SVET, with support from the UN Refugee Agency. Consists of a fleet of seven vehicles that travel to areas in the country with little national government presence, with the aim of preventing and creating awareness about crimes related to exploitation, trafficking in persons, and sexual violence. Carries out detection and awareness trainings on trafficking in persons within rural and often remote communities and provides information to survivors of crimes of trafficking in persons but does not have authority to accept complaints or make referrals. In 2023, UNIVET continued to carry out awareness trainings on trafficking in persons with rural communities.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

In Guatemala, trade unions faced administrative obstacles imposed by the Ministry of Labor to approve agreements and update their membership, and the law restricted union leadership to citizens. The government has also failed to investigate and prosecute cases of murder and other violent crimes against workers and trade unionists, creating a climate of fear that hinders workers’ ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

GUINEA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Guinea made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed the Law to Combat Human Trafficking and Similar Practices in Guinea, which increases victim protections, mandates the creation of a victim fund, and establishes an anti-trafficking committee. The labor inspectorate increased worksite inspections by at least 46 percent, from 441 in 2022 to at least 646 in 2023. Law enforcement agencies also increased border security and surveillance to identify potential child trafficking situations. In addition, the government developed and validated a 3-year national action plan to address human trafficking and hosted a regional workshop to improve anti-trafficking coordination between Guinea, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire. It also resumed direct cash transfers, after a 2-year hiatus, to households facing poverty, which helps reduce their vulnerability to child labor. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it does not meet the international standard for the minimum age for work. Guinea's legal protections do not cover children working outside of a formal employment relationship or children who are self-employed, and they allow children under the age of 13 to perform light work. In addition, the government lacks a coordinating mechanism and national policy to address all relevant worst forms of child labor, and social programs do not address the extent of the child labor problem.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	31.2% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	54.2%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	17.3%

Children in Guinea are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor in artisanal mining and forced begging.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including farming cashews, cocoa, and coffee. Herding livestock. Working in fishing, sometimes with exposure to inclement weather, dangerous waters, dangerous equipment, poor sanitation, and lack of fresh food and water. Working in forestry, including transporting dead wood, working with kilns, and carbonization of dead wood.



Industry

Mining† gold and diamonds, including exposure to toxic chemicals. Quarrying.† Manufacturing, including soapmaking and dyeing, sometimes with exposure to hazardous chemicals. Construction,† including carrying heavy loads, operating machinery, and fabricating construction materials.



Services

Street work, including vending, begging, shoe shining, and carrying heavy loads as porters in markets and the transportation sector. Working in restaurants. Domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in street vending, domestic work, construction, artisanal mining, herding, fishing, and farming. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging. Use in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Guinea’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for light work to age 13 to comply with international standards and ensure that the law’s light work provisions specify the conditions in which light work may be undertaken and the number of hours that are permitted for children to be engaged in light work.

Ensure that all children are protected by the minimum age for work laws, including children working outside of a formal employment relationship and children who are self-employed.

Establish by law free public education through lower secondary school.

Enforcement

Ensure that the government conducts an adequate number of labor inspections throughout the country.

Provide consistent training, including initial courses, refresher courses, and training on new laws, for labor law and criminal enforcement officials.

Ensure labor inspections are conducted in all regions of the country, including in the agricultural sector, where child labor is known to be present, and publish inspection data.

Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal law enforcement officers, including the Special Police Unit of the Office for the Protection of Gender, Children, and Morals, receive adequate human and material resources to enforce labor laws, including office supplies, fuel, and vehicles.

Publish complete data on labor law enforcement, including the number of penalties imposed and collected.

Publish data on criminal law enforcement efforts to address the worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations conducted, violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions made, and penalties imposed.

Coordination

Establish a coordinating mechanism to prevent and eliminate all forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor.

Increase investments in education and concrete actions to implement the Ten-Year Education Plan for Guinea and make information about implementation measures publicly available.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to make education accessible for all children by eliminating fees and associated costs, improving school infrastructure, providing transportation, protecting students from violence and sexual harassment in schools, ensuring that pregnant students may continue their studies, and increasing school and teacher availability.

Provide all children with access to birth registration or identity documentation.

Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture, domestic work, forced begging, mining, and street work.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children whose parents send them to live and work with family members or strangers purportedly in exchange for schooling, in arrangements known as *confiage*, are frequently exploited in forced domestic work and other forced services. Children sent to Koranic schools also face increased vulnerability to forced begging or forced labor in their teachers’ agricultural interests. Finally, undocumented migrants and stateless children face higher risks of child labor due to their lack of identification documents.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Significant factors hinder access to education and therefore leave children vulnerable to child labor. Barriers to education include the limited number of public schools, lack of transportation, the lack of teachers (particularly in rural areas), and violence in schools. Accommodations for children with disabilities are also lacking, leading some parents to decide not to enroll those children in school. Guinean families must pay school fees and other indirect costs, which can be prohibitively expensive. Girls face particular barriers to school attendance and completion, and sometimes leave school early due to cultural barriers, pregnancy, and sexual harassment at school.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Guinea has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Guinea’s laws do not meet international standards on free basic public education or on the minimum age for work, as minimum age laws only apply to children with written employment contracts and allow children under the age of 13 to perform light work without a limit on the number of hours or the conditions of work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 121.4 and 137.5 of the Labor Code; Article 919 of the Children’s Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 2–4 of Order 2791 Working Conditions for Employees Aged Under 18 Years; Article 137.4 of the Labor Code; Articles 922 and 925 of the Children’s Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2 and 4 of Order 2791 Working Conditions for Employees Aged Under 18 Years; Article 147 of the Mining Code; Article 137.6 of the Labor Code; Articles 909–936 of the Children’s Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 6, 893–905, 912–915, and 922–923 of the Children’s Code; Articles 3, 36, 38, and 46 of the Law on Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 893–901 and 912 of the Children’s Code; Articles 3, 36, and 46 of the Law on Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 346–348 and 355 of the Penal Code; Articles 820, 852–856, and 867–871 of the Children’s Code; Article 39 of the Law on Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 137.6 of the Labor Code; Article 890 of the Children’s Code; Article 344 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 941 of the Children’s Code
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 792.7 of the Penal Code; Article 941 of the Children’s Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 6, Title 1 of Education Decree
Free Public Education		

* Country has no conscription

On April 6, 2023, the National Council of the Transition, the transition government’s legislative body, adopted the Law to Combat Human Trafficking and Similar Practices in Guinea. The new law brings together existing provisions from the Children’s Code and the Penal Code in one place. It also provides additional protections for victims and witnesses, establishes a victim fund, and mandates that the government establish an anti-trafficking committee. On April 26, 2024, it was enacted by the President and announced to the public in a state television broadcast. Alongside this positive development, several gaps in the legal framework remain. Guinea’s Children’s Code and the Labor Code allow children between the ages of 12 and 14 to perform light work, which does not meet international standards that set the minimum age for light work at 13. In addition, these laws do not prescribe the number of hours per week permitted for light work, nor do they specify the conditions under which light work may be done. Moreover, these laws only apply to workers with written employment contracts, leaving self-employed children and children working outside of formal employment relationships vulnerable to exploitation. Guinea has no law providing for free basic education for all children; the former Constitution, which stipulated free public education, was dissolved by the transition government in 2021 and has yet to be replaced.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Guinea took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial, human, and material resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Public Service: Enforces all labor laws, including those related to child labor, through its General Labor Inspectorate. Labor inspectors can impose civil penalties directly or draft reports of criminal violations and refer them to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. In 2023, labor inspectors participated in a capacity-building workshop and received training on human trafficking. In addition, the Conakry Regional Labor Inspectorate prepared terms of reference to inspect 15 sectors for labor violations, including the port and airport, banking, education, construction, hotel, mining, informal economy, fishing, non-governmental organizations, mechanics, industries, telecommunications, media, private surveillance, and security. However, insufficient financial, human, and material resources hindered their ability to fulfill their mandate.

Ministry of Security and Civil Protection: Investigates violations of criminal law. Through its Office for the Protection of Gender, Children, and Morals (OPROGEM), investigates criminal cases related to the protection of minors, including the worst forms of child labor. There is an OPROGEM representative in each of the 33 central police stations of the country who specializes in issues related to the trafficking of women and children. In practice, OPROGEM focuses on urban areas, while gendarmes in the Ministry of Defense’s Central Service for the Protection of Vulnerable Persons (SCPPV) investigate criminal cases related to the protection of minors, including the worst forms of child labor, in rural areas where there is less police presence. Both enforcement units refer cases to the Juvenile Court in the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. OPROGEM and SCPPV units received training on trafficking in persons during the reporting period. However, more training for judicial and security sector actors is still needed, and insufficient resources continue to hinder their ability to investigate and prosecute cases related to the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **168** labor inspectors conducted **646** worksite inspections in the Conakry capital region, finding **2** child labor violations. The government also conducted **1** investigation into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, although it is **unknown** whether any prosecutions were initiated or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Guinea established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism does not coordinate efforts to address all worst forms of child labor in the country.</p>	<p>National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices: Coordinates anti-trafficking efforts. Led by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children, and Vulnerable People (MPFEPV), includes representatives from the Ministries of Labor, Security, Justice, Mines, and Education, among others. Coordinates with civil society and foreign donors. Organizes awareness campaigns for human trafficking prevention. During the reporting period, developed the new National Action Plan to Address Trafficking in Persons (2023–2025), adopted a communication strategy to raise awareness among the public, and conducted awareness sessions in local languages to reach target audiences.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Guinea established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including in artisanal mining.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>National Action Plan to Address Trafficking in Persons (2023–2025):† Developed based on the anti-trafficking action plan of the Economic Community of West African States, international partner recommendations, and gaps identified in the previous plan, and validated in October 2023. Includes funding to create and operationalize a secure trafficking database accessible to all relevant stakeholders. MPFEPV has included a line in the national 2024 budget for funding to implement this action plan.</p> <p>Ten-Year National Education Plan for Guinea (2020–2029): Launched under the National Economic and Social Development Policy. Sets the goal of progressively providing free primary education in Guinea and makes provisions to ensure that girls and other underserved groups have access to education. Implemented by the Ministry of National Education and Literacy at the primary school level. Has received over \$60 million in funding from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the French Development Agency, and UNICEF. During the reporting period, stakeholders developed a Partnership Compact setting strategic goals for 2024–2027 to accelerate implementation of the Ten-Year Plan, prioritizing teacher recruitment, and improving girls’ enrollment. The government also launched the first batch of digital educational content in line with the national curriculum, as part of a multi-year initiative to digitize learning in Guinea. However, the percentage of government expenditure allocated to education in 2023 was just under 12 percent, well below its GPE commitment of 20 percent and the level of investment needed to ensure equal-access, universal primary education.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Guinea participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in agriculture, domestic work, forced begging, mining, and street work.</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Temporary Reception and Child Protection Centers for Trafficking Victims: Facilities that provide shelter and services to trafficking survivors, including children. Managed by NGOs, with support from MPFEPV. Includes a children’s shelter in the N’Zérékoré administrative region, the Catholic Organization for Human Promotion CARITAS Guinea Sonfonia reception center in Conakry, a short-term shelter run by the SCPPV in Conakry, and a shelter in Jean Paul II Hospital in Conakry. Building rehabilitation has been provided as part of an EU project entitled “Support the Fight Against Human Trafficking in the States of the Gulf of Guinea,” which aims to prevent human trafficking in six countries in the Gulf of Guinea.</p> <p>Preventing Risks and Occasions of Trafficking and Exploitation in Communities and Townships (PROTECT):* Two-year USAID-funded program launched in October 2023 to help local communities combat trafficking in persons. Developed jointly between the Government of Guinea, USAID, and development partners. Aims to strengthen government efforts to combat human trafficking and improve coordination with civil society.</p> <p>UNICEF Programs: Multisectoral initiatives developed in cooperation with the Government of Guinea. Include education interventions, child protection initiatives, and birth registration support. During the reporting period, UNICEF provided school scholarships to 2,000 middle school students, including 1,051 girls, to help cover school supplies and other costs, and organized train-the-trainer sessions for educators.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

GUINEA-BISSAU

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Guinea-Bissau made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Interministerial Commission to Fight Child Labor distributed tablets to all law enforcement agencies for the purpose of collecting child labor and human trafficking data. The Commission also provided training to relevant technicians on the management of human trafficking cases, distributed food and clothes to shelters, and conducted awareness-raising campaigns on human trafficking and forced child labor throughout communities. In collaboration with the United Nations World Food Program, the government also increased educational access to over 170,000 students throughout 693 schools, ensuring school meals reached children across all regions in the country, and provided additional rations to school-aged girls and to children with disabilities. However, prohibitions against the commercial sexual exploitation of children do not meet international standards since the prostitution of children is not criminally prohibited. In addition, minimum age protections for work only apply to children with a formal employment contract, which does not comply with international standards that require all children to be protected. Finally, since basic education is free only through the sixth grade, children in grades seven through nine are left without access to free basic education.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	18.8% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	97.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	20.6%

Children in Guinea-Bissau are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and fishing.



Industry

Construction.



Services

Domestic work. Street work, including shoe-shining and vending. Also working as mechanics, including maintaining and repairing automobiles. Working in nightclubs,† including washing dishes and custodial work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, mining, and street work, including begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Guinea-Bissau’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the minimum age for work applies to all children, including children without a formal employment agreement.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that all nine years of basic education are free.

Increase the compulsory education age from 15 to 16 to align with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Ensure that the number of law enforcement officials is sufficient to address the scope of the problem, and that both law and criminal enforcement officials receive adequate resources to inspect, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor throughout the country, including in Bafatá and Gabú, where child labor is known to occur.

Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating routine inspections and targeting inspections based on the analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents.

Publish information on labor enforcement data for the reporting period, including whether worksite inspections were routinely conducted, and whether penalties were imposed for child labor violations and the worst forms of child labor crimes.

Government Policies

Ensure that a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, like the National Policy for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, is approved.

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Emergency Plan for the Prevention and Combat of Trafficking in Persons and publish results from activities conducted during the reporting period.

Social Programs

Ensure that facilities, including shelters, have adequate resources to assist victims of the worst forms of child labor.

Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, including in agriculture and street work, particularly begging.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children by improving school infrastructure and providing transportation, particularly in rural areas.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Koranic students, known as *talibés*, from the eastern region of the country, such as Bafatá and Gabú, are particularly vulnerable to being exploited for forced begging by corrupt Koranic school teachers and organized networks of human traffickers affiliated with Koranic schools. Furthermore, human trafficking networks take advantage of the country’s weak institutions and porous borders to transport large numbers of Bissau-Guinean boys to Senegal, and, to a lesser extent, to The Gambia, Guinea, and Mali, to beg on the streets for money and food.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Inadequate school infrastructure and long distances to schools, particularly in rural areas, contribute to children’s barriers to accessing education in Guinea-Bissau.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Guinea-Bissau has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Guinea-Bissau’s laws on the minimum work age or the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation do not meet international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 1, 3, 288, 347, 350, and 520 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 354 and 355 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 354 and 355 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 2–4 and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; Article 106 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2–4 and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 3–5 and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; Articles 134 and 136 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 3 and 7 of the Decree on Narcotic Substances
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 17 Years		Article 31 of Law No. 4/99
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 2 of Law No. 4/99
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Articles 12 and 13 of the Education System Law
Free Public Education		Article 12(2) of the Education System Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The law’s minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside formal employment relationships, which is not in compliance with international standards that require all children to be protected by the law. In addition, the law does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation because the use of children in prostitution is not criminally prohibited. Although the Education System Law states that basic education is compulsory and lasts 9 years, it makes basic education free only through grade six, leaving children in grades seven through nine without access to free basic education. Moreover, as the minimum age for work is 16, children aged 15 are vulnerable to exploitative child labor because they are not required to attend school while also not legally permitted to work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient allocation of financial and human resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Administration, Labor, Employment and Social Security: Enforces child labor legislation in collaboration with the Ministries of the Interior and Justice, and the National Institute for Women and Children (IMC).

Ministry of the Interior’s Public Order Police and National Guard: Enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking, and refer relevant cases to IMC and NGOs for referral to social services providers. Through its Women and Children Brigade, investigates cases involving the worst forms of child labor, apart from child trafficking, and refers these to the IMC and NGOs. The Brigade comprises 10 officers.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, 22 labor inspectors conducted an unknown number of worksite inspections, finding an unknown number of child labor violations. In addition, the government also conducted 56 investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated 3 prosecutions, and did not convict any perpetrators.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Guinea-Bissau established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Interministerial Commission to Fight Child Labor: Coordinates the government’s efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor. Led by the IMC. In 2023, the Commission distributed tablets to all interministerial agencies for the purpose of collecting child labor and human trafficking data. The Commission also provided training to relevant technicians on the management of human trafficking cases, distributed food and clothes to shelters, and conducted awareness-raising campaigns on human trafficking and forced child labor throughout communities.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Guinea-Bissau established policies related to child labor. However, lack of implementation of these policies hindered efforts to address the worst forms of child labor, including forced child begging.</p>	<p>National Policy for the Protection of Children (2021–2032): Guides the government’s policies for addressing violence toward children, including the worst forms of child labor. Although the policy has yet to be approved by Parliament, NGOs, law enforcement agencies, and institutions working on child protection issues are already implementing its outlined procedures.</p> <p>National Emergency Plan for the Prevention and Combat of Trafficking in Persons: Aims to prevent and reduce human trafficking by strengthening legislation, coordinate actions and initiatives among government agencies, promote the coordination and collaboration of relevant stakeholders, and improve protective services and assistance to victims. Led by the IMC with the collaboration of national and international NGOs and relevant government entities.</p> <p>Code of Conduct Against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism: Seeks to raise awareness of commercial sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, including in the Bijagós Archipelago, Bubaque, São Domingos, and Bissau regions. In 2023, the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Solidarity conducted human trafficking awareness-raising activities through radio campaigns and mural displays featuring trafficking in persons awareness messages.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Guinea-Bissau funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating and preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in agriculture and street work, particularly begging.

† Program is funded by the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

Friends of the Child Association Shelters (Associação dos Amigos da Criança): † Donor-funded shelters, with government support, in Bissau and Gabú. Operated by a national NGO providing social services to vulnerable children, including victims of the worst forms of child labor. In 2023, repatriated 179 *talibés* (Koranic school students) to Guinea-Bissau from other countries, predominantly Senegal.

UN World Food Program: † School meals program reaching children in all regions of the country, with the aim of universal coverage by 2027. Also provides rations to school-aged girls and children with disabilities. In May 2023, a pilot program was launched to create vegetable gardens in schools for children with special needs. The UN Guinea-Bissau annual report, published during the reporting period, indicates an increase of education access to over 170,000 students throughout 693 schools in the country.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

GUYANA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Guyana made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed the Combating and Trafficking in Persons Act No. 7, which prohibits the use, procuring and offering of children for the production or trafficking of narcotics; classified child pornography as a form of commercial sexual exploitation; and enabled higher penalties and charges if the victim of a crime is a child. It also increased its 'Because We Care' cash grant payments by 32.8 percent for all school-age children, including migrant children. In addition, it provided enforcement personnel with several trainings on child labor, including trainings on human trafficking indicators and refresher courses. However, despite these efforts, Guyana does not meet international standards for prohibition of hazardous work because it allows children ages 16 to 17 to conduct night work in industrial activities. Guyanese law does not fully prohibit all commercial sexual exploitation of children, since it does not impose harsher charges for the use of children for prostitution. In addition, Guyanese law enforcement agencies have insufficient resources for conducting inspections in remote areas, including a lack of transportation and accommodation, and difficulties in prosecuting cases promptly even with abundant evidence.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	10.1% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	96.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	18.5%

Children in Guyana are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in mining.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming,[†] fishing,[†] and forestry, including logging.[†]



Industry

Construction[†] and mining.[†]



Services

Domestic work, welding,[†] working in bars and restaurants, street vending, washing cars, and begging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, such as selling drugs; and engagement in hazardous tasks in mining, including operating heavy machinery, exposure to dangerous chemicals, and vulnerability to injury or death in case of collapsing mines.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Guyana's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminalize the use of children in prostitution.

Criminalize the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that the law sufficiently prohibits children ages 16 to 17 from engaging in hazardous work, including conducting night work in industrial activities.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Enforcement

- Publish information on labor inspectorate funding.
- Remove barriers and delays to enforcement and prosecution and make judicial processes more efficient.
- Ensure that the labor inspectorate receives sufficient resources, including staffing and transportation and accommodation for staff, to monitor the interior and other remote areas, where child labor is most prevalent.
- Ensure that the number of inspectors is sufficient to conduct inspections in the most industrially dense region, Administrative Region 4.
- Collect and publish information on criminal labor enforcement for all of the worst forms of child labor, including reporting on the number of children identified in the worst forms of child labor and the number of imposed penalties against perpetrators.
- Ensure that fines for labor violations are high enough to serve as a preventive measure.

Coordination

- Permit the Commission on the Rights of the Child to join and participate in the Ministerial Taskforce on Combating Trafficking in Persons.
- Publish information about the activities of the National Steering Committee on Child Labor and the coordination of efforts by government agencies to combat and prevent child labor.

Government Policies

- Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key policies, including the National Policy Towards the Elimination of Child Labor and National Action Plan.

Social Programs

- Ensure that children are not prevented from attending school because of a lack of access to transportation and lack of infrastructure, and increase the number of teachers, particularly in rural, riverine, and interior areas.
- Plan and deliver special targeted social programs for migrant children and young people from rural, impoverished, and indigenous communities. Increase monitoring in mining communities and urban areas and provide targeted support to young girls.
- Increase spending on social services to address sustained poverty, especially in rural areas. Further expand ‘Because We Care’ cash grants to provide the necessary support for school children and their families in order to prevent school dropouts.
- Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor, including in agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, and construction, to inform policies and programs.
- Develop new initiatives and expand existing programs to reach all children involved in the worst forms of child labor, including programs addressing child labor in the mining industry and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

 **CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Migrants, young people from rural, impoverished, and indigenous communities, and those without education are the most at risk for human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. Migrant children from Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Suriname, and Venezuela, including indigenous girls from Bolivar state in Venezuela, and young girls from Guyana are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in mining communities in the interior and urban areas.

 **BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**

Children in Guyana’s rural and riverine areas have limited access to education due to long distances between homes and schools, problems accessing transportation, shortages of qualified teachers, and insufficient teaching and learning materials. Rural and riverine communities also lack information technologies and have limited availability of electricity and internet connectivity, which hinders access to education in times when it needs to be provided remotely.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Guyana has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Guyana’s laws do not meet international standards on the full prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation, including child prostitution, and military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Sections 2 and 3, and Part 2, Article 2 of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Articles 17–22 of the Education Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 16 Years		Part 1, Article 2, and Part 2, Article 3 of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Articles 17, 41, 46, and 75 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		List of Hazardous Occupations and Processes in Guyana; Part 1, Article 2 of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Articles 17, 41, and 75 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 2, 4 and 9 of the Combating and Trafficking in Persons Act No. 7 of 2023; Article 140 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Section 2 and 9 of the Combating and Trafficking in Persons Act No.7 of 2023
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Section 2 and 40 of the Combating and Trafficking in Persons Act No.7 of 2023; Article 50(3) of the Protection of Children Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 50(1) of the Protection of Children Act; Sections 2, 4 and 9 of the Combating and Trafficking in Persons Act No.7 of 2023
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 18 of the Defense Act and Defense Amendment Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 38E of the Constitution; Articles 13 and 22 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Articles 27 and 149H of the Constitution

* Country has no conscription

In 2023, Guyana passed a new Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act No.7, 2023, which expanded the meaning of exploitation to include the use, procuring, or offering of a child for the production or trafficking of narcotics; clarified the prohibition against the use, procuring, or offering of a child for child pornography; and enabled higher penalties and charges if the victim of human trafficking is a child. However, Guyana’s hazardous work prohibitions for children do not meet international standards because children ages 16 to 18 are permitted to perform night work in certain industrial activities. Guyanese law does not sufficiently prohibit all commercial sexual exploitation of children because it does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution. Furthermore, Guyanese law does not criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Guyana took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of sufficient transportation resources for conducting inspections in remote regions of the interior as well as barriers and delays to enforcement and prosecution hindered enforcement actions.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor: Investigates reports of child labor, conducts routine labor inspections, and refers children identified during labor inspections to the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security’s (MHSSS) Countering Trafficking in Persons Unit (C-TIP) and the Childcare and Protection Agency. Inspectors are permitted to conduct unannounced inspections in all sectors, but they are not authorized by law to assess penalties for labor law violations. When general labor violations are found, the employer is informed of the labor violation and given a period of time to rectify the violation. If inspectors find child labor violations, they may report the employer to the Chief Labor Officer or police for investigation. The Chief Labor Officer can file a case against an offending employer with a magistrate judge, who may impose a civil penalty. The welfare and social services officers of MHSSS have the right to access private premises if there is a child labor investigation. C-TIP, under the supervision of the Director of Public Prosecutions, prosecutes trafficking in persons cases. In June 2023, the Ministry of Labor introduced a new initiative, an art competition for children with a theme of social justice and ending child labor, among other activities dedicated to the Day Against Child Labor to raise awareness on this issue.

Guyana Police Force (GPF): Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Works in consultation with the Director of Public Prosecutions, Ministry of Home Affairs, MHSSS, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs, depending on the circumstances of each case. GPF’s Trafficking in Persons Unit also investigates reports of human trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **20** labor inspectors conducted **3,900** worksite inspections and found **1** child labor violation. There were also **3** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, with **3** new prosecutions initiated, and **3** prosecutions were carried over from the previous reporting period. However, **0** perpetrators were convicted from those cases.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Guyana established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism lacks institutional capacity, including human, administrative, and technical resources.

National Steering Committee on Child Labor: Includes the Ministry of Labor, MHSSS, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, Guyana Child Protection Agency, Guyana Women Miners Association, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, Guyana Forestry Commission, Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association, and the Private Sector Commission. The committee is chaired by the ministerial advisor for the Ministry of Labor. According to reports, the committee was revived in 2020 and was active during the reporting period, but there is a lack of transparency regarding its specific activities.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Guyana established policies related to child labor. However, it is unclear whether the National Policy Towards the Elimination of Child Labor and National Action Plan was implemented during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Policy Towards the Elimination of Child Labor and National Action Plan (2019–2025): Aims to prevent and eliminate child labor in all its forms by 2025 by reconciling gaps and inconsistencies between existing national policies and ratified international conventions. Establishes a national framework to coordinate, enforce, monitor, and evaluate efforts to address child labor. However, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the plan during the reporting period.</p> <p>Ministerial Taskforce on Combating Trafficking in Persons Action Plan (2021–2025): Seeks to prevent and raise awareness about human trafficking, provide direct assistance to survivors, improve law enforcement’s capacity to identify and respond to human trafficking, and strengthen interagency coordination and referral mechanisms. With a budget of \$329,944, the plan also provides for the review and amendment of the Combating and Trafficking in Persons Act, which was passed in 2023. To implement the plan, the government conducted anti-human trafficking awareness and sensitization sessions in schools, indigenous communities, and migrant settlements, targeting 1,500 migrants, on labor policies and regulations, indicators of human trafficking, and work permit processes.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Guyana funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors, including mining, agriculture, forestry and fishing, and in all regions, including the interior of the country, where child labor has been identified.</p> <p><i>† The program is funded by the Government of Guyana.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Child Advocacy Centers: Funded by private sector donations and UNICEF, and implemented by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, the UN Population Fund, and NGOs (ChildLinK and Blossom Inc.) to provide services for abused children. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security Childcare and Protection Agency oversees the 12 centers and makes referrals. In 2023, the government announced that it will open one more center in Lethem, Region Nine.</p> <p>Government-Funded School Programs:[†] Aim to deter early school dropouts by providing job skills to at-risk youth who may not otherwise be able to complete their formal education. All students in public and private schools from nursery school to secondary school, including migrant children, were eligible to receive government vouchers to purchase school uniforms, shoes, and backpacks. In 2023, the government increased the ‘Because We Care’ annual cash grant from \$140 to \$186 (GY\$40,000). The government also has programs that provide hot meals, breakfasts, juice, and biscuits to improve attendance and enrollment in schools. Over \$10 million was allocated to these programs and a total of 87,634 children benefited from school feeding in 2023. In addition, the government provides transportation for students in several remote areas, and books for school children.</p> <p>Guyana Improving Human Capital through Education Project (2022–2027): A World Bank-funded project to provide \$44 million to the Ministry of Education of Guyana. The project is focused on improving secondary level education and technical and vocational training, facilitating access to quality education, and providing training for teachers.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



HAITI

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Haiti made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government, in partnership with Better Work Haiti, provided multiple trainings on forced labor and human trafficking for labor inspectors, and continued investigating child commercial sexual exploitation cases throughout the reporting period. However, despite these efforts, minimum age protections only apply to children with a formal employment contract, which does not comply with international standards that require all children to be protected. In addition, Haiti lacks a clear minimum age for domestic work and a list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited to children. Furthermore, social programs to address child labor are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem, particularly in domestic work, agriculture, and child trafficking.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	34.4% (815,993)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	92.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	34.9%

Children in Haiti are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture and domestic work.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture. Raising livestock. Fishing.



Industry

Construction.



Services

Domestic work and street work as vendors, beggars, and car washers. Selling alcohol[†] and tobacco.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, street vending, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including by criminal groups in drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Haiti’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that minimum age for work protections apply to all children, including those without formal employment contracts.

Clarify the minimum age for work, including for domestic work.

Adopt a list of hazardous occupations and activities and ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include work in hazardous agricultural environments.

Criminally prohibit slavery.

Establish a minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military, at age 18 or at age 16, with safeguards for voluntariness.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Raise the compulsory education age from age 15 to age 16 so that it aligns with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Collect and publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including on labor inspectorate funding, the number of labor inspectors, the number of labor inspections conducted, the number of violations found and total penalties imposed and collected, and whether unannounced inspections were carried out.

Ensure that the number of labor and criminal law enforcement agents, training, and material and financial resources for labor and criminal law enforcement agencies are sufficient to adequately enforce laws related to child labor, including its worst forms throughout the country, including in orphanages.

Expand the reach of hotlines operated by the Brigade for the Protection of Minors and the Institute of Social Welfare and Research to facilitate reporting of child exploitation cases in areas beyond Port-au-Prince, including in rural areas.

Collect and publish complete information on the number of investigations undertaken, convictions achieved, and penalties imposed related to worst forms of child labor crimes.

Employ at least 129 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 5.2 million people.

Government Policies

Ensure that the National Social Protection and Promotion Policy is implemented.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Ensure that all children are able to obtain birth registration documents, and expand access to identity documents to ensure that children have access to education and other social protection mechanisms.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education and increase accessibility for all children by increasing the number of public schools and teachers, especially in rural areas; improving school infrastructure and safety; ensuring that public schools address language barriers; and ensuring that schools meet the specific educational needs of vulnerable populations, including unregistered children and children with disabilities.

Expand existing social programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, particularly in domestic work, agriculture, and child trafficking.

Ensure that all social programs designed to address child labor are active and fulfilling their mandates as intended.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Many children in Haiti are not registered at birth, and unregistered children are not able to access social services and educational programs provided by the government, making them particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. According to reports, approximately 30 percent of children ages 1 to 5 lack birth certificates or any other official documentation. Children born in rural communities are less likely to be documented than children in urban areas. Due to poverty, some parents who are unable to care for their children send them to residential care centers or to relatives or strangers who are expected to provide the children with food, shelter, and schooling in exchange for household work. In practice, some of these children receive care and access to education, while many others become victims of labor exploitation and abuse. In addition, Haiti has more than 750 orphanages that house more than 30,000 children who may be vulnerable to human trafficking and child labor. Research indicates that some children in orphanages engage in child labor as domestic workers and are prevented from attending school. Due to the security situation of the country, children are at an increased risk of child labor, especially in areas under gang control. According to reports, all gangs in Haiti have children in their ranks and exploit them for use in armed violence, including to carry out attacks, as well as for labor.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

There are significant barriers to education in Haiti, especially in rural areas, including extreme poverty, security risks, language barriers, access to transportation, limited availability of teachers, dilapidated school premises, and overall lack of school infrastructure. Moreover, because approximately 80 percent of all existing schools are private, most Haitian children are enrolled in private schools that charge tuition and other fees, making education prohibitively expensive for many families. In addition, estimates show that approximately 10 percent of students drop out of school before grade six and 40 percent before the end of grade nine, making these children more vulnerable to child labor, including its worst forms. Research also indicates that less than 14 percent of children with disabilities attend school, with only 3.5 percent of an estimated 120,000 children with disabilities attending school in the capital Port-au-Prince.










LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Haiti has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Haiti's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the law applies only to workers with a formal employment agreement; or on the prohibition of slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor because Haiti's laws do not criminally prohibit slavery.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 2, 340, 513, and 515 of the Labor Code; Article 10 of the Law Organizing and Regulating Labor
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 10, 333–335, 513, and 515 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Act on the Prohibition and Elimination of All Forms of Abuse, Violence, Ill Treatment, or Inhumane Treatment Against Children (Act of 2003)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 333–336 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 4, 513, and 515 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Act of 2003; Articles 1.1, 11, 15, and 21 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 2 of the Act of 2003; Articles 1.1, 11, 12, 15, and 21 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 2 of the Act of 2003; Article 281 of the Penal Code; Articles 1.1, 11, 12, and 21 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 47–51 and 72 of the Law on the Control and Suppression of Illicit Drug Trafficking; Article 2 of the Act of 2003
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 268 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 70 of the Penal Code; Article 2 of the Act of 2003
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 23 of the Decree on the Reorganization of the Haitian Education System
Free Public Education		Articles 32.1 and 33 of the Constitution

The Labor Code, which establishes the penalty for violations of the minimum age for work, applies only to workers with a formal employment agreement, a stipulation that does not conform to international standards that require all children to be protected under the law establishing a minimum age for work. Furthermore, as the minimum age for work is 16, children aged 15 are vulnerable to exploitative child labor because they are not required to attend school but also are not yet legally permitted to work. It is also unclear whether there is a minimum age for domestic work because the Act on the Prohibition and Elimination of All Forms of Abuse, Violence, Ill Treatment, or Inhumane Treatment Against Children of 2003 (Act of 2003) annulled Chapter 9 of the Labor Code, which set the minimum age for domestic work at age 12. The Labor Code prohibits children under age 18 from working in establishments that sell alcohol and from working at night in industrial enterprises. However, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover agriculture, an economic sector in which children are exposed to hazardous substances and to temperatures that can damage their health. Furthermore, although the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law criminalizes trafficking for forced labor, servitude, and debt bondage, slavery is not criminally prohibited. Research could not find evidence of any other legal provision criminally prohibiting slavery. Moreover, while Haiti's Constitution establishes the age for compulsory military recruitment at age 18 and sources suggest that recruitment materials set the minimum age for voluntary recruitment at that age, research could not find evidence of a law that establishes the age for voluntary recruitment.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Haiti took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST): Enforces laws related to child labor by receiving complaints, conducting investigations, referring cases to juvenile courts, and issuing employment permits to approve certain forms of labor for children between ages 15 and 18. Develops and implements programs to raise awareness of child labor and provide social services to child survivors of labor exploitation. Its agents at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research (IBESR) perform child protection inspections, including following up on reported

incidents of child labor, and are responsible for accrediting residential care centers. However, reports indicate that a lack of personnel and financial resources for things like transportation, fuel, and appropriately equipped workplaces, as well as insecurity, severely impact enforcement efforts in the country.

Haitian National Police: Investigates crimes involving the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation through its Brigade for the Protection of Minors (BPM), which submits investigations to judicial authorities for criminal prosecution and refers child survivors to IBESR. BPM maintains 22 offices around the country, including 2 offices along the Haiti-Dominican Republic border. Through its Border Police Unit, POLIFRONT, it enforces Haiti's Customs Code and investigates transnational crimes, including child trafficking. POLIFRONT is also responsible for referring cases of vulnerable migrants, including minors, to IBESR and operates at the border crossings of Ouanaminthe, Anse-à-Pitres, and Malpasse. Law enforcement agencies lack human and financial resources, such as agents, equipment, transportation, and training to carry out their mandates.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, an **unknown** number of labor inspectors conducted routine labor inspections, however the total number of worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found is **unknown**. It is also **unknown** how many investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Haiti established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Tripartite Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Develops policies, approves programs, and coordinates, monitors, and evaluates efforts to address child labor in Haiti. Chaired by MAST and receives technical support from ILO. Reports indicate that it was active in 2023.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Haiti established a policy related to child labor. However, it is uncertain if the National Social Protection and Promotion Policy implemented activities addressing child labor during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Social Protection and Promotion Policy: Aims to build institutional resilience for social protection and promotion in response to economic shocks and health crises. Consists of four major pillars, including childhood social care and efforts to support employment and employability. Lines of effort under these two pillars include the identification and removal of children from work and vocational training for youth, among other activities. Past efforts include the World Bank partnering with MAST and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to deliver cash transfers to targeted households, and the Inter-American Development Bank partnering with WFP and the Economic and Social Assistance Fund to deliver food and cash to vulnerable households in several departments of the country. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

In 2023, Haiti funded and participated in a program that includes the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, this social program is inadequate because it does not address the problem of child labor in all sectors.

† Program is funded by the Government of the Republic of Haiti.

Special Program of Free Education (PROSGATE):† Replaced the National Free Education Program and aims to increase poor children’s access to education. Includes school grants intended to eliminate school fees and for accelerated learning programs for students who are behind in school. Research was unable to determine whether activities addressing child labor were undertaken in 2023, but reports indicate that this program is still active.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects



WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

In Haiti, the law set very low fines for dismissing trade union members despite legal protections and did not explicitly provide for reinstatement as a remedy. To establish a union, MAST must provide prior approval and approve the union’s constitution. In addition, workers cannot choose which trade union they would like to join, and children who are at or above the minimum age for work cannot join a union without parental permission. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses in the agriculture sector may go undetected.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

HONDURAS

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Honduras made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government conducted the country's first national child labor survey and created an implementation manual that identifies sectors such as forestry, logging, hunting, fishing, mining, quarrying, and manufacturing as hazardous. It also established 91 local community committees for the prevention of child labor. However, labor law enforcement agencies lack the financial and human resources necessary to fulfill their mandates, identifying no child labor violations in 2023. Social programs to address child labor in agriculture are also insufficient, and additional social programs are needed to address child labor in mining, domestic work, and illicit gang activity.

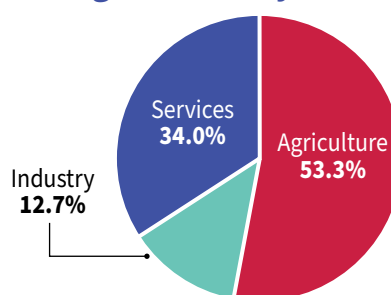


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	9.0% (168,348)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	87.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	6.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Honduras are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. They are also used to carry out illicit activities, including selling and trafficking drugs. In addition, children engage in child labor in the production of coffee, melons, and lobsters.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of melons and coffee. Fishing,[†] including diving for lobster.[†]



Industry

Artisanal mining[†] and construction.[†]



Services

Washing car windows, begging, vending, and performing[†] on the streets for tips. Scavenging in garbage dumps.[†]

Domestic work.[†]



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced labor in fishing, mining, construction, and in the hospitality industry. Forced begging, street vending, and domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including by gangs in committing extortion, transporting weapons, and selling and trafficking drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Honduras' implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the compulsory education age from 17 to 18 to align with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Conduct sufficient labor inspections in areas in which child labor is prevalent, such as rural areas, the informal sector, and indigenous communities in which children engage in hazardous activities.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Provide information related to the number of labor inspectors, the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed and collected, and the labor inspectorate's funding.

Ensure that labor and criminal law enforcement agencies have sufficient funding to carry out their mandates nationwide.

While the number of labor inspectors is unknown, employ at least 290 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 4.3 million people.

Investigate and prosecute perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure enforcement authorities utilize the established referral mechanism to provide the families of children removed from child labor, particularly the worst forms, with social protection services such as conditional cash transfers for families in poverty, health and nutrition programs, and education programs.

Ensure that the number of inspections conducted by labor inspectors is commensurate to the size of the labor inspectorate to ensure the adequate quality and scope of inspections.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the Road Map for the Elimination of Child Labor in Honduras (2021–2025) and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Expand access to education by increasing funding and infrastructure for schools, enhancing efforts to protect students from gang violence, and ensuring that all students are able to attend school with sufficient support, including children with disabilities and those in rural areas.

Ensure that social programs reach the children who are most vulnerable to child labor, including children of African descent and indigenous children.

Expand social programs that address child labor in agriculture and create programs to assist children engaged in child labor in fishing, mining, domestic work, and illicit gang activity.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Reports indicate that children from indigenous and Afro-descendant groups, returned migrant children, and children in the LGBTQIA+ community are vulnerable to child labor, including its worst forms. In particular, boys from the Miskito Afro-descendant community are vulnerable to forced labor in the agriculture, construction, fishing, mining, and hospitality sectors. The Inter-Institutional Commission against Sexual, Commercial, and Trafficking Exploitation and the Public Ministry reported cases of commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes perpetrated by family members or friends. Criminal organizations exploit girls in sex trafficking, force children into street begging, and coerce and threaten children to transport weapons, sell drugs, commit extortion, or serve as lookouts.

**BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**

There are numerous barriers to education access in Honduras, including poor school infrastructure; gang violence; lack of transportation; and the cost of school fees, uniforms, and supplies. Reports indicate that 40.3 percent of children aged 5 to 17 (1,156,578 children) are outside the educational system, a number much higher than the official statistics show. Reports also indicate that in some regions of the country, especially in La Mosquitia, language barriers exist as the teachers often do not speak local languages or dialects. Violence originating from gang activity, including recruitment into gangs and territorial disputes, also presents barriers to access for both children and educators, causing some schools to drastically reduce their enrollment. Additionally, children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities face barriers to education access as a result of discrimination, causing a high dropout rate among this population. Finally, children with disabilities attend schools at a lower rate than the general population, and the National Center for Social Sector Information stated that 43 percent of persons with disabilities received no formal education.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Honduras has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Honduras' laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Article 120 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Article 15 of the Executive Agreement STSS-211-01; Article 32 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 1 and 122 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Article 1 of the Executive Agreement STSS-441-2016
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 1 of the Executive Agreement STSS-441-2016; Article 8 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Articles 6 and 52 of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (No. 59-2012); Articles 221 and 222 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Article 8 of the Legislative Decree 35-2013; Articles 219 and 220 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 134 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Articles 219, 220, 257, and 259–262 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 134 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Article 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Articles 6 and 52 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons (Decree 59-2012); Article 8 of the Legislative Decree 35-2013
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Articles 2 and 12 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years		Articles 8, 13, and 21–23 of the Fundamental Law of Education; Articles 36 and 39 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence
Free Public Education		Articles 7, 13, and 21–23 of the Fundamental Law of Education; Article 36 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Article 171 of the Constitution

*Country has no conscription

In 2023, the National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor implementation manual interpreted Honduras' hazardous work list to include sectors such as forestry, logging, hunting, fishing, mining, quarrying, and manufacturing. Despite this effort, children in Honduras are required to attend school only up to age 17 even though the minimum age for work is 18. This standard makes children aged 17 vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Honduras took action to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resources for the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (SETRASS) and criminal enforcement agencies hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (SETRASS): Conducts labor inspections and enforces child labor laws through the General Directorate of Social Welfare and the General Directorate of Labor Inspections. In 2023, the Secretary of Labor and Social Security, along with the National Institute of Statistics and World Vision, conducted the first National Child Labor Survey of Honduras (ENTIH), covering all 18 departments and involving 22,762 households and approximately 100 trained enumerators. Going forward, the ENTIH is expected to take place every 4 years.

Public Ministry: Carries out criminal investigations and prosecutions, including for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor. Through its Office of the Special Prosecutor for Children, prosecutes crimes involving child victims. Also coordinates with the National Police to investigate crimes related to the worst forms of child labor through its Police Investigation Directorate (DPI). In 2023, DPI, in coordination with the Public Ministry, carried out several investigations, including “Operation Breaking the Chain,” which resulted in the arrest of 9 individuals linked to human trafficking and the rescue of 40 Honduran women, including 7 girls. The Public Ministry, through its Technical Agency for Criminal Investigations, investigates and provides technical support for criminal prosecutions, including by the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Children, such as those related to human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and child pornography. Through its Unit Against Trafficking in Persons, Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Illicit Human Smuggling (UTESCTP), coordinates with domestic and international enforcement agencies to carry out anti-trafficking in persons operations and prosecutions.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, an **unknown** number of labor inspectors conducted **3,007** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The Government conducted **207** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiating **0** prosecutions and convicting **0** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Honduras established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor (CONETI): Coordinates government policies and efforts on child labor issues. Chaired by SETRASS and includes officials from eight government ministries; the Secretariat for Children, Adolescence, and Family (SENAF); the Supreme Court; and other government entities. Oversees regional sub-commissions, led by officials from SETRASS and SENAF, which implement efforts at the local level. In 2023, the government approved the Strategic Plan of the National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor, which focuses on promoting children’s rights, ensuring access to education, and strengthening institutions and entities responsible for protecting children. Additionally, CONETI created a new legal entity within the commission to assist institutions in reaching consensus on initiatives related to abolishing child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Honduras established policies related to child labor. However, the tripartite commission under the U.S.–Honduras Labor Rights Monitoring Action Plan meant to advise, support, and ensure the sustainability of the Government of Honduras’ efforts to effectively enforce labor laws, including child labor, has been inactive since it made the request to extend the Monitoring Action Plan in September 2023.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>National Plan for the Elimination of Child labor (2023–2026):† Developed with the support of the Alliance 8.7 and approved by CONETI in July 2023. Highlights the need to identify risk factors for vulnerability to child labor, establish a common protocol for responding to child labor situations, and conduct awareness raising on child labor laws and labor rights. In 2023, under the plan, the government conducted the first national child labor survey, submitted a hazardous work manual to the National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor, and established 91 local community committees for the prevention of child labor.</p> <p>U.S.–Honduras Labor Rights Monitoring and Action Plan (MAP): Aims to improve the enforcement of labor laws, including laws related to child labor, by implementing legal and policy reforms, strengthening SETRASS, and increasing outreach efforts. However, since September 2023, the Government of Honduras has ceased organizing tripartite meetings under this plan. With the tripartite commission being inactive, and the lag in backfilling inspectors since the 2022 mass firing, U.S. and Honduran observers have raised concerns regarding the Honduran government’s commitment to the MAP. In 2023, USDOL and the U.S. Department of State continued to finance programs to educate youth who are at risk of labor exploitation, provide technical assistance for an electronic case management system to improve enforcement of labor laws, and develop a system to detect and prevent child labor in the coffee sector.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>In 2023, Honduras funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including the use of children in fishing, mining, domestic work, and illicit activities.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Honduras.</i></p> <p><i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Solidarity Network (Red Solidaria):† Consists of a conditional cash transfer of \$163 annually to 350,000 families in some of the poorest towns in the country, provided that families vaccinate their children and keep them enrolled in school. The program also includes \$32.4 million in investments in health, education, preventing teenage pregnancy, infrastructure, and housing projects. In 2023, the program distributed over \$63 million to participants in 2,007 targeted villages, reached 52,176 people through literacy programs, and awarded 30,000 scholarships for continued education to youth who experience poverty or social vulnerability.</p> <p>Program to Combat Child Forced Begging:† SENAF program that identifies and rescues children who are subjected to forced begging and raises awareness of child forced begging through media. In 2023, this program carried out a campaign to assist children living and working on the streets by providing humanitarian aid to families and referring them to social services.</p> <p>Program for the Reintegration of Returned Unaccompanied Migrant Children:† The program protects and assists unaccompanied migrant children who have been returned to Honduras. It is implemented by SENAF in collaboration with the National Institute for Migration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), UNICEF, the Network of Institutions for Children’s Rights, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and NGO Aldeas SOS. UNICEF, through IOM, provides financial support for the program. The United States Agency for International Development, through activity with IOM, supports the Government of Honduras (GOH) to assist returned migrants to reintegrate into local communities, beginning with humane and dignified services at the reception centers in Omoa, La Lima, and Belen. The Belen Center is the only center that supports unaccompanied migrant children and families. It offers reintegration services and lodging with capacity for 110 people. SENAF manages the Belen Center and provides staffing for it and relies on funding support from the MFA and donors to cover operational costs due to lack of sufficient budget. In addition, the three centers provide the following services: immigration registration, psychological care, primary medical care, Restoring Family Links by phone and internet, and protection services.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Workers in Honduras had difficulty exercising the rights to form and join unions and to engage in collective bargaining. As labor unions are integral to reporting on and advocacy for the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses in the agriculture sector may go undetected.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



INDIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, India made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government extended its Fast Track Special Courts, which expedite the trial process for sexual offense cases, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police rescued 858 children from railway platforms, preventing them from being exploited for labor exploitation or sex trafficking. Several states provided rehabilitation and financial assistance to 654 adult bonded labor survivors and their immediate families. However, despite these efforts, the government’s existing hazardous work prohibitions do not include all occupations in which children work in unsafe and unhealthy environments, and penalties for illegally employing children are insufficient to deter violations. Prosecution rates for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking, remain low and the mistreatment of child labor victims by the police remains a concern. Through the enhanced enforcement of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, the government continued to revoke the licenses of nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, some of which work to address the worst forms of child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	1.0% (2,119,846)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	90.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	0.4%

Children in India are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in garment production, stone quarrying, and brickmaking.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Producing hybrid cottonseed, cultivating cotton, harvesting and processing sugarcane, transplanting rice seedlings, and performing peripheral work on farms, such as removing weeds.



Industry

Manufacturing garments, weaving silk fabric and carpets,† producing raw silk thread (sericulture), spinning cotton thread and yarn, and embellishing textiles with silver and gold (*zari*).† Quarrying and breaking stone and sandstone,† producing bricks,† recovering metals from electronic waste (e-waste),† and mining and collecting mica.† Polishing gems† and manufacturing glass bangles,† locks,† and brassware.† Rolling cigarettes (*bidis*)† and manufacturing incense sticks (*agarbatti*), fireworks,† and matches.† Manufacturing footwear; producing leather goods and accessories,† and stitching soccer balls.



Services

Domestic work.† Working in restaurants, hotels, food service, and tourism services. Street work, including scavenging, sorting garbage, selling trinkets, and organized begging. Working in automobile workshops and repairing vehicles.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in agriculture, including producing hybrid cottonseed, making bricks, quarrying stones, and in rice mills. Forced labor in garments, embroidering silver and gold into textiles (*zari*), domestic work, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in India’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Include in the list of hazardous work prohibited for all children all sectors in which children work in unsafe and unhealthy conditions, such as spinning mills, garment production, carpet making, and domestic work.

Amend child trafficking laws so they do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking.

Publish the legal instrument that establishes the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into India's armed forces.

Encourage all states and union territories to enact rules to implement the Occupational, Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code to ensure protection of children from hazardous forms of work.

Enforcement

Employ at least 35,668 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 535 million people, and publish national data related to labor law enforcement.

Provide adequate training to labor inspectors and criminal investigators on child labor in all states and union territories, including on the new Occupational, Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code.

Fast track bonded labor cases and consistently impose penalties for violations.

Provide states and union territories with dedicated and sufficient funding, staff, and infrastructure to establish anti-human trafficking units.

Ensure that all cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Fast Track Special Courts adhere to their mandated 1-year timeline for prosecution, that backlogs of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences cases are adjudicated with priority, and that judges and prosecutors at these courts are adequately trained to handle child sex crimes.

Hold accountable public officials who facilitate, participate in, or hinder efforts to address the worst forms of child labor, including officials who accept bribes, hold children in bonded labor in agriculture and in brick kilns, and who delay registering human trafficking cases or mistreat human trafficking survivors.

Prosecute and hold accountable perpetrators of the *Jogini* system to protect girls from lower castes from being sold to local deities for sexual exploitation in return for in-kind payments or cash allowances.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Plan of Action for Children and State Action Plans on Child Labor and publish results from activities undertaken to implement these plans annually.

Encourage states and territories that do not currently have action plans for the elimination of child labor to establish such plans.

Social Programs

Reduce barriers and promote access to education for all children, including for low-caste Hindus, members of tribal communities, religious minorities, and other disadvantaged communities by providing sufficient training for teachers, providing separate and sanitary washrooms for girls, and increasing the number of available schools, especially in urban slums in which inadequate infrastructure options limit access to education.

Collect and make available to the public data on exploitative child labor in every state, including findings from district-level bonded labor surveys and raw data from the national census.

Ensure that state governments issue release certificates and provide financial assistance for bonded labor victims, including full compensation for those freed from bonded labor, through the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Laborers.

Provide rescued child labor victims with adequate social services to prevent their re-entry to the labor market, including through educational re-entry programs.

Ensure that the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act is not used to prevent child labor-focused nongovernmental organizations from obtaining international funding or preserving their licenses to operate in the country.

Provide all states and union territories with funding for human trafficking shelters in a timely and consistent manner.

Develop and implement social programs to address child labor, bonded child labor, and child trafficking among vulnerable populations in India, including religious minorities and migrant children.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In India, migrant children, low-caste children, and religious minorities are vulnerable to child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and familial debt bondage. Girls from such disadvantaged communities are vulnerable to forced and bonded labor in the home-based garment sector. Caste-based discrimination and poverty renders Dalit children especially vulnerable to child labor. Children are vulnerable to labor exploitation in sectors in which adults from marginalized castes face labor exploitation, such as shrimp processing in Adhra Pradesh, where children reportedly accompany their families in debt bondage. In some cases, girls from the Dalit community are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Furthermore, climate change in India is pushing more children into child labor as children drop out of school to help their parents make up livelihoods lost to extreme weather events. Maoist groups reportedly forcibly recruit children in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand to handle weapons, serve as human shields, and for use as cooks, porters, and informants in armed conflict. Reports indicate that some non-state armed groups recruit girls for sexual exploitation, including practices indicative of sexual slavery.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

In India, school budgetary constraints, inadequate transportation for children in rural areas, a lack of separate and sanitary washrooms for female students, and inadequate infrastructure in existing schools present barriers to education access. Limited direct recruitment for teaching jobs and a cumbersome teacher recruitment process has led to high pupil-teacher ratios, severe teacher vacancies, and a non-availability of teachers with subject matter expertise, adversely impacting quality of education. Lower-caste Hindu children, members of tribal communities, and religious minorities face discrimination and harassment by education officials. Lower-caste children in some schools are segregated from other students, given less food than higher-caste students, relegated to seats in the back of classrooms, and assigned tasks like cleaning toilets during the school day.









LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

India has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, India’s legal framework regarding the prohibition of child trafficking does not meet international standards because the law requires the use of force, fraud, or coercion to establish child trafficking offenses.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Section 3(1) of the Child and Adolescent Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Section 3A of the Child and Adolescent Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Schedule to the Child and Adolescent Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act; The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 2(g), 4, and 16–19 of the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act; Sections 138(4), 141, 143, and 144 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita; Section 79 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 139 and 141 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita; Sections 2, 5, 5A, and 5B of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act; Article 23 of the Constitution

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 93, 94, 96, 97, 139, and 142 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita; Sections 4–6 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act; Sections 13 and 14 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act; Section 67B of the Information Technology Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Sections 76, 78, and 83(2) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act; Sections 15–18, 20–23, and 32B(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act; Section 93 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years		Codified Military Rules
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Section 1(2) and 83 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act
Compulsory Education Age, 14 Years		Section 3 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act
Free Public Education		Section 3 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act

*Country has no conscription

India’s new criminal code, the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita*, went into effect in 2024. India’s hazardous work regulations for children ages 14 to 18—established in the country’s Occupational, Safety, Health, and Working Conditions (OSH) Code—do not include all sectors in which children are known to work, including spinning mills, garment production, and carpet making, which expose children to dangerous machinery and difficult working conditions, including long hours. The OSH Code has not been universally adopted at the state level and the deadline for state-level adoption remains unknown, rendering children in some states vulnerable to child labor. The OSH Code only applies to institutions with 10 or more employees, leaving workers in smaller workplaces unprotected. India’s child trafficking laws do not meet international standards as they require the use of force, fraud, or coercion to establish child trafficking offenses. Although sources report that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into India’s Armed Forces is age 16 and that individuals must be age 18 to be deployed, these legal provisions are not publicly available and could not be verified.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in India took actions to address child labor. However, alleged corruption in state police forces, a lack of training of enforcement personnel, and the absence of standard operating procedures in certain states hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

State Government Labor Ministries: Each state has its own labor ministry that employs labor inspectors responsible for the enforcement of labor laws. State ministries conduct labor inspections, including inspections for child labor, and assess penalties for violations. Ministries refer children to child welfare committees for protection and rehabilitation services when child workers are identified and removed from work.

Criminal Law Enforcement Agencies: Enforce laws pertaining to the worst forms of child labor. State and local police submit information to District Magistrates to determine whether a case should be prosecuted in District Court. Police refer children found in child labor situations to child welfare committees for protection and rehabilitation services. Anti-Human Trafficking Units, which are reportedly not fully operational or established in all states, function under district police headquarters and provide intelligence gathering on human trafficking cases. Cases that fall under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, are referred to Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), which are mandated to prosecute offenders within 1 year. A backlog of cases and insufficient training of personnel, however, prevents the courts from complying with this timeline. Reportedly, some police do not follow protocol in child trafficking investigations and state authorities have ordered police to register these cases as kidnapping or missing persons cases to reduce the number of human trafficking cases in official statistics.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. In addition, although investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, the total number of investigations is **unknown**. However, the Government of India reported that **609** prosecutions were initiated, and **181** perpetrators—including cases pending from previous years—were convicted for suspected worst forms of child labor crimes.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>India established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Child Labor Coordinating Bodies: Led by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE), the Task Force to Implement the Child Labor Act (CLA) comprises 12 officials from the federal and state governments. In 2023, the task force met three times and instructed states to closely monitor child labor issues to ensure the implementation of the CLA. The Central Advisory Board on Child and Adolescent Labor monitors the implementation of existing legislation and programs related to child labor. The board met once during the reporting period; the outcome of the meeting, however, is unknown. In 2023, MOLE released a standard operating procedure to assign responsibilities to different government departments to tackle child labor and bonded labor concerns.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>India established policies related to child labor. However, states have not uniformly established action plans to eliminate child labor, and reporting on actions undertaken to implement policies is limited.</p>	<p>National Policy on Child Labor: Overseen by MOLE and the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Aims to address child labor and includes activities for the provision of assistance to children. Under the policy, the Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labor (PENCIL) Portal was developed and implemented. The PENCIL Portal incorporates a child tracking filing system to enhance enforcement of child labor laws, including the Child Labor Act, and provides a complaint mechanism for citizens to report child labor violations. Since 2017, The PENCIL portal has removed 144,021 children from child labor.</p> <p>National Plan of Action for Children: Identifies priority actions for achieving the objectives set out in the National Policy for Children, including age-appropriate classes for children released from child labor and child trafficking. Also seeks to develop community-based prevention, identification and release procedures, victim services, and reintegration mechanisms, as well as strengthen institutions to address the worst forms of child labor. Research was unable to identify specific activities carried out under this policy during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>State Action Plans on Child Labor: State- and union territory-specific plans to address and eliminate child labor. Exist in only 11 out of 28 states. In 2023, the Government of Odisha published actions undertaken to implement its Plan, which included child labor prevention trainings for employers, publishing data on inspections conducted under the Child and Adolescent Labor Act, and collaborative activities with NGOs. The Delhi government collaborated with local resident welfare associations to address child labor in the state’s domestic sector. In addition, Bihar’s State Child Labor Commission rescued 795 children from child labor through effective coordination and enforcement mechanisms. States do not uniformly report on actions undertaken to implement action plans.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>India funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, shelters providing assistance to victims of the worst forms of child labor lack financial and human resources.</p> <p><small>† Program is funded by the Government of India.</small></p>	<p>National Child Labor Project (NCLP) Scheme and Special Training Centers (STCs):† MOLE program operating at the district level to identify working children, remove them from work, and provide them with education and vocational training. Comprises approximately 3,000 NCLP STCs that provide children with support including stipends, meals, and health checkups. From April 2022 to March 2023, the NCLP STC program removed 13,761 children from child labor and provided services to victims. Observers note that since the merging of the NCLP with the <i>Samagara Shiksha Abhiyan</i> scheme—a program focused on achieving universal elementary education—many children have re-entered the labor market as local schools cannot accommodate all released children and do not provide the services that former child laborers require.</p> <p>Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Laborers:† MOLE program that provides released bonded laborers with financial assistance and social protection services, and funds district-level surveys on bonded labor prevalence. In 2022–2023, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu cumulatively provided rehabilitation assistance to 654 survivors. Although reporting did not indicate how many of these survivors were children, intergenerational debt bondage is common in India—thus, removing parents from bonded labor likely protects their children from bonded labor as well. Research did not yield information on the remainder of the states’ efforts to rehabilitate bonded labor survivors. Some state governments lack standard operating procedures to implement this scheme and failed to issue release certificates, and some failed to provide adequate financial assistance to bonded labor victims without significant support from NGOs.</p> <p>Anti-Human Trafficking Activities:† Government-operated anti-trafficking shelters, run in collaboration with NGOs and state governments. Shelters include government-run juvenile justice homes and government-run women and children’s homes. The Ministry of Women and Child Development-funded <i>Ujjawala</i> and <i>Swadhar Greh</i> schemes provide services to and repatriate human trafficking survivors, including children. In 2023, the <i>Ujjawala</i> and <i>Swadhar Greh</i> schemes merged to create the <i>Shakti Sadan</i> scheme, an integrated relief and services program. The scheme provides shelter, food, clothing, and primary health for female and child victims of human trafficking. Although government-supported shelters were active during the reporting period, observers reported that the shelters have not received adequate funding in over 2 years, and many operated at a deficit in 2023.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

In India, workers face obstacles forming and maintaining unions. These obstacles include provisions requiring at least 100 workers or 10 percent of the workforce (whichever is lower) is represented in the union; a lack of collective bargaining rights for civil servants; the illegality of strikes in Kerala; and the illegality of strikes regarding essential services in Tamil Nadu.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

INDONESIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Indonesia made moderate advancement in eliminating the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of National Development Planning, together with the United Nations Children’s Fund, published the first ever Landscape Analysis on Children with Disabilities in Indonesia that includes recommendations for addressing and preventing the exclusion and exploitation of children with disabilities. The government also allocated \$150,000 for social rehabilitation programs for child survivors of human trafficking. Furthermore, the Ministry of Manpower increased the budget for the labor inspectorate from \$15.1 million in 2022 to \$22.7 million in 2023, using the additional funds to conduct inspections and investigations, as well as to build the capacity of labor inspectors. However, the Ministry of Manpower continues to lack the financial resources and personnel necessary to fully enforce child labor laws throughout the country. In addition, Indonesia’s prohibitions against child trafficking are inconsistent with international standards because the Law on the Eradication of the Criminal Act of Trafficking in Persons requires that the use of threats, force, or coercion be established for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred. Finally, Indonesian law is not consistent with international law as the National Education System Act allows students to be charged fees for education.

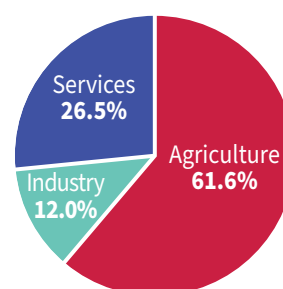


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	3.7% (816,363)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	10 to 14	92.4%
Combining Work and School	10 to 14	2.1%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Some children in Indonesia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Some children also perform dangerous tasks in plantation agriculture, including in palm oil and tobacco production.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of palm fruit, including by applying fertilizers,† spraying pesticides,† and harvesting and loading fruits.† Planting, watering, harvesting, and applying fertilizer† to tobacco, and curing, tying, and carrying tobacco leaves into storage units in the post-harvesting phase.† Producing rubber† and working in the fishing sector, including on fishing vessels,† in processing facilities, and on offshore platforms.†



Industry

Construction,† producing footwear, and mining,† including the mining of gold and tin.



Services

Domestic work, horse jockeying, and street work, including working as sidewalk food vendors, begging, busking, and street performing.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic work, fishing, and mining. Used in illicit activities, including the sale, production, and trafficking of drugs, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Indonesia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that threats, the use of force, and coercion do not need to be established for the crime of child trafficking to be proven.

Include in the list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children all sectors and activities in which hazardous child labor is known to occur, including jockeying in horse racing.

Specify in the labor law’s light work provisions the activities in which light work may be permitted for children.

Establish by law free basic public education by removing provisions that permit schools to charge fees, and ensure that free basic public education is provided to all students regardless of citizenship or residence status.

Enforcement

Ensure that labor inspectorate funding is sufficient to cover office infrastructure, transportation, and fuel requirements to enable labor inspectors to carry out inspections.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 1,467 to 9,047 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 135.7 million workers.

Legally authorize labor inspectors to conduct inspections in the informal sector, including on private farms and homes, and ensure that labor law enforcement officials have a mechanism to assess civil penalties.

Provide all criminal law enforcement personnel with adequate training on child labor regulations and relevant criminal laws.

Strengthen the labor inspection system by conducting unannounced inspections and by ensuring that routine inspections are targeted toward sectors in which child labor is known to occur.

Publish information and data on criminal law enforcement annually.

Provide resources for the collection and centralization of national data on child labor, mandate reporting by precincts, and specify which child labor crimes are referenced in the collected data.

Sufficiently fund the anti-trafficking task forces at the national, provincial, and local levels to conduct investigations and carry out their intended mandates.

Social Programs

Conduct research to better understand the number of children engaged in child labor and its worst forms and the activities in which they are engaged, and ensure the research includes information on child laborers between the ages of 5 and 10. Harmonize research findings with findings from international and local NGOs and use the findings to inform social policies and programs.

Develop and implement social programs to address and prevent child labor among internal and external migrant populations, including migrant child labor in offshore fishing, mining, domestic work, construction, the sale and transportation of illicit drugs, and in commercial sexual exploitation.

Remove educational barriers and make education accessible for all children by taking measures to remove school fees, expanding birth registration and national identification for refugees and Indonesian children without proper birth documentation, and increasing resources for students with disabilities.

Publicly report results of the Minimum Service Standards of Basic Education Program and the Community Learning Centers Program.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Research indicates that both internal and external migrant children in Indonesia, particularly girls, are vulnerable to child labor, including being recruited illegally for work and commercial sexual exploitation. Undocumented migrant children are reportedly vulnerable to child labor in offshore fishing, mining, domestic work, construction, the sale and transportation of illicit drugs, and the commercial sex industry. Children of refugees and asylum seekers residing in Indonesia—including Rohingya people fleeing violence and oppression in Burma and poor conditions in the refugee camps of Bangladesh—are also at risk of child labor in these sectors. Furthermore, Indonesian citizens are being increasingly displaced internally due to natural disasters and conflict; children below the age of 18 comprise approximately 30 percent of these internally displaced people and are at increased risk for child labor.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the National Education System Act mandates free education, the law also permits schools to impose additional fees on students to cover items such as books, uniforms, transportation, and other non-tuition costs, which may hinder the ability of students, particularly those from low-income families, to attend school. Refugee children and Indonesian children without proper birth documentation or government-sponsored identification cards also face barriers to accessing education, because Indonesia’s formal education system is only accessible to citizens and individuals who have been officially granted residency. In addition, children with disabilities reportedly have higher rates of non-registration due to stigma and poverty.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Indonesia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Indonesia’s laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of child trafficking because the law requires that the use of threats, force, or coercion be established for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred. Additionally, Indonesia’s law that establishes free public education does not meet international standards as it requires students to pay certain fees in order to attend school.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Law on the Ratification of ILO C. 138; Article 69 of the Manpower Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 74 of the Manpower Act; Article 2 of Ministerial Decree on Jobs that Jeopardize the Health, Safety, or Morals of Children
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Annex F of Ministerial Decree on Jobs that Jeopardize the Health, Safety, or Morals of Children
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 74 and 183 of the Manpower Act; Articles 1–6 and 17 of the Law on the Eradication of the Criminal Act of Trafficking in Persons; Article 83 of the Law on Child Protection
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 1–6 and 17 of the Law on the Eradication of the Criminal Act of Trafficking in Persons; Article 83 of the Law on Child Protection
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 74 and 183 of the Manpower Act; Articles 81 and 82 of the Law on Child Protection; Section 3 of the Law on the Ratification of the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; Articles 4–12 and 37 of the Law on Anti-Pornography; Articles 293 and 297 of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 74 and 183 of the Manpower Act; Articles 67, 78, and 89 of the Law on Child Protection
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment		Article 28 of Law on the Indonesian National Armed Forces
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 28 of Law on the Indonesian National Armed Forces
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 3(d) of Law on the Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 48 of the Law on Child Protection; Articles 6 and 34 of the National Education System Act
Free Public Education		Articles 1, 12 Section 2(b), and 34 of the National Education System Act

Indonesia’s prohibitions against child trafficking are inconsistent with international law because the Law on the Eradication of the Criminal Act of Trafficking in Persons requires that the use of threats, force, or coercion be established for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred. Although Indonesian law does specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken and limits the number of hours for light work, it does not list the activities that constitute light work. Furthermore, horse jockeying, which has been documented as physically dangerous to children, is not included on the list of hazardous work prohibited for children. In addition, although the National Education System Act provides for free basic education, Article 12, Section 2(b) of the Act also requires students to pay prescribed fees unless those fees are waived. Additionally, free, compulsory education is only guaranteed for citizens and individuals who have been officially granted residency. The failure to provide for completely free basic education for all children may increase the risk of children’s involvement in the worst forms of child labor.

 **ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR**

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Indonesia took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of comprehensive and reliable enforcement data hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Manpower: Through the Directorate General of Labor Development and Supervision, enforces the country’s labor laws relating to child labor through labor inspections and formulates policies, standards, norms, guidelines, and mechanisms on labor inspections. Provides information to employers on child labor laws and works with law enforcement officials to prosecute child labor violators. Through the Directorate of Norms Supervision of Women and Child Workers, responds to complaints of child labor by telephone, fax, or e-mail. Refers children found during inspections to the local Women’s Empowerment and Family Planning Body or to the Integrated Service Center for Empowering Women and Children for social services. In 2023, the Ministry of Manpower conducted regular inspections, as well as complaint-based inspections. The Ministry also reportedly initiated a program to eliminate child labor on palm oil plantations in 16 provinces including South Sumatera, Riau, Jambi, North Sumatera, West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, and Central Kalimantan.

Indonesian National Police (INP): Handle investigations involving child trafficking. Conduct inspections and raids, and make arrests in response to crimes, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. Maintain an informal database of cases involving child trafficking. However, the government lacks a centralized system for aggregating information on its criminal law enforcement efforts. The decentralized nature of criminal law enforcement data and voluntary system of reporting by precincts contributed to incomplete criminal law enforcement information related to the worst forms of child labor. In 2023, the National Police partnered with the International Organization for Migration to conduct a training on investigations into trafficking in persons crimes for law enforcement agencies.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

Between January 2023 and September 2023, **1,467** inspectors conducted **14,458** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Indonesia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI): Monitors the implementation of the Child Protection Law and child protection policies and provides recommendations on child protection to the President of Indonesia. Includes the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (MoWECP); Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA); the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology; the Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture; the Ministry of Law and Human Rights; the INP; and the National Narcotics Agency. In 2023, KPAI conducted activities related to child rights and protection, including issuing recommendations to local and regional governments and to ministries relating to child protection, child labor, and rights fulfillment.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Indonesia established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.

National Plan of Action (NPA) for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Provides a policy framework for the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms. Though the Plan formally expired in 2022, reports indicate that the third phase of the NPA remains in effect until further notice. This phase focuses on developing a set of recommendations with international and local NGOs, increasing awareness-raising and advocacy efforts, and integrating child labor in formulating sectoral policies and regulations. Reporting was unable to identify actions undertaken by the Government of Indonesia to implement the Plan during the reporting period.

National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Trafficking in Persons:[†] Adopted in 2023 and aims to prevent and address human trafficking, including the trafficking of children, by working through the Central Task Force, Provincial Task Force, and District/City Task Force.

[†] Policy was approved during the reporting period.
[‡] The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Indonesia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, reporting indicates that the government does not use data consistently to inform its social programs.

† Program is funded by the Government of Indonesia.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

Cash Transfer Programs:† Provide conditional cash transfers to help with formal and informal education opportunities and health expenses for vulnerable groups, including children who experience homelessness, abandoned children and infants, children facing criminal charges, children with disabilities, and child laborers who dropped out of school. Includes the Healthy Indonesia Card (*KIS [Kartu Indonesia Sehat]*), which serves 100 million Indonesians who are struggling to meet basic needs, thereby reducing their risk of child labor; the Smart Indonesia Program (*KIP [Kartu Indonesia Pintar]*), a card that provides educational grants to all school-age children whose families have a Family Welfare Card or meet eligibility criteria covering both formal and informal education; Child Social Welfare Program (*Program Kesejahteraan Sosial Anak*), which provides conditional cash transfers to children; Family Welfare Card (*Kartu Keluarga Sejahtera*), which provides a bank account and consolidates all financial assistance programs, including children’s education and health funds, for low-income families; and the Family Home Program (*PKH [Program Keluarga Harapan]*), which provides conditional cash transfers for children’s education to the poorest 5 percent of households. During the reporting period, the Government provided educational grants to 20.1 million students from poor families through its cash transfer programs.

Education Programs:‡ School Operation Assistance (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*) grant program, funded at \$4.8 million (78 billion *rupiah*) during the reporting period, compensates schools for the loss of income from waiving school fees for poor and vulnerable children in primary, junior secondary, and senior high schools. Minimum Service Standards of Basic Education Program improves access to quality public education by limiting the distance of primary and junior secondary schools from children’s households, specifying minimum teacher-student ratios, and identifying minimum teacher education qualifications. Community Learning Centers provide education for children of migrant palm oil workers. Research indicates that all three programs were active during the reporting period, but the government did not report specific activities conducted to implement them.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

In Indonesia, the right to strike is legally restricted and the government did not always effectively enforce provisions of the law protecting freedom of association or preventing antiunion discrimination. Without these rights, workers may not be able to advocate for their interests or report labor abuses, including the exploitation of children in the workplace.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

IRAQ

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Iraq made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government signed an action plan with the United Nations to prevent the recruitment and use of children as combatants by the Popular Mobilization Forces. However, despite this initiative to address child labor, Iraq is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because Iraqi and Kurdistan regional government authorities continued to inappropriately detain or punish children allegedly affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq—some of whom were victims of forcible recruitment or use. In addition, the government did not provide information on its criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report, the Child Protection Policy has lapsed and not been renewed or replaced, and the Interministerial Committee on Child Labor does not effectively coordinate with agencies to process cases of children suspected of having ties to the Islamic State or who are victims of human trafficking.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	4.8% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	78.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	4.2%

Children in Iraq are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment by non-state armed groups for use in use in illicit activities, such as cross-border smuggling, drug and weapons trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and work in fisheries.



Industry

Construction,† working in small factories and brick kilns, and recycling plastic. Work in chemical factories.†



Services

Street work, including selling goods, cleaning cars, and begging. Domestic work and working in restaurants, bars, nightclubs,† and brothels. Working in landfills, scavenging and collecting garbage† and scrap metal. Working at auto repair shops.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced recruitment of children for use in illicit activities, including cross-border smuggling and drug and weapons trafficking. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging and forced domestic work. Forced work in chemical factories.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Iraq's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Prohibit child trafficking in all parts of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, and do not require force or coercion for the application of trafficking laws, in accordance with international standards.

Criminally prohibit the use of a child in prostitution and the use, procuring, and offering of a child for the production of pornography and pornographic performances.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Raise the compulsory education age of 12 years in Iraq to age 16, the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Ensure that children are not arrested, detained, tortured, or denied services on the basis of their or their family members' perceived ties to the Islamic State.

Investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and trafficking of girls in internally displaced persons camps by government officials and hold those responsible criminally liable.

Screen children who are picked up by authorities for begging for trafficking indicators; do not imprison child trafficking survivors; and give survivors of the worst forms of child labor access to social service providers and humanitarian assistance.

Provide sufficient resources and training on child labor issues to labor inspectors and criminal investigators so they can carry out their duties.

Publish labor law enforcement information, such as labor inspectorate funding, number of labor inspectors, number of labor inspections conducted at worksites, number of child labor violations found, number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed, number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, whether routine inspections and targeted inspections were conducted, and whether unannounced inspections were conducted.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement on the worst forms of child labor in Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

Employ at least 690 labor inspectors to provide adequate coverage for the labor force of approximately 10.3 million people and ensure adequate funding to enforce legal protections against child labor.

Ensure that routine labor inspections are carried out in Iraq and in the Kurdistan Region.

Coordination

Ensure that the Interministerial Committee on Child Labor effectively coordinates among agencies to process cases of children suspected of having ties to the Islamic State or who are victims of human trafficking.

Government Policies

Adopt a child labor policy that covers all worst forms of child labor present in Iraq, including forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation.

Social Programs

Implement programs to provide protection services to demobilized child soldiers.

Ensure that universal access to education is consistent with international standards, including for refugee and internally displaced children, Black Iraqi children, and children with special needs, and address barriers to education. Ensure that the lack of identification documents does not hinder access to education, including for internally displaced persons and refugees, children with suspected ties to the Islamic State, and children born of “informal” marriages.

Implement programs to address child labor in relevant sectors in Iraq, such as the provision of services to children in commercial sexual exploitation, to demobilize and reintegrate children engaged in armed groups, and to provide informal education programs and shelters for human trafficking victims.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Refugees and asylum seekers in Iraq are vulnerable to exploitation due to difficulty accessing basic services, including education. An estimated 41 percent of refugee households reported having a child active in wage labor in 2023, while 83 percent of refugee children did not attend secondary school. Additionally, internally displaced children and returnee children are vulnerable to being forced into labor by their families for a lack of economic opportunities. Closures of displaced persons camps exacerbated existing difficulties among this community.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Iraq face numerous barriers to accessing education, including displacement, the lack of local schools, costs of transportation and school supplies, and discrimination. Girls face additional barriers in the form of cultural norms that prioritize boys' education and concerns for their safety. Consequently, Iraqi girls are more likely to drop out of school, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. Displaced children and refugee children are especially vulnerable to educational barriers, including the cost of transportation and school supplies, lack of documentation, and host-community children receiving priority for classroom seats. Children with special needs have limited access to education due to a lack of specialized teachers and school infrastructure. Additionally, Black Iraqis in Basrah have difficulty accessing education because of the low number of schools in their communities, bullying, and lack of identification documents.







LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Iraq has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Iraq's laws do not meet international standards, including on the prohibition of child trafficking, the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the prohibition of using children in illicit activities.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years	✓	Articles 7, 11, and 98 of the 2015 Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 95 and 105 of the 2015 Labor Law
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 95 of the 2015 Labor Law; Ministry of Labor's Instruction 19 of 1987
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 9 and 11.2 of the 2015 Labor Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	Articles 1 and 6 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Articles 399 and 403 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✗	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Section 6(2) of the CPA Order 22
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 12 Years ‡		Articles 8.1.1 and 11.1 of the Education Law; Articles 1.1 and 1.3 of the Law on Compulsory Education
Free Public Education		Article 34.2 of the Constitution; Article 9 of the Education Law

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Article 117 of the Constitution of Iraq recognizes Kurdistan as a federal region composed of the provinces of Duhok, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah, as well as Halabja. Article 121 grants the Iraqi Kurdistan Region the right to exercise legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament must endorse any laws that the Government of Iraq passed after 1991 for such laws to enter into force in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Under the Iraqi Education Law and under the Law on Compulsory Education, children are required to attend primary school for only 6 years, which is typically up to age 12. This leaves children ages 12 to 15 particularly vulnerable to child labor, because they are not required to be in school, yet they are not legally permitted to work. However, in the Kurdistan Region, compulsory primary education is 9 years, typically to age 15, in accordance with international standards.

In Iraq, Article 1 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking requires force, fraud, or coercion to be present as an element to constitute the crime of child sex trafficking, which is inconsistent with international standards, including Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol. As the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament has adopted the Iraqi Law to Combat Human Trafficking, the human trafficking standard in the Kurdistan Region is also not in compliance with international standards. In addition, while the laws of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) meet international standards for the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation under Articles 91.3(b), 91.4, and 97 of the 1987 Labor Law, federal Iraq’s laws do not prohibit the use of children in prostitution and do not clearly prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production of pornography or pornographic performances. Furthermore, federal Iraq’s laws do not prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, while the KRG prohibits such use under Articles 91.3(c), 91.4, and 97 of the 1987 Labor Law. Moreover, Iraqi law does not prohibit recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Iraq took actions to address child labor. However, continued detention or punishment of children allegedly affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS)—some of whom were victims of forcible recruitment or use—and a lack of financial resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA): Enforces child labor laws and regulations through its Child Labor Unit. Conducts research on child labor through its Childhood Welfare Authority. Receives complaints of child labor cases. The KRG's MOLSA also enforces child labor laws and regulations.

Ministry of Interior: Enforces criminal laws on the worst forms of child labor. Collaborates with MOLSA, the Iraqi Industries Federation, and the Confederation of Trade Unions to conduct inspection campaigns. Maintains a hotline for victims of human trafficking, with calls routed directly to the Ministry's Anti-Trafficking Directorate. The KRG's Ministry of Interior also enforces child labor laws and regulations, investigates cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and includes a Counter Trafficking Directorate.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, the Government of Iraq and KRG authorities continued to inappropriately detain and prosecute, without legal representation, children allegedly affiliated with the Islamic State—some of whom were victims of forcible recruitment or use—and used abusive interrogation techniques and torture to obtain confessions. In addition, it is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Iraq established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the Interministerial Committee on Child Labor does not sufficiently coordinate among agencies.</p>	<p>Interministerial Committee on Child Labor: Coordinates overall government efforts to address child labor, researches policies regarding child labor, and designs and manages projects. Members include representatives from MOLSA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Education. The committee was not active in 2023. The committee did not sufficiently coordinate among agencies to effectively process cases of children suspected of having ties to ISIS or were victims of human trafficking.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Iraq established policies related to child labor. However, policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor, including forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>Child Protection Policy: Outlines a comprehensive approach to addressing child protection, including addressing child labor through prevention, protection, and rehabilitation programs, such as a poverty-alleviation initiative and educational and mental health services. Includes a component to provide rehabilitation and reintegration activities for children previously engaged in armed conflict and those who experienced trauma during the period of ISIS occupation. The policy does not specifically cover other worst forms of child labor present in Iraq, including forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation. The government did not implement this policy in 2023.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>† Policy was approved during the reporting period</p>	<p>National Strategy on Combating Human Trafficking (2023–2026):† Aims to address human trafficking by outlining steps to be taken by authorities represented on the Central Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Focuses on prevention, protection, prosecution, and regional and international cooperation, and includes items to address child victims. Enacted in 2023. During the reporting period, the Government of Iraq conducted at least 12 nationwide anti-begging campaigns. The Iraqi Ministry of Interior conducted site inspections to industrial areas to address child exploitation, which resulted in rescuing 17 children who received access to rehabilitation centers.</p> <p>Action Plan to Prevent the Recruitment and Use of Children by Armed Forces:† Signed in March 2023, aims to prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Popular Mobilization Forces through measures such as strengthening age verification, awareness-raising activities, legislation, and investigation into cases of alleged recruitment and use. Signed by MOLSA and the UN and supported by UNICEF and the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Iraq funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, programs do not address the full scope of the problem.</p> <p>† Program is funded by the Government of Iraq.</p>	<p>Informal Education:† Government-supported informal education systems, including evening school programs and accelerated education that encourages children ages 12 to 18 who have dropped out of school to continue their education. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken by the Informal Education program during the reporting period.</p> <p>Conditional Subsidies Program:† Provides assistance to low-income families for children to stay in school and out of the workforce. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken by the Conditional Subsidies Program during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



JAMAICA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Jamaica made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased its funding for a school feeding program from \$7 billion in 2022 to \$9 billion in 2023, providing support to 180,171 students. The Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on collecting human trafficking data. In addition, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security used geo-mapping and heat maps to identify areas for child labor inspections. However, Jamaica’s laws do not provide higher penalties for using, procuring, or offering children for the production and distribution of drugs than penalties imposed for these same crimes when the victims are adults. Moreover, the law providing for free basic education does not meet international standards because free education is only guaranteed for Jamaican citizens.

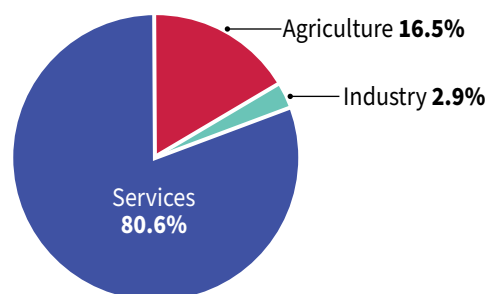


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	6.2% (30,111)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	98.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Jamaica are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; in forced work in shops and markets; and in illicit activities, including financial scams, recruitment into criminal organizations, serving as drug and gun couriers, and forced begging.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming,† fishing, and hunting.



Industry

Construction, forestry.



Services

Working in shops and markets; domestic work; street work, including begging† and vending; wholesale and retail; fetching water and collecting firewood.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; forced domestic work; use in illicit activities, including executing financial scams, recruitment into criminal organizations, and serving as drug and gun couriers; forced work in shops and markets; and forced begging.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Jamaica’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Increase penalties for the use of children in the production and distribution of drugs.

Prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution.

Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to age 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Establish by law that free basic public education is available to all children, regardless of citizenship.

Pass legislation that will determine the specific light work activities and hours permissible for children ages 13 and 14 to facilitate enforcement.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 41 to 88 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of over 1.3 million workers. Ensure that targeted inspections are conducted.

Ensure that initiatives and programming, staffing levels, and budgets for agencies, including the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, are sufficient to identify child labor violations and fulfill their mandates.

Screen children for indicators of human trafficking and forced labor, including children found participating in illicit activities and victims of child abuse.

Keep the National Steering Committee and the National Task Force active and able to carry out their intended mandates and make the information about their activities publicly available.

Government Policies

Increase the integration of child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing and future policies.

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement all current policies and make reports on these activities publicly available.

Implement the Ministry of Labor and Social Security's National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor.

Social Programs

Establish social programs to provide support to girls, immigrant children, and LGBTQIA+ youth in situations of child labor, including in street work, commercial sexual exploitation, agricultural work, and other worst forms of child labor, particularly in rural areas.

Ensure that school costs, such as uniforms, books, food, and transportation, do not diminish access to free public education for students at both traditional and non-traditional schools.

Implement a program to report, identify, and find missing children who may have been forced into child labor.

Ensure that children with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, have access to an education, and resume visits by officers to ensure attendance.

Implement activities related to the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor and make information publicly available.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Children from rural areas and unaccompanied children are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Children are sent from rural areas to live with affluent family members, which leads to situations of forced labor in private households, markets, and shops. Children, especially girls, without a parent or guardian are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation from traffickers who advertise false employment opportunities on social media and in the newspapers. Reports indicate that these children are trafficked into work at brothels, nightclubs, strip clubs, and massage parlors. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ youth are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation as they leave their families or communities in fear of persecution or bullying.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Jamaican law limits access to free primary education to Jamaican citizens. Rural areas do not have sufficient transportation and facilities to support children with disabilities, and some parents of children with disabilities choose not to send their children to school. Reports also indicate that truancy officers were not active during the reporting year. Additionally, increasing violence in communities impacts attendance, alongside issues with pedestrian road safety. An unofficial division also remains between traditional high schools and non-traditional secondary schools, despite government reforms. Government officials and educators report that this leaves students without adequate education and certification, which creates further barriers to education.





LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Jamaica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, gaps exist in Jamaica’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including failure to sufficiently criminalize the use of children in illicit activities, sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and criminally prohibit military recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Articles 34(1) and 36 of the Child Care and Protection Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 34(3) and 36 of the Child Care and Protection Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 34(3)(b), 39, and 41 of the Child Care and Protection Act; Section 55 of the Factories Act: Docks (Safety, Health and Welfare) Regulations; Section 49(2) of the Factories Act: Building Operations and Works of Engineering Construction Regulations; Section 18 of the Mining Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Sections 2, 4(1)(a), and 4(2)–4(9) of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act; Section 2 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment (Amendment) Act, 2021
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Section 10 of the Child Care and Protection Act; Sections 2, 4, and 4A of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act; Section 2 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) (Amendment) Act, 2021
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Sections 2, 4, and 4A of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act; Sections 18, 21, and 36 of the Sexual Offenses Act; Sections 3 and 4 of the Child Pornography (Prevention) Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✗	Section 4 of the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Section 18(2) of the Defense Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Sections 28 and 89 of the Child Care and Protection Act
Free Public Education		Section 13(k) of the Jamaican Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms

*Country has no conscription

Jamaica allows children ages 13 to 14 to engage in light work but has not determined specific permissible light work activities and hours. Jamaica also does not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children because its laws do not specifically criminalize the use of a child for prostitution. In addition, the laws related to the use of children in illicit activities do not include higher penalties for perpetrators who use, procure, or offer a child for the production and distribution of drugs. Furthermore, the laws do not criminally prohibit military recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups. Jamaica also does not meet the international standard for free public education as free education is only guaranteed for Jamaican citizens, leaving non-citizens vulnerable to child labor. Moreover, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before completing school.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Jamaica took actions to address child labor. However, gaps exist within the operations of the enforcement agency that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient human resource allocation and a low number of prosecutions, investigations, and convictions.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS): Enforces and administers child labor laws in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy through the labor inspectorate’s Child Labor Unit. Responsible for policy development, as well as the management of government agencies involved in child labor enforcement. In 2023, MLSS carried out inspections in parishes with a high risk of child labor, including Kingston and Saint Andrew, Clarendon, Trelawny, St. Elizabeth, and Portland. Used geo-mapping and heat maps during the reporting period to identify areas for child labor inspections.

Jamaica Constabulary Force: Investigates, through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Vice Squad (A-TIP Vice Squad), cases of child trafficking, including forced child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities in which human trafficking is involved. The A-TIP Vice Squad has over 250 officers and leads operations and case management activities for human trafficking cases. Through the Center for the Investigation of Sexual Offenses and Child Abuse, investigates sex crimes against children and educates the public about these crimes. Receives referrals of suspected child labor law violations and other abuses for criminal enforcement from the Ministry of Education and Youth, Child Protective and Family Services, and MLSS.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, **41** labor inspectors conducted **544** worksite inspections, finding **0** violations. While the government conducted investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor and convicted perpetrators of crimes, the total number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions is **unknown**.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Jamaica established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unknown whether this mechanism carried out activities during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor: Provides leadership and guidance on policies and programs that aim to reduce and eliminate child labor. Partners with the Child Labor Unit from MLSS and the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NATFATIP), a multi-agency body comprising various ministries, departments, agencies of government, and representatives of three NGOs. Research could not determine whether the committee was active during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Jamaica established policies related to child labor. However, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement its National Plan of Action for Combating Trafficking in Persons during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Plan of Action for Combating Trafficking in Persons: Aims to prevent and eliminate human trafficking, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and forced child labor, through prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships. Guides the activities of NATFATIP. Though the plan expired at the end of 2021, the government reported that it continued to undertake activities under the plan.</p> <p>National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence (2018–2023): Overseen by the Inter-Sectoral Committee on Children and Violence. Aimed to address child violence and abuse through a range of strategies and programs implemented over 5 years of a child’s life. The government continued to support and implement this policy during the reporting period, including by supporting Project Birthright, an initiative to provide free birth certificates to undocumented Jamaicans, especially vulnerable children.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Jamaica funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including street work, commercial sexual exploitation, and agricultural work.</p> <p>† The program is funded by the Government of Jamaica. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Program for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH):† A conditional cash transfer program launched in 2002 and funded by the Government of Jamaica and the World Bank that helps reduce child labor by requiring participants to attend school at least 85 percent of the academic days in a month. In August 2023, changes to PATH were announced to allow more families in need of support to qualify for and receive the benefits.</p> <p>Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor (2022–2025): An intergovernmental cooperation platform made up of 31 countries, with the active participation of employers’ and workers’ organizations. Seeks to declare Latin America and the Caribbean the first developing region free of child labor by 2025. Drawing on the knowledge, experience, and accumulated capacity of key public and private actors, aims to address the persistence of child work.</p> <p>U.S.-Jamaica Child Protection Compact Partnership (2018–2022): A 4-year plan partially funded by the U.S. Government that enhanced the efforts of the Government of Jamaica to address child trafficking. It opened new Child-Friendly Spaces to support survivors and participated in trainings for criminal justice professionals and social services providers who may come into contact with child trafficking victims. The U.S. Government has invested \$6.7 million in foreign assistance. In 2023, the Government of Jamaica made incremental improvements to address operational gaps in its Child Protection Compact efforts.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



JORDAN

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Jordan made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government approved a new National Strategy to Prevent Human Trafficking for 2023 to 2026; enacted a Child Rights Act, which requires certain professions to report exposure of a child to human trafficking, prostitution, or economic exploitation, including forced labor and forced begging, to competent authorities; and approved new bylaws for sheltering victims of human trafficking. It also referred all 507 child laborers identified by inspectors to social services providers. However, despite these efforts, Syrian children still face barriers to accessing education due to socioeconomic pressures, bullying, and the costs associated with transportation and supplies, among other issues. The high number of inspections per inspector also raises concerns that inspectors may not have the time to adequately identify and remediate labor law violations. Additionally, the scope of government programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of child labor, including in construction and street vending. Moreover, the legal framework does not criminally prohibit the use of children in prostitution.

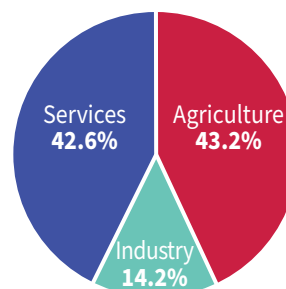


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	1.0% (33,182)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	94.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	1.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Jordan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in agriculture and forced begging. Children also engage in child labor in farming.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, forestry, and fishing, including packing fruits and vegetables, harvesting, applying pesticides and fertilizer, assisting with irrigation and grazing and feeding of livestock.



Industry

Manufacturing, including packing and sanitation work. Construction,† including cleaning, and assisting with carpentry and metalwork. Mining† and quarrying.†



Services

Street work,† including vending and begging, and domestic work.† Scavenging scrap metal and waste†

and maintenance and repair of motor vehicles.† Hotel services,† working in retail, including cleaning shops, and food services, including working in restaurants and bakeries and selling coffee.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture and forced begging.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Jordan’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation.

Enforcement

Ensure that the labor inspectorate has sufficient resources to fulfill its mandate.

Ensure that the number of inspections conducted per labor inspector affords inspectors enough time to adequately identify and remediate labor law violations, including in the agricultural sector.

Social Programs

Continue to expand access to education for all children, including Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, ensuring that students have transportation, are able to purchase supplies and uniforms, and are not bullied or harassed, and that school hours are extended.

Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in construction and street vending.

Provide dedicated services, including shelter, for victims of child labor, including child trafficking.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

The majority of working children in Jordan are engaged in the agricultural sector, making children from rural areas vulnerable to exploitation. They perform tasks such as weeding, planting, and harvesting on non-industrial scale farms and are exposed to hazardous conditions. Additionally, Syrian refugee children are vulnerable to exploitation, and forced to work alongside their families in agriculture and service industries.















BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

In 2023, Jordan once again waived a requirement for identity documentation to expand access to education for Syrian and other refugee children for the 2023–2024 school year. However, non-Syrian refugee children, including those from Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia, and children of non-Jordanian fathers face administrative burdens in accessing education. Children in Jordan sometimes face de facto barriers to education, including a lack of schools in rural areas, teacher shortages, a lack of adequate public transportation, and bullying. To alleviate the pressures of overcrowding, the government continued to provide double-shift schools, with Jordanian children attending in the morning and Syrian children in the afternoon. However, both Jordanian and Syrian children attending double-shift schools were vulnerable to child labor because school hours are considerably shorter, and fewer school hours leave more time for work.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Jordan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Jordan’s laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of military recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 73 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 74 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 3(a) and 8–11 of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years		Article 5(b) of the Military Service Act; Article 13(b) of the Officer’s Service Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 3(a) of the National Service Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles 7(a.2) and 10(b) of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 10(a) of the Education Act; Article 20 of the Constitution

Article 21 of the Child’s Rights Act No. 17 of 2022, which was passed by the Parliament in September 2022 and came into effect on January 11, 2023, requires various service providers to report exposure of a child to human trafficking, prostitution, or economic exploitation, including forced labor and forced begging, to competent authorities. While Jordan criminally prohibits trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, it does not criminally prohibit the use of children in prostitution (i.e., payment in exchange for sex acts with a child).



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient resources and a high number of labor inspections per labor inspector hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL), Central Inspection Directorate: Enforces labor laws, including those on child labor. Identifies cases of child labor through worksite inspections and 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 social services. Maintains a hotline, website, and mobile app to receive labor-related complaints, including complaints of child labor.

Public Security Directorate, Criminal Investigation Unit: Investigates and prosecutes violations of the Penal Code, including allegations of the worst forms of child labor. Includes the Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit with MOL that investigates cases of human trafficking and forced labor, refers cases for prosecution, and coordinates with foreign embassies to identify victims of human trafficking and, when needed, to repatriate foreign workers.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **191** labor inspectors conducted **59,525** worksite inspections. The government also conducted **3** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **3** prosecutions, and convicted **1** perpetrator.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p>	<p>National Committee on Child Labor: Formulates new policies, amends legislation as necessary, and oversees the implementation of child labor policies. Led by MOL, members include three other ministries, plus international and civil society organizations. Continued carrying out its coordinating role in 2023.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>National Strategy for the Reduction of Child Labor (2022–2030): 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 to Reduce Child Labor, MOL inspectors monitor child labor and refer cases to the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) and the Ministry of Education for the provision of services. In 2023, the government continued to implement the strategy.</p>
<p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>National Strategy to Prevent Human Trafficking (2023–2026):† Aims to address trafficking in persons through prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnership. Includes goals such as raising awareness of trafficking issues in the media and among workers, developing the legal framework and training law enforcement, alleviating poverty, and preventing truancy. Additionally, intends to reduce child begging. Approved in 2023.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Jordan funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, social programs are inadequate to address child labor in all sectors.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Jordan.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Child Labor Units:<i>†</i> Consist of Child Labor Units within MOSD and MOL. The MOSD unit provides support to 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. Provides services to children engaged in child begging through centers in Madaba and Deleil (Zarqa). The MOL unit coordinates government campaigns against child labor, conducts training, and raises awareness about child labor issues. Manages the Child Labor Monitoring System, a case management tool that helps coordinate efforts by relevant government agencies and civil society organizations to ensure that children are removed from child labor and provided with critical social and educational services. In 2023, the government referred 507 child laborers to social services providers, comprising all child laborers identified by inspectors.</p> <hr/> <p>Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Agriculture Sector:<i>†</i> Aims to reduce child labor in the agriculture sector, taking into consideration vulnerabilities of children and their families, with field visits by joint teams of MOL inspectors and behavior monitors from MOSD and the Family Healthcare Institute of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation. Works in informal tented settlement communities in rural and remote parts of Mafraq and the Jordan Valley that have not received child labor protection support. Active in 2023.</p> <hr/> <p>Program to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Zarqa and Amman: Funded by UNICEF, implemented by the Rowad al Khair Society and with the participation of MOL, this program aims to identify 400 of the most vulnerable children in Zarqa and Amman to receive psychosocial support, access to education, and other training to reduce the number of children subjected to the worst forms of child labor. Active in 2023.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Jordanian law establishes a single General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions to which seventeen legally defined sectoral federations must affiliate: workers may not organize independent unions outside this structure. Independent unions exist, but lack legal recognition to collect dues, formally negotiate on behalf of workers, rent spaces and are unable to meet with the Jordanian government because they are not legally sanctioned. Significant numbers of Jordanian and migrant workers do not feel represented by their unions and are unaware of elections or collective bargaining processes carried out in their name. Civil servants, domestic workers, gardeners, cooks, and agricultural workers also do not have the right to collective bargaining. In addition, migrant workers are prohibited from forming and leading unions.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



KAZAKHSTAN

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Kazakhstan made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In December 2023, Kazakhstan’s Parliament ratified the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure. In addition, Kazakhstan created Territorial Mobile Teams in 2023, which include police, prosecutors, labor inspectors, and non-governmental organization representatives, and travel to remote rural areas to carry out explanatory work among the population and immediately respond to reports of forced labor on farms. The government also provided law enforcement authorities with targeted trainings on detecting and prosecuting child labor and child trafficking and conducted many public awareness campaigns on these issues. However, despite these efforts, Kazakhstan is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because on December 30, 2021, the President of Kazakhstan signed a law significantly restricting the circumstances under which unannounced inspections can be performed. The new law, which came into effect on January 1, 2023, codifies and expands the government’s existing practice under which unannounced inspections are prohibited in all cases, except in the presence of compelling grounds, and supporting evidence enclosed to such a complaint, or if an inspection is mandated by judicial or tax authorities. The lack of unannounced inspections may leave potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected in workplaces. In addition, the government extended a moratorium until January 1, 2024, under which labor inspections of small enterprises were permitted only in cases that pose a mass threat to life and health, law and social order, or national security. The government also lacks current, comprehensive, and detailed research on child labor, including in cotton production.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	3.2% (79,690)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	90.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	3.6%

Children in Kazakhstan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in catering services.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture,† including farming, harvesting vegetables, weeding, collecting worms, harvesting cotton, milking cows, and tending livestock including goats and horses.



Industry

Construction† and road repair.



Services

Working in markets and on the streets, including transporting and selling items,† domestic work,

including childcare, working in gas stations,† car washing,† working in catering and in restaurants† as waiters, and working as bus conductors †.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging. Use in illicit activities, including selling drugs.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Kazakhstan's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that minimum age provisions and hazardous work prohibitions apply to all children, including those working without an employment contract.

Increase the compulsory education age from 17 years old to 18 years old to align with the minimum age for work.

Criminally prohibit slavery-like practices or debt bondage.

Criminally prohibit and penalize the users (clients) of prostitution involving children.

Enforcement

Strengthen the labor inspection system by eliminating barriers for onsite and unannounced inspections, as well as targeting high-risk industries for inspections.

Lift the moratorium on labor inspections at small enterprises and ensure that the labor inspectorate conducts routine, targeted, and unannounced labor inspections at such businesses as appropriate.

Strengthen detection of child labor by ensuring that targeted enforcement efforts, such as raids and unannounced labor inspections, are undertaken throughout the year and in all sectors in which children are vulnerable to child labor, including in agriculture.

Publish information on criminal enforcement efforts to address the worst forms of child labor, including the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted.

Publish labor law enforcement information, including labor inspectorate funding amount, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor, including the activities carried out by children working in agriculture, in construction, and in the service sector, to inform policies and programs.

Remove barriers that prevent migrant children, ages 16 and 17, from obtaining legal work permits for light work.

Ensure that all children have access to education and may receive official diplomas, including children with irregular migration status and children with disabilities, and raise awareness in marginalized communities about existing remedies for denial of school enrollment.

Institute programs to address child labor, particularly in the agriculture and service sectors.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Child migrants from other countries in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan, are especially vulnerable to forced labor, trafficking, and other forms of abuse. Refugee children may only officially register for annual permits rather than a more permanent residency status, and migration authorities sometimes register migrant children under age 16 as unnamed family members, which prevents them from receiving Kazakhstani identification documents. Without permanent status or identification documents, these children have limited access to many social and legal services. Children in welfare systems are also especially vulnerable to forced labor and trafficking.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Migrant children face barriers to accessing education in Kazakhstan. Children may enroll in school without identification documents but may not receive a diploma without them. Landlords often do not register migrant tenants, which may prevent migrant children from enrolling in local schools. Children with disabilities in Kazakhstan also face challenges accessing education due to inaccessible school buildings, a lack of specialists able to provide inclusive education services, and official disability evaluations that render children eligible for at-home education only or ineligible for education entirely. In addition, disabled children who are unable to access mainstream or inclusive education are at greater risk of being sent to state institutions where they may not be able to access education and may be subjected to labor exploitation.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Kazakhstan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Kazakhstan's laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work or minimum age for hazardous work because they do not cover children working in the informal sector; and Kazakhstan's laws prohibiting commercial sexual exploitation of children also do not meet international standards because they do not criminalize the users (clients) of prostitution involving children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Articles 31 and 69 of the Labor Code; Article 153 of the Criminal Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 26.1(2) of the Labor Code; Article 153 of the Criminal Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 26.1(2) of the Labor Code; Decree of the Minister of Health and Social Development No. 944 of 2015
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 7 of the Labor Code; Articles 3, 128, and 135 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 135 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 134, 135, and 312 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 132, 133, 135.2(9), 296 and 297 of the Criminal Code; Article 26.1(2) of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 19 Years		Article 38.1(2) of the Military Service Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 31 of the Military Service Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 41 of the Law on Children's Rights; Articles 132 and 267 of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years ‡		Article 30 of the Constitution; Articles 12 and 30 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Article 30 of the Constitution

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The Labor Code’s protections, including the minimum age for employment and prohibitions on hazardous work, do not meet international standards because they do not cover children working without a written employment contract. Additionally, no law criminalizes slavery-like practices or debt bondage. Although Article 134 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan criminalizes involving a minor in prostitution, and Article 135 of the Criminal Code criminalizes trafficking of minors, including for the purpose of sexual exploitation, no law clearly criminalizes the users (clients) of prostitution involving children. However, government officials report that any users identified in the course of a prostitution investigation involving minors will be charged under Article 122, which criminalizes adult sexual relations with persons under the age of 16. Children in Kazakhstan are required to attend school through the completion of secondary education, which typically ends when they are around age 17. This standard makes children aged 17 vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school but are still subject to restrictions on the hours and times of day they may work and may, therefore, be pushed into informal work outside of legal contracts.

 **ENFORCEMENT**

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Kazakhstan took actions to address child labor. However, a labor inspection moratorium and restrictive laws on unannounced inspections hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP): Enforces child labor laws and conducts labor inspections through the Ministry’s Committee on Labor and Social Protection. Responsible for implementation and control functions in the fields of labor, employment, and social protection. Implements the special social services program that funds shelters for survivors of trafficking, including children. The Committee on Labor, Social Protection, and Migration is divided into two different committees, with one focused on labor and social protection and the other on migration. The chairperson of the labor and social protection committee holds the position of Chief Labor Inspector and coordinates the work of labor inspectors in the regions.

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA): Oversees police and specialized law enforcement officials, including an Anti-Trafficking Unit. Identifies and carries out initial investigation of criminal cases involving the worst forms of child labor and hazardous child labor and refers cases to the Prosecutor General’s Office for prosecution. Engages in identification and protection of human trafficking victims, including child victims.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducts Worksite Inspections	Yes	Routinely Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	No	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

An **unknown** number of labor inspectors conducted **6,926** worksite inspections and found **1** child labor violation. The government also conducted **11** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, although it is **unknown** how many prosecutions were initiated, and at least **1** perpetrator was convicted and sentenced to 8 years in prison.

Legislative barriers prevent labor inspectors in Kazakhstan from performing unannounced, onsite inspections. All small businesses are exempt from inspections in their first 3 years after registration, and thereafter, an inspection can only occur at a small enterprise in cases that pose a mass threat to life and health, law and social order, or national security. Moreover, additional restrictions came into force in 2023 that prohibit unannounced inspections unless suspected violations are supported by compelling evidence or the inspection is mandated by judicial or tax authorities, and the President extended a labor inspection moratorium on all small businesses through January 1, 2024. This law officially codifies what has been standard practice since 2020 and is in part a response to complaints from business owners that labor inspectors use unannounced inspections as a pretext to solicit bribes. These restrictions limit inspectors’ ability to check that working conditions comply with national labor laws, including those related to child labor.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Kazakhstan established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Coordination Council on Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Implements the 2022–2024 National Action Plan (NAP) on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, overseen by MLSP. The Council met once in June 2023.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Kazakhstan established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan (NAP) on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2022–2024): Includes a set of organizational and legislative measures aimed at eliminating child labor issues by strengthening administrative liability for hiring minors without an employment contract, requiring employers to inform local executive bodies about minors involved in work, introducing an electronic recording system for labor contracts, and conducting public awareness campaigns. The NAP also includes an initiative to conduct research, analysis, and monitoring of child labor including children engaged in seasonal work. The NAP remained active during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Action Plan (NAP) to Counter Trafficking in Persons (2021–2023): Included legislative improvements to provide shelter assistance to non-citizen survivors, align the legal definition of human trafficking with international standards, and improve identification procedures for front-line officials. Some of the activities specifically targeted the worst forms of child labor, including efforts to prevent forced child labor, including the exploitation of child labor in cotton and tobacco fields and at construction sites; monitoring and exchanging data between competent agencies on advertisements of human trafficking and child pornography; and conducting human trafficking prevention and awareness campaigns for children. In November 2023, a new NAP was approved for 2024–2026.</p> <p>Roadmap to Strengthen the Protection of the Rights of Children, Counter Domestic Violence, and Address Suicide Among Adolescents (2020–2023): Addressed issues related to children’s mental health and social well-being by creating a more supportive environment in schools and promptly identifying children in need of social assistance.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Kazakhstan funded and participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not address child labor in all sectors.</p> <p>‡ Program is funded by the Government of Kazakhstan. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Shelters for Trafficking Victims:‡ Funded by the government and operated by NGOs, shelters provide legal, psychological, medical, and educational services to survivors of human trafficking, including minors, in seven provinces and two cities, including Almaty. These shelters provide social support and other assistance to minor survivors of trafficking, including foreign survivors and those from underserved populations, and are staffed by trained social workers who remain present for all interviews, including medical evaluations. In 2023, at least six children were removed from the circumstances of their exploitation and referred for services and rehabilitation at the government-funded shelters.</p> <p>Awareness-Raising Campaigns:‡ Raise public awareness on child labor issues, including the annual "Twelve Days Against Child Labor" campaign, conducted by the government June 1–12, 2023, in cooperation with NGOs, labor inspectors, and police.</p> <p>Juvenile Care Centers:‡ Ministry of Education-run centers including the Centers for the Adaptation of Minors and Children Support Centers for children in difficult circumstances. There are shelters that provide assistance to orphans, unhoused children, children with behavioral problems, children who committed crimes, and children who are victims of crimes, including child survivors of the worst forms of child labor. These Centers remained active during the reporting period.</p>

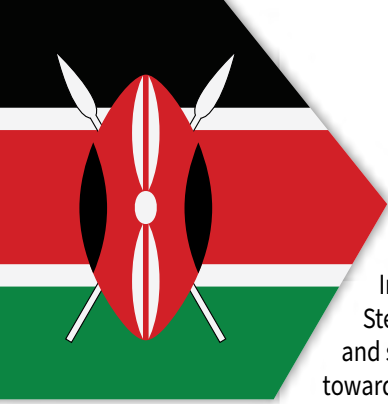
For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects



WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Kazakhstan maintains burdensome requirements for union registration at the sectoral and national level. Unions must register and maintain affiliates in at least half of Kazakhstan’s provinces and cities of national significance and are frequently denied affiliate registrations for minor paperwork issues. Kazakhstan also limits workers’ ability to engage in collective action, including by imposing criminal penalties for calling for strike action deemed illegal by a court and restricting individuals’ ability to hold trade union officer positions after completing a criminal sentence. This can hinder workers’ ability to report child labor, particularly in agriculture and the informal economy.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



KENYA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Kenya made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The National Steering Committee convened for the first time in several years to develop a workplan for a new child labor survey and support entry into the Alliance 8.7 pathfinder country program, which commits Kenya to accelerated progress towards elimination of child labor and forced labor. The government also continued its support of county-level child labor interventions, including convening two new children’s advisory committees in Busia and Kwale counties, while the Nyamira county assembly adopted a child protection policy to direct resources for child labor awareness and prevention activities. In addition, the government significantly increased the number of labor inspections it conducted at worksites from 8,131 to 13,268 during the reporting period. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Kenya is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because elements within the Kenyan Defense Forces continued to provide in-kind support to a Somali federal member state group that has been implicated in the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Key coordinating committees related to the elimination of child labor also lack adequate resources to carry out their mandates, and the labor inspectorate does not have sufficient financial and human resources, affecting its ability to ensure that child labor laws are enforced.

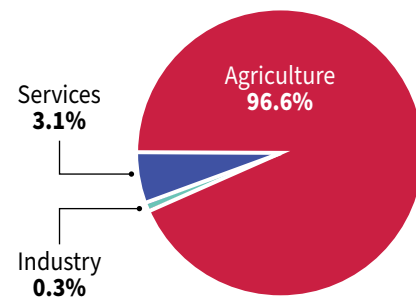


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	5.9% (782,258)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	16.4% (569,031)
Attending School	5 to 14	92.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	6.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Kenya are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced domestic service. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming,† including cultivating land, tilling, planting, weeding, and harvesting of sisal, sugarcane, tea, coffee, tobacco, khat (*miraa*),† rice, and other crops, herding† cattle, and fishing.†



Industry

Construction,† quarrying† for stone, sand harvesting,† and mining† for gold.



Services

Domestic work,† street work, including vending and hawking, transporting† goods and people. Also engaged in garbage scavenging† and begging.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in slaughterhouses, begging and street vending, domestic work, herding livestock, fishing, as well as commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, including in drug trafficking, intelligence gathering to plan for criminal operations, and providing security for criminal operations.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO Convention (C.) 182.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Kenya’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Broaden light work regulations to limit the number of hours for all light work activities, including for work outside of agriculture or horticulture.

Raise the minimum age of work from age 16 to age 18 to align with the compulsory education age and ensure that children up to the compulsory education age are covered by the light work provisions.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education cover all children in Kenya, including non-citizens.

Increase penalties for all recruitment of children by non-state armed groups, whether by force or not, to be commensurate with crimes of similar gravity, such as forcible recruitment for armed conflict.

Enforcement

Publish information about labor law enforcement efforts, including the funding of the labor inspectorate, the number of child labor violations, and the number of child labor violations in which penalties were imposed and collected.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 165 to 1,314 to ensure adequate coverage of all sectors, including agriculture, and to reduce the burden of labor arbitration responsibilities that limit time dedicated for onsite labor inspections.

Ensure that the Ministry of Labor has sufficient material resources, including vehicles, to address labor violations in all geographical regions and sectors, including in the informal economy.

Publish information about criminal law enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations and prosecutions initiated.

Ensure that magistrates handling child protection cases receive training on policies, laws, and procedures, including the Sexual Offenses Act and the Children Act.

Coordination

Strengthen coordination between the Child Labor Unit and the Department of Children Services, including sharing of child protection data and referral of child laborers for rehabilitation services, to better facilitate management and resolution of child labor cases.

Ensure that all coordinating bodies, including the National Steering Committee on Child Labor, receive sufficient funding to fully carry out their intended mandates of overseeing efforts to eliminate child labor across government agencies, civil society organizations, and employer organizations.

Increase coordination between the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the State Department for Labor and Skills Development regarding litigation and penalty assessment of cases related to labor violations to ensure timely adjudication of violations related to labor law, including child labor.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Policy on the Elimination of Child Labor and publish results from activities implemented during the reporting period, including implementation of outlined strategies to increase child labor awareness, establish child labor free zones, and improve accessibility to education and social protection programs.

Provide sufficient fiscal resources for public institutions mandated to develop and implement child labor policies, including the State Department for Labor and Skills Development and its National Steering Committee on Child Labor, as well as the State Department for Social Protection.

Social Programs

Put in place measures to strengthen the monitoring, prevention, and remediation of child recruitment into armed conflict, including by armed groups receiving financial, training, transportation, and other forms of in-kind support from Kenyan Defense Forces, and develop accountability mechanisms to hold perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor, including child soldiering, accountable.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including girls and refugee children, by improving access to birth registration documents, increasing the number of schools, and improving existing educational facilities in refugee camps.

Improve access to education by increasing the number of schools and teachers, addressing sexual abuse in schools, and eliminating or defraying the cost of school fees, books, and uniforms.

Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, including establishing interventions to support children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.

Reports indicate that local elements of the Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF) maintained ongoing support of Jubaland Security Forces (JSF), a federal member state group in Somalia, that the UN and other organizations report as recruiting and using children in armed conflict. Such support has included training, provision of transportation (including armed vehicles), intelligence sharing, payment of salaries of JSF combatants, and allowing JSF regiments to garrison in northern Kenya, near the border of Somalia. Local organizations and community leaders in both northern Kenya and Jubaland have likewise observed recruitment by the JSF, sometimes even occurring on the Kenyan side of the border, with some KDF elements providing direct training to child recruits. Research cannot identify any screening or mitigation procedures within the KDF to ensure that children recruited by the JSF and their respective units are not benefiting from Kenyan training and other forms of tactical support.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

A severe drought and food shortages have increased school absenteeism and child labor vulnerabilities, particularly in Kenya’s northern counties. In addition, children living in refugee camps, especially those who identify as LGBTQIA+, are targeted for commercial sexual exploitation. Moreover, traffickers increasingly exploit migrant children and children with disabilities in forced begging. Finally, criminals involved in terrorist networks lure and recruit Kenyan children to join non-state armed groups, primarily Al Shabaab, in Somalia, sometimes with fraudulent promises of lucrative employment.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Some children living in Kenya lack birth registration and national identification documents, resulting in difficulties in accessing services and education. Although Kenya law mandates free basic education and prohibits schools from charging tuition fees, the cost of unofficial fees levied by local schools, as well as the cost of books and uniforms, prevent some children from attending school, particularly at the secondary level. Long travel distances, teacher and staff shortages, and sexual abuse within schools further contribute to children in Kenya dropping out of school and becoming vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Furthermore, children seeking asylum or of refugee status are often restricted to living in designated areas, such as the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, where there are limited schools and existing facilities lack sufficient teachers, textbooks, electricity, and latrines.











LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Kenya has not ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. In addition, Kenya’s laws do not meet international standards on free public education because the law allows fees to be levied for children residing in Kenya but who are not Kenyan citizens.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Sections 2, 52, and 56 of the Employment Act; Sections 12 and 16 of the Employment (General) Rules; Section 10.4 of the Children Act; Sections 18.1 and 18.2 of the Children Act of 2022
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 2, 53.1, and 64 of the Employment Act; Sections 2 and 10.1 of the Children Act; Sections 2 and 18 of the Children Act of 2022
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Sections 2 and 52 of the Employment Act; Section 12 and the Fourth Schedule of the Employment (General) Rules

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 30 of the Constitution; Sections 2, 4, and 53.1 of the Employment Act; Sections 254–266 of the Penal Code; Sections 2–4 of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act; Section 13.1 of the Children Act; Section 18.3 of the Children Act of 2022
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2 and 3 of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act; Section 13.1 of the Children Act; Sections 2, 4, and 53.1 of the Employment Act; Sections 174 and 254–265 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 2 and 13–16 of the Sexual Offenses Act; Sections 2 and 53.1 of the Employment Act; Sections 2 and 15 of the Children Act; Sections 2 and 22 of the Children Act of 2022
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Sections 2 and 53.1 of the Employment Act; Sections 2 and 16 of the Children Act; Section 24 of the Children Act of 2022
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Sections 2 and 10.2 of the Children Act; Section 243 (1) of the Kenya Defense Forces Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Section 243 (1) of the Kenya Defense Forces Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Section 2, 3, and 10 of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 19 and 246 of the Children Act of 2022
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years		Sections 2, 28, and 30 of the Basic Education Act; Section 2 and 13 of the Children Act of 2022
Free Public Education		Section 7.2 of the Children Act; Sections 28, 29, and 32 of the Basic Education Act; Article 53(b) of the Constitution; Section 13 of the Children Act of 2022

*Country has no conscription

Children ages 13 to 16 are only permitted to perform light work. However, Kenya’s laws do not meet international standards because they do not limit the hours for light work, except for agricultural and horticultural work. In addition, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Moreover, although the Basic Education Act establishes free basic education and stipulates that children should not be denied admission to school on account of not paying fees, the law does not meet international standards because it permits schools to levy tuition for children who reside in Kenya but do not have Kenyan citizenship. Kenya’s legal framework also does not fully meet international standards for the protection of children from armed conflict, because the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act does not criminalize the recruitment of children in the absence of force or fraud. Although the Children Act of 2022 addresses this gap by prohibiting the use of children by armed groups both within Kenya and across the border, the penalty of imprisonment not to exceed 12 months is not commensurate with crimes of similar gravity.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Kenya took actions to address child labor. However, an insufficient number of labor inspectors hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection: Conducts labor inspections and enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor, and directs activities to promote awareness and withdraw children from child labor through its Child Labor Division. Includes the State Department for Labor and Skills Development (SDLSD), which houses the Child Labor Division. Also includes the State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizen’s Affairs (SDSPSCA), which maintains a Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) that collects, aggregates, and reports on child protection data, including child labor violations, to assist child protection officials to track and report on child protection activities. CPIMS reported that 214 children were removed from child labor during the reporting period, though it does not specify whether these occurred as a result of labor inspections or other interventions. Research indicates that there are gaps in coordination in information sharing and case management between SDLSD and SDSPSCA.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP): Enforces laws through the prosecution of criminal offenses, including labor-related offenses. ODPP directs the National Police Service, including its Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Protection Unit, to investigate cases related to the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **165** labor inspectors conducted **13,268†** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into the worst forms of child labor were conducted or whether prosecutions were initiated, although **1** perpetrator was convicted and sentenced to 81 years imprisonment.

† Data are from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Kenya established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including a lack of coordination between government agencies involved in the protection of children from child labor.

National Steering Committee on Child Labor: Oversees efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor and comprises government agencies, private employers, and workers’ organizations. Children Area Advisory Councils work with the National Steering Committee to carry out child labor prevention efforts at the county level. The National Steering Committee met in February 2023 to advance progress on Kenya’s intention to join Alliance 8.7 as a pathfinder country and to commission a study on child labor prevalence in the country. In addition, the government convened new children’s advisory committees in Busia and Kwale counties.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Kenya established policy related to child labor. However, insufficient funding hindered implementation of this policy.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Policy on the Elimination of Child Labor: Proposes strategies to prevent and eliminate child labor, including its worst forms, while providing support and rehabilitation for children removed from child labor. Includes measures to establish child labor-free zones, increase financial support for labor law enforcement, raise awareness, improve accessibility to education and social protection programs, and integrate child labor into corporate responsibility programs.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Kenya funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in the commercial sexual exploitation of children.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Kenya.</i></p> <p><i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Safety Net Program (2013–2026):<i>†</i> Government-funded, social safety net program, with support from the World Bank. During the reporting period, the government spent \$202 million (31 billion Kenyan shillings) on social assistance to vulnerable groups. In addition, the government disbursed approximately \$2 million (338.6 million Kenyan shillings) through its Hunger Safety Net Program to respond to the drought and food crises faced by Kenya’s northern counties, reaching 119,406 families as of August 2023.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



KIRIBATI

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Kiribati made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Kiribati's Child Labor Taskforce held its first meeting and sought assistance from the International Labor Organization to prepare an action plan to address child labor. The government also partnered with non-governmental organizations to train youth in job skills who dropped out of school early. In addition, the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources required businesses to submit employment records for inspection to ensure adherence to labor laws, including those related to child labor. However, existing laws do not identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children. The law also does not specify the conditions under which light work can be undertaken. In addition, the government has not adopted a national policy to address the worst forms of child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	14.6% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	29.7%

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Kiribati are subjected to child labor in street work, including vending.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Services

Street work, including vending.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the continued prevention of child labor in Kiribati.

Legal Framework

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children.

Ensure that the law specifies the activities and number of hours of work per week that are acceptable for children engaged in light work, and the conditions under which children can engage in light work.

Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 15 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Ensure that labor inspectors are inspecting informal sectors where there is evidence of child labor violations, such as street work.

Institutionalize training on child labor laws for labor inspectors and criminal investigators and allocate funding for this training.

Publish criminal law enforcement information, including the number of criminal inspections conducted, the number of investigators, and data on the number of prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Government Policies

Adopt a national policy specifically focused on addressing child labor.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor in all sectors to inform policies and programs.

Implement social programs to address all relevant forms of child labor, including street vending.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Kiribati has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Kiribati's laws do not meet international standards regarding the types of hazardous work prohibited for children because specific types of work have not been identified by national law or regulations.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Section 115 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Section 117 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 244 and 249 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(a, c, d) and 122 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2, 43, and 44 of the Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act; Section 118(1)(b) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 136, 141, and 142 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(f), 118(1)(g), and 118(2) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Section 142 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(h) and 118(1)(i) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Sections 118(1)(e) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Section 7 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Section 11 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

The government has not identified by national law or regulations the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. Also, under Article 116 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code, the laws do not specify the activities and hours of work per week that are acceptable for children engaged in light work, or the conditions under which light work can be undertaken. In addition, as the minimum age for work of 14 is lower than the compulsory education age of 15, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Kiribati took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of labor inspections in the informal sector and information about criminal investigations hinders enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment and Human Resources (MEHR): Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor. During the reporting period, MEHR required businesses to submit employment records for inspection to ensure adherence to labor laws, including those related to child labor.

Kiribati Police Services: Enforce criminal laws related to forced child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, Kiribati's 4 labor inspectors conducted 43 worksite inspections, including at wholesalers, restaurants, and state-owned businesses. 0 investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted and 0 prosecutions were initiated or perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Kiribati established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

** Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.*

Child Labor Taskforce:* Chaired by the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources. In 2023, the Taskforce held their first meeting and sought assistance from the ILO to prepare an action plan to address child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The government has established a policy related to child labor. However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including coverage of all worst forms of child labor.</p> <p>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>Children, Young People, and Families Welfare System Policy (CYPFWS): Focuses on strengthening the welfare system, in part by implementing services to prevent the abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation of children and young people, including in hazardous labor. During the reporting period, the government remained active in strengthening child protection activities and in implementing its CYPFWS policy.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Kiribati funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in street work.</p> <p>† Program is funded by the Government of Kiribati. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>SafeNet:† Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports, and Social Affairs-coordinated program that allows government, churches, and NGOs to provide assistance to victims found in exploitative and violent situations. The program remained active during the reporting period.</p> <p>Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT) Foundation Skills Program:† The Foundational Skills Program supports children who leave school early by providing opportunities to develop marketable skills. During the reporting period, KIT partnered with NGOs like ChildFund Kiribati to allow participation by youth who had dropped out of school early. A total of 55 youths participated in courses at KIT in 2023.</p> <p>Hotlines:† Child Protection Officer, Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports, and Social Affairs, and police-supported 24-hour hotlines are available for children to report violations, request information, or obtain access to services. The hotlines remained active during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



KOSOVO

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Kosovo made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed an amendment to the Law on Social and Family Services, which continues to require the provision of social services for at-risk populations and now prohibits children’s work in nightclubs and similar venues. It also requires medical and psychological treatment and compensation for victims of child abuse. The government also doubled the budget for its labor inspectorate, increasing it from almost \$875,000 in 2022 to over \$1,706,000 in 2023, and hired 25 additional labor inspectors. In addition, the Municipality of Pristina spearheaded a new social welfare payment and childcare program for families below the national poverty line. However, despite these efforts, the Committee on the Prevention and Elimination of Hazardous Forms of Child Labor continued to lack the financial support necessary to coordinate government actions to combat child labor, and children from vulnerable groups encountered barriers to accessing education.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	9.0% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	11.7%

Children in Kosovo are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and use in illicit activities sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work, scavenging, and agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including operating agricultural machinery.†
Forestry, including operating machinery and transporting wood.



Industry

Mining, including underground extraction of coal by hand.† Construction and manufacturing, including operation of tools at hazardous worksites.†



Services

Street work,† including vending small items,† manual transport of goods,† and begging.† Garbage scavenging at dumpsites.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Kosovo’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminalize and prescribe punishments for the customer’s use of a child for prostitution regardless of whether the child is a victim of trafficking.

Enforcement

Conduct labor inspections in the informal sector, including in markets.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Coordination

Ensure that inter-ministerial communication between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other government entities on issues concerning policymaking and enforcement related to child labor is improved.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor in Kosovo to inform policies and programs.

Eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including by making additional efforts to register Ashkali, Balkan Egyptian, and Roma children at birth and ensuring the availability of native-language teaching materials and subsidized transportation.

 **CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**







Kosovo is a source and destination country for child trafficking, especially of girls who are forced to work in massage parlors by organized criminal groups. In addition, Kosovan children and children from neighboring countries, especially Albania, are forced into street work, including begging, in Prizren and Pristina. Most of these children come from the Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian minority ethnic groups. Economically vulnerable Kosovan children also sometimes work in construction and agriculture to support their families.

 **BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**

Children from minority ethnic communities, especially girls, sometimes experience difficulty accessing education, in part due to a lack of native-language educational materials and insufficient subsidized transportation for rural children. In addition, although the law guarantees educational access to children who lack birth documentation, some undocumented children encounter challenges when trying to enroll in school. Children who do not attend school are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.

 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Kosovo holds a unique status *vis-à-vis* UN recognition that complicates its ratification of international agreements. In addition, Article 22 of Kosovo’s Constitution incorporates the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into its national legal framework. However, Kosovo does not meet the international standard for prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 7 of the Law on Labor
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 20, 23, 26, 27, and 45 of the Law on Labor
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Administrative Instruction No. 05/2013; Article 45 of the Law on Labor; Administrative Instruction No. 2008
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 1 and 6 of the Law on Labor; Articles 163 and 165 of the Criminal Code; Articles 1 and 5 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting Victims of Trafficking.
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 165 and 166 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3.1.8 and 5 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting Victims of Trafficking; Articles 21 and 22 of Administrative Instruction No. 10/2017
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 171, 231 and 235 of the Criminal Code; Articles 47 and 62 of the Law on Child Protection

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 267–273 of the Criminal Code; Article 43 of the Law on Child Protection
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Article 6 of the Law on the Kosovo Security Force
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Article 149 of the Criminal Code; Articles 38 and 39 of the Law on Child Protection
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡	✓	Article 9 of the Law on Pre-University Education
Free Public Education	✓	Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo; Article 9 of the Law on Pre-University Education

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In 2023, the government passed a new Law on Social and Family Services, which expanded upon existing legislation on the regulation of social welfare programs and continued to require the provision of social services to at-risk populations. It also amended the existing Law on Child Protection to prohibit children from working in nightclubs and similar venues (Article 44), as well as incorporated an administrative order that requires medical and psychological treatment and compensation for victims of child abuse, including child labor. Kosovo does not meet the international standard prohibiting commercial sexual exploitation of children because the current laws require the child to be a victim of trafficking in order to prosecute.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Kosovo took actions to address child labor. However, the labor inspectorate failed to conduct inspections in the informal sector, where much of the country’s child labor problem occurs.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Inspectorate: Operates under the Ministry of Finance, Labor, and Transfers (MFLT). Conducts inspections to enforce child labor laws, removes children engaged in hazardous work, and refers children to regional centers for social work. During the reporting period, the government nearly doubled the Labor Inspectorate’s budget to \$1,706,228 from \$874,798, allowing MFLT to hire an additional 25 labor inspectors and carry out inspections in the high-risk agriculture and construction sectors.

Kosovo Police: Enforce criminal laws on forced child labor and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Through the Anti-Trafficking Directorate, enforce laws on child trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **60** labor inspectors conducted **8,114** worksite inspections, finding **4** child labor violations. The government also conducted **92** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated **35** prosecutions, and convicted **12** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Kosovo established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, inter-ministerial communication between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other government entities concerning policymaking and enforcement related to child labor needs to be improved.</p>	<p>Committee for Prevention and Elimination of Hazardous Forms of Child Labor: Coordinates government policies to combat child labor. Comprises representatives of government agencies, the Kosovo Police, trade unions, and an NGO. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to facilitate collaboration among its constituents and conducted two mandatory annual meetings.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Kosovo established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>Children’s Rights Action Plan (2021–2025): Aims to improve social, economic, and legislative rights and the protection of children through developing institutions at the local and national levels. Includes the accompanying Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2019–2023). In 2023, the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo responded to 60 complaints related to the protection of vulnerable children and developed a program to standardize its reporting and monitoring mechanisms related to children’s rights.</p> <p>Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2019–2023): Called for a comprehensive framework of policies for the protection of children’s rights, including the prevention, protection, and reintegration of children involved in hazardous child labor practices, such as street work and underground ore extraction. The policy expired during the reporting period.</p> <p>Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities (2022–2024): Focuses on employment, social issues, healthcare, education access, and housing for the Ashkali and Roma communities. In 2023, the government met with civil society partners to discuss areas for improvement under the strategy, including providing more support for targeted communities in the areas of education, employment, and housing.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Kosovo funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, which cover the main sectors in which child labor has been identified in the country.</p> <p><i>‡ Program is funded by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Hope and Homes for Children:[‡] Government-funded NGO shelters that accommodate child victims of abuse and human trafficking. In 2023, the government continued to support the shelters through financial and in-kind contributions.</p> <p>UN Kosovo/UNICEF Program (2021–2025): Aims to increase availability of early childhood education opportunities, inclusion of children with disabilities, and justice for children through data generation and evidence-based policymaking. During the reporting period, UNICEF continued to collaborate with NGOs throughout Kosovo to provide supplementary educational services to children from vulnerable communities.</p> <p>Helpline:[‡] Government-operated hotline for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. The Helpline was active during the reporting period.</p>

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 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, the Kyrgyz Republic made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration created a digitized system to track higher risk children and provide them with appropriate resources. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, the Kyrgyz Republic is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because in 2022 the President of the Kyrgyz Republic signed a law extending a labor inspection moratorium through December 31, 2023. The lack of unannounced inspections may leave potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected in workplaces. The government also lacks current, comprehensive, and detailed research on child labor, including in cotton production, and the labor inspectorate lacks adequate staff and resources. Finally, prohibitions for the commercial sexual exploitation of children are insufficient because no law clearly criminalizes the users (clients) of prostitution involving children.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	34.0% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	94.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	38.4%

Children in the Kyrgyz Republic are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including cultivating or harvesting cotton and tobacco,[†] and herding.



Industry

Mining,[†] construction, manufacturing, working in sewing workshops.



Services

Working in bazaars and markets, including portering, shining shoes, and selling items, including food and beverages, working in restaurants and cafes, washing and repairing cars, and street work including begging and collecting and sorting plastics.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation and use in illicit activities, including the trafficking of drugs, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Kyrgyz Republic's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law’s minimum age provisions apply to all children, including those working without an employment contract.

Raise the minimum age for work from 16 to 17 to align with the compulsory education age.

Criminally prohibit and penalize the use of a child for prostitution, including the users (clients) of prostitution involving children, and ensure that laws prohibiting the offering of children for prostitution cover all children under age 18.

Ensure that the law’s light work provisions specify the activities in which children may undertake light work.

Enforcement

Ensure that the labor inspectorate conducts unannounced, onsite labor inspections, and assesses penalties as appropriate.

Publish complete information about the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration's efforts to enforce prohibitions on child labor, including information on the inspectorate's funding and the number of unannounced labor inspections conducted at worksites.

Ensure that child labor violations identified by regulatory and law enforcement agencies are appropriately referred for investigation and prosecution.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from around 50 to 144 labor inspectors to provide adequate coverage for the labor force of approximately 2.9 million workers and ensure that inspectors have adequate resources to conduct inspections in rural areas.

Conduct targeted inspections in all sectors in which children are highly vulnerable to child labor, including in rural areas, agriculture, and manufacturing.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies investigate, prosecute, and impose penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor under the appropriate statutes, including cases of possible law enforcement and judicial complicity in abusing victims and protecting offenders.

Require law enforcement officials to follow established procedures and ensure that child survivors or trafficking are not subjected to questioning without the support of a social worker or psychologist.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the Program for the Support of Family and Protection of Children and publish results of activities implemented during the reporting period.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Ensure that all children have access to free education, including children with disabilities, children in rural areas, those lacking residence registration, and those without birth certificates and guardianship documents.

Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, particularly in commercial sexual exploitation and in agriculture, including cultivating cotton.

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key social programs to address child labor and make information about implementation measures publicly available.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children of parents who have migrated abroad seeking work, particularly girls, are especially vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and may be targeted by traffickers. NGOs report that more than 85 percent of children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation are the children of migrants. In addition, within the Kyrgyz Republic, children whose parents have migrated abroad for work have been identified engaging in child labor in markets. Children from rural and low-income families and those in the child welfare system, including orphans, are also at higher risk of being subjected to trafficking. There are no shelters specifically for child survivors of trafficking, meaning they are sometimes placed in orphanages where they may be at higher risk of re-victimization. Additionally, the practice of "bride kidnapping" puts girls at higher risk of forced marriage and possible subsequent forced labor or trafficking into commercial sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

In the Kyrgyz Republic, documentation requirements for school registration continue to prevent some children from enrolling in schools, particularly children whose parents are labor migrants. Some children who have either migrated to the Kyrgyz Republic with their parents or were left behind when their parents migrated to other countries or other areas of the Kyrgyz Republic for work cannot access their birth certificates or guardianship documents, which are required for school enrollment. Children living in rural areas and those with disabilities, especially girls, also have difficulty accessing education. In rare cases, some parents prevent children from attending school for religious reasons or require older children to miss school to care for their younger siblings. Children living in state institutions or orphanages are more likely to leave school due to violence or the need to earn money.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Kyrgyz Republic has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, the Kyrgyz Republic's law does not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because it does not cover children working in the informal sector; and on the commercial sexual exploitation of children because the law does not criminalize the users (clients) of prostitution involving children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 6 and 18 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 294 and 446 of the Labor Code; Article 72 of the Code on Administrative Liability; Article 15 of the Code on Children
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 294 of the Labor Code; Decree 565 on the List of Works Prohibited for Persons Under Age 18
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 10 and 446 of the Labor Code; Article 15.2 of the Code on Children; Article 1 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking; Articles 166 and 170 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 1 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking; Articles 166 and 167 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 166–168 of the Criminal Code; Articles 5 and 15 of the Code on Children
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 19, 180, 181, 282, and 283 of the Criminal Code; Articles 5 and 15 of the Code on Children
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 24.1 of the Law on Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 17.1 and 22.1 of the Law on Military Service; Article 392 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 392 and 395 of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years ‡		Article 16 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Article 16 of the Law on Education

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The Kyrgyz Republic's labor law governing the minimum age for work is not in compliance with international standards because according to Article 6 of the Labor Code, protections granted in the Labor Code, such as the minimum age for employment, are not extended to children engaged in non-contractual employment. Restrictions on the number of hours that children under age 18 may work are also not enforced for children engaged in non-contractual employment. In addition, as the minimum age for work stated in the Labor Code is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Further, the government does not have a list of permitted light work activities. Finally, although Articles 166–168 of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic criminalize involving a minor in commercial sexual exploitation, no law clearly criminalizes the users (clients) of prostitution involving children.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic took actions to address child labor. However, a labor inspection moratorium and lack of sufficient staff and resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration (MLSSM): Monitors worksites and refers child laborers to social services. Coordinates with the Inspectorate for Minors' Affairs in the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA), the Prosecutor General's Office, and regional State District Administration authorities to enforce child labor laws. Identifies at-risk children, refers them for social services through a Child Protection Plan, and monitors their well-being, including the prevention of their involvement in child labor. Runs a hotline to which anyone can report child abuse and exploitation, including the worst forms of child labor, and refers cases for criminal prosecution, if appropriate, as well as a hotline through which children, parents, and legal guardians can report child abuse and exploitation, including the worst forms of child labor, and receive referrals for services. These hotlines fielded more than 77,000 calls during the reporting period. In 2023, created a digitized system to track children "in difficult situations" with the goal of streamlining the process for providing them services.

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA): Enforces criminal laws related to child labor, including its worst forms. Conducts independent inspections and joint raids with MLSSM to identify violations, which can be referred to the Prosecutor General's Office for prosecutorial action.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	No	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, approximately **50** labor inspectors conducted **1,155** inspections between January and October, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is also **unknown** how many investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

Legislative barriers prevent labor inspectors in the Kyrgyz Republic from performing unannounced, onsite inspections. In addition, a series of government moratoriums on labor inspections, including a moratorium that was in effect from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, continue to impede the authority of labor inspectors in the Kyrgyz Republic, and it is not clear how many inspections were performed onsite. Though the MOIA is authorized to conduct unannounced raids, in practice these investigations often require coordination across several government ministries and are frequently announced in advance. Labor inspectors are also often reluctant to impose penalties or refer cases for criminal prosecution, instead preferring to recommend remediation of observed violations. Sources also indicate that there are fewer than 50 labor inspectors employed by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, and that staffing and resources are inadequate to monitor labor conditions or to detect violations, including of child labor laws, especially in remote, rural areas. While the government generally respects workers' rights to form and join trade unions, most unions fall under the umbrella of

the government-affiliated Federation of Trade Unions. The law does not protect workers from retaliation for striking, nor does it include workers in domestic service. Migrant workers and workers employed by foreign companies (notably, Chinese-owned mining companies) may also have their rights curtailed. These factors have created an environment that limits unions’ independence and ability to advocate effectively for workers’ rights, including reporting child labor.

 **COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>The Kyrgyz Republic established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Commissioner for Children's Rights: Appointed by the President, tasked with promoting and coordinating the activities of government bodies and local governments to protect the rights and interests of children in the Kyrgyz Republic and Kyrgyz children residing abroad. In 2023, the Commissioner led a delegation to the UN to report on steps taken to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including prevention of child marriage and supporting children with disabilities as well as those who are institutionalized or the children of migrants.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The Kyrgyz Republic has established a policy related to child labor. However, it is unclear if this policy is being implemented.</p>	<p>Program for the Protection of Children (2023–2026): Includes action items on addressing child labor, including revising the hazardous work list for children, enhancing social services for vulnerable children and families, and creating an Action Plan on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Kyrgyz Republic funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not address the full scope of the problem.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>MLSSM Social Protection Program:[†] Aimed at identifying children in difficult circumstances, monitoring their progress, and providing access to resources including direct financial assistance. Includes a government-funded cash transfer program for families living in difficult situations, including families with children engaged in child labor.</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) National School Attendance Database:[†] Unified online database maintained by MOES to monitor school enrollment and attendance. Based on these data, government ministries and local government officials can identify and assist children who may be vulnerable to child labor.</p> <p>Shelters for Human Trafficking Victims:[†] Includes two 24-hour shelters funded by the government and operated by NGOs that serve survivors of violence of all ages, including child trafficking survivors. One center is located in Bishkek and the other is in Osh. The MOIA also operates two daytime children's shelters, also located in Bishkek and Osh.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



LEBANON

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Lebanon made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Lebanon's Internal Security Forces reported that officers received training related to human rights, child protection, and conducting investigations involving minors. However, government officials continued to indicate that funding is insufficient to properly carry out their duties. In addition, Lebanese law prohibits inspectors from inspecting informal workplaces, where the majority of child labor occurs, and social programs targeting child labor remained insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Lebanon are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in illicit activities and forced labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including the production of potatoes and tobacco,† and fishing.



Industry

Construction,† including carpentry and welding,† working in slaughterhouses† and butcheries, and making handicrafts.



Services

Street work,† including begging, street vending, portering, and scavenging garbage,† and collecting waste materials, including scrap metal. Working in small shops and groceries and in food service,† including working as waiters. Domestic work† and maintenance and repair of motor vehicles.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Use in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs, and arms dealing. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture and forced begging.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Lebanon's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 15 to align with the compulsory education age.

Ensure that the minimum age for work applies to all children, including informal workers, domestic workers, and all agricultural workers.

Enforcement

Track and publish information on labor law enforcement on an annual basis.

Authorize the labor inspectorate to inspect informal employment.

Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties and allow inspections of informal workplaces.

Provide Ministry of Labor inspectors with proper funding and resources and ensure that routine inspections are carried out.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Employ at least 120 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 1.8 million people.

Publish information on the number of prosecutions initiated and number of convictions for violations of criminal laws.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies, including the Internal Security Forces' Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, have the necessary funding and staff to investigate and prosecute criminal cases of child labor in accordance with the law, and establish field offices outside of Beirut.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Steering Committee on Child Labor meets on a regular basis and coordinates activities to address child labor.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Action Plan to End Street Begging by Children and the Work Plan to Prevent and Respond to the Association of Children with Armed Violence in Lebanon during the reporting period and that data on these activities are published on an annual basis.

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Ensure access to public education for all children, including refugees, by improving transportation, addressing bullying and harassment, accommodating students with disabilities, ending corporal punishment, improving facilities, and accommodating students coming from a different curriculum than that in Lebanon.

Expand programs, including social services for human trafficking survivors, to fully address the extent of child labor, including in construction and forced labor in agriculture.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Child labor is prevalent among refugee communities in Lebanon. An estimated 75 percent of Syrian refugee children working in the Bekaa Valley do so in agriculture. Children, particularly Syrian refugee children, are forced to beg throughout the country due to extreme poverty. Children involved in street begging are at increased vulnerability for further exploitation and abuse. Syrian refugee children are also subjected to forced labor in agriculture. In addition, some Syrian refugee children and their families in the Bekaa Valley are kept in bonded labor in agriculture to pay for makeshift dwellings.

**BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**

In 2023, more than 6,000 students were affected by school closures in southern Lebanon due to increased hostilities with Israel. Both Lebanese and Syrian refugee children face barriers to accessing education because of public sector strikes, which include teachers. Additionally, Syrian refugee children face other difficulties, such as the cost of transportation and supplies, fear of passing checkpoints or of violence, lack of private sanitation facilities for girls, discrimination, bullying, corporal punishment, and a different curriculum in Lebanon than in their country of origin. In 2023, the government continued its policy of admitting all refugee children regardless of whether they had the required documentation for school enrollment. However, the public school system in Lebanon lacks the capacity to accommodate the large number of school-age Syrian refugee children. Despite the official policy of schools being open to all, in practice, a small number of refugees have been denied access to schools. Students without transcripts are also only eligible to receive a certificate, rather than a diploma, causing some undocumented students to drop out. Furthermore, most children with disabilities, including refugee children, were unable to attend school due to insufficient accessibility or inadequacy of facilities, lack of specialized facilities, or unavailability of tailored services for children with disabilities.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Lebanon has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict. In addition, Lebanon's law related to the minimum age for work does not meet international standards because it excludes domestic work and non-industrial, non-trade agriculture.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Article 22 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 1 and 2 and Annex 2 of Decree No. 8987
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Annex 1 of Decree No. 8987
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 8 of Decree No. 3855; Articles 569, 586.1, and 586.5 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 506, 523, 525–527, 586.1, and 586.5 of the Penal Code; Decree No. 8987
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 586.1, 586.5, and 618 of the Penal Code; Article 13 of the Law on Drugs
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 30 of the National Defense Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 586.1 of the Penal Code; Annex 1 of Decree No. 8987
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years‡		Article 49 of the Education Law
Free Public Education		Article 49 of the Education Law

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The Labor Code applies only to workers who perform work in industrial, trading, or agricultural enterprises and excludes domestic work and non-industrial, non-trade agriculture. This does not conform to international standards that require all children to be protected by the minimum age for work. In addition, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Lebanon took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Enforces child labor laws through desk review and workplace inspections. MOL’s Child Labor Unit acts as the government focal point for child labor issues and raises public awareness about child labor and the right to education. Receives complaints of child labor violations on its Child Labor Unit hotline. Is only able to enforce labor laws in the formal sector, leaving children vulnerable to exploitation in the informal sector such as agriculture, small businesses, and in private homes.

Internal Security Forces: Enforce laws regarding child labor through the Anti-Human Trafficking and Moral Crimes Unit. The Anti-Trafficking Unit is reportedly underfunded and understaffed, and it has no field offices outside Beirut.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found in 2023. Although investigations into **115** suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, it is **unknown** whether prosecutions were initiated or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Lebanon established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including a lack of efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

National Steering Committee on Child Labor: Raises awareness; coordinates efforts among government agencies; establishes standard practices; develops, enforces, and recommends changes; and ensures that government agencies comply with the law. Led by MOL, includes representatives from six other ministries and other institutions and international organizations. The committee has not met since 2021.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Lebanon established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of a comprehensive policy on eliminating child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to End Street Begging by Children: Seeks to end child begging by ensuring legal protection for street children, building capacity to protect street children, rehabilitating and reintegrating street children, and conducting outreach regarding the problem. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Action Plan to End Street Begging by Children during the reporting period.</p> <p>Work Plan to Prevent and Respond to the Association of Children with Armed Violence in Lebanon: Provides the policy framework for the prevention of children's involvement in armed conflict. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Work Plan to Prevent and Respond to the Association of Children with Armed Violence in Lebanon during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Lebanon participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not adequately address the full scope of the problem.</p>	<p>UNICEF Programs: UNICEF implements several programs with the Ministry of Social Affairs to address child labor through interventions. In 2023, UNICEF established three drop-in centers for children involved in street work where they can access services such as education, psycho-social support, and recreational activities. Additionally in 2023, UNICEF supported the establishment of two regionally based child labor task forces to develop action plans to reduce child labor in coordination with civil society organizations and the Ministry of Social Affairs. UNICEF also continued to support <i>Haddi</i>, a national grant for children. The program provides cash assistance to children at risk of child labor and child marriage, and to children with disabilities, children in non-formal education, and children needing nutrition support. The program pays between \$40 and \$80 to Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian families. Since <i>Haddi's</i> inception as an emergency program in 2021, it has paid out tens of millions of dollars to vulnerable families.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



LESOTHO

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Lesotho made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government drafted a National Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labor. However, Lesotho's compulsory education age of 13 is below the minimum age for work, which is 15, leaving children between these ages vulnerable to child labor. The government also lacks effective coordination mechanisms to address child labor, and labor inspections are not conducted in high-risk sectors, including the informal sector, in which child labor is prevalent.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	30.1% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	93.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	32.1%

Children in Lesotho are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in animal herding.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Herding animals, including cattle,[†] farming, including planting, applying pesticides, and harvesting.



Services

Domestic work, street work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including theft.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Lesotho's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Increase the compulsory education age from age 13 to age 15 to align with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Provide adequate funding, resources, and training to labor inspectors and criminal investigators to carry out mandated duties.

Ensure that labor inspections are conducted in all relevant sectors, including the informal sector.

Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Coordination

Improve coordination and communication among all coordinating bodies to clarify mandates to address all forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as livestock herding and commercial sexual exploitation.

Social Programs

Institute programs that mitigate the impacts of HIV and support orphans and vulnerable children.

Ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to education, including by providing adequate facilities to meet their needs.

Address educational and logistical gaps resulting in reduced opportunities for secondary education, including the shortage of teachers and schools, the lack of sanitation facilities, and secondary school fees.

Increase efforts to provide birth registration documentation to children to reduce their vulnerability to the worst forms of child labor.

Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Due to the high rate of HIV among adults, many children in Lesotho become orphans and are vulnerable to human trafficking. Children, especially orphans, also sometimes voluntarily travel to other countries, including South Africa, for domestic work, and upon arrival they are subsequently detained in prison-like conditions and sexually exploited. In addition, boys involved in animal herding are exposed to harsh weather conditions, sometimes leading to death.














BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

In Lesotho, primary education is free; however, there is a fee for secondary education that is cost prohibitive for many families. Many children also face limited access to education due to a shortage of teachers and schools, which causes them to travel long distances. In addition, the absence of sanitation facilities in schools remains a barrier for many children, especially menstruating girls. Children with disabilities also encounter difficulties with ill-equipped educational facilities. According to the Ministry of Social Development, children must produce copies of birth certificates to qualify for the Orphans and Vulnerable Children program, which provides school fees and uniforms for orphans and vulnerable children. The low number of birth registrations in Lesotho may prevent some children from accessing this program, increasing their vulnerability to child labor because they are unable to attend school. There are also reports that children from ethnic minorities such as Zulus, Xhosa, and Baphuthi are prevented from attending school because classes are not instructed in their native language.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Lesotho has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Lesotho’s laws do not meet the international standard on compulsory education age because the compulsory education age of 13 is less than the minimum age for work, leaving children ages 13 and 14 more vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to be in school nor are they legally permitted to work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 228(1) of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act; Article 124(1) of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 230(1) of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act; Article 125(1) of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 230(3) and 231 of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 7(1) of the Labor Code; Article 9(2) of the Constitution; Article 5 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 5 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Anti-Trafficking in Persons (Amendment) Act (2021)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 77 of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act; Articles 10–14 of the Sexual Offenses Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 45(b) of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 22(o) of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 22(o) of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 22(o) of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act
Compulsory Education Age, 13 Years ‡		Part I Article 3(a), and Part II Articles 6 and 7(3)(c) of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Part II Articles 4(1)(a) and 4(1)(b) of the Education Act; Article 22(k) of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Lesotho took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of inspections in high-risk areas and funding issues may have hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE): Enforces minimum-age requirements and hazardous work prohibitions while conducting general labor inspections. There is also a Child Labor Unit within the Ministry that conducts trainings on the worst forms of child labor for district child protection teams. Research indicates that MOLE has insufficient resources, including an inadequate budget, and did not conduct enough inspections in areas in which child labor is known to occur, including the informal sector. In 2023, MOLE drafted a National Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labor, which would become the primary document covering child labor issues.

National Police: Investigate criminal violations related to the worst forms of child labor. Manage all trafficking in persons-related cases within the Lesotho Mounted Police Service and refer cases for prosecution to the Public Prosecutor's Office. Also accompany MOLE officials on inspections related to hazardous work and forced child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **24** labor inspectors conducted **423** worksite inspections, finding **3** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Lesotho established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including a lack of coordination among agencies.

Program Advisory Committee on Child Labor/National Task Team: Led by MOLE’s Child Labor Unit and includes representatives from government ministries, trade unions, NGOs, and international organizations. In 2023, the government conducted trainings at schools and public gatherings on child labor issues, and also carried out house-to-house child labor sensitization visits. In addition, the task force held a workshop to discuss how to incorporate the National Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labor into their overall strategy.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Lesotho established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all the worst forms of child labor, including livestock herding and commercial sexual exploitation.

National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Strategic Framework and Action Plan (2021–2026): Supports national and international obligations and commitments regarding human trafficking in line with the vision to eliminate all forms of trafficking in persons in Lesotho. Provides victim protection, guidance for the successful arrest and prosecution of offenders, and preventive measures. During the reporting period, the government organized three trafficking in persons awareness campaigns: in Ladybrand on August 28, in Ficksburg on August 29, and in Qwaqwa on August 31. The police, labor ministry, refugees’ unit, two NGOs, and representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister participated in the campaigns.

‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Kingdom of Lesotho: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper—National Strategic Development Plan (2018–2023): Identified child protection services (from the Child and Gender Protection Unit, social welfare and health agencies, and the justice system) and their capacity to respond adequately to cases of violence, abuse, and exploitation of children, including child labor. Outlined prevention measures. The Government of Lesotho continued to implement this policy during the reporting period.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Lesotho funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address all worst forms of child labor occurring in Lesotho, including child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, due to a lack of funding.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children Scholarship Program:† Government program that pays for tuition, uniforms, supplies, and boarding fees for orphans and vulnerable children. Benefited over 17,368 orphans and vulnerable children during the reporting period.

World Food Program: Provides incentives for primary school children from impoverished backgrounds to attend school and improves retention. Provided meals to over 50,000 pupils in 2023.

† Program is funded by the Government of Lesotho.

Child Grant Program: Provides cash transfers to impoverished families and households with orphans and vulnerable children. Implemented by the Ministry of Social Development and funded by the EU with technical support from UNICEF. Benefited 51,177 households during the reporting period.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



LIBERIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Liberia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government conducted a study on street children and began mapping child labor incidents throughout the country in order to raise awareness. The Social Safety Net Program also provided an estimated 25,000 households (about 105,000 individuals) in four counties (Bomi, Grand Kru, Maryland, and River Gee) with cash transfers. However, the government has yet to accede to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict or the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. The government's social programs are also not sufficient to address the scope of the problem in the country, and labor and criminal law enforcement efforts are hindered by a lack of financial resources.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	30.4% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	80.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	28.6%

Children in Liberia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work. Children also perform dangerous tasks in construction, including carrying heavy loads.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of rubber, including cutting trees with machetes and using acid; farming activities.



Industry

Mining diamonds, including washing gravel and using mercury and cyanide, crushing stones; construction, including carrying heavy loads.†



Services

Domestic work; street work, including begging and selling goods.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Use in illicit activities, including selling drugs; forced labor in domestic work, street vending, mining, begging, and work on small rubber plantations; commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Liberia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Accede to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Enforcement

Ensure that penalties for employing children under the minimum age for work are stringent enough to deter violations.

Publicly release labor and criminal law enforcement data, including the number of inspectors, inspections, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions done by the labor inspectorate during the reporting period.

Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties for child labor violations.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate's complaint and referral mechanism is adequately supported and operational.

Ensure adequate funding for child labor enforcement agencies, such as the Ministry of Labor, the Liberia National Police, and the Women and Children Protection Section, and provide necessary training for such officials to enforce child labor laws.

Disaggregate the child endangerment cases prosecuted through the Ministry of Justice to determine the number of cases related to the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure adequate funding for the National Commission on Child Labor's program activities to address child labor.

Ensure that coordinating bodies, including the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force, are implementing effective case referral mechanisms.

Government Policies

Carry out activities under the National Action Plan for Trafficking in Persons and the Social Welfare Policy, and publish information about the implementation of these policies on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Collect and publish comprehensive research data to determine child labor activities and to inform policies and programs.

Improve access to education by subsidizing school-related costs, and reduce barriers to education by building additional schools, hiring more rural teachers, providing sufficient learning materials, addressing sexual abuse in both schools and orphanages, and providing adequate transportation.

Ensure that children do not leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

Expand existing social programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, especially in forced domestic work, the production of rubber, commercial sexual exploitation, and the mining of diamonds.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Human traffickers are often family members or respected members of the community who promise poor rural relatives and neighbors better economic or educational opportunities for themselves (in the case of young women) or their children, but instead the young women and children are subjected to domestic servitude, forced begging, forced labor, street vending, and occasionally sex trafficking. In addition, there are reports that children residing at various orphanages within the capital of Monrovia and in other parts of the country are vulnerable to sexual exploitation due to a lack of basic necessities at the orphanages, including food.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Section 9 of the Children’s Law mandates free basic education from grades one to nine, but the cost of registration fees, uniforms, transportation, books, and school supplies limits access to education for some children. In addition, family members often require children to work long hours, denying them the ability to attend school, even if they could afford to do so. In schools throughout rural communities, few teachers are on the official Ministry of Education payroll, and communities supplement their school’s teaching force by recruiting and paying small stipends for volunteer teachers. For secondary school students (grades 10–12), reports indicate that there is a shortage of teachers, insufficient learning materials, a lack of educational facilities, and inadequate transportation, all of which limit access to education. In addition, some teachers sexually exploit students in exchange for the promise of good grades, resulting in children avoiding or dropping out of school. Research also indicates the ongoing practice of temporarily removing boys and girls from formal schooling to participate in initiation rituals that transition a child into adulthood; many of these children may not return to school after their participation in these initiation ceremonies, making them more vulnerable to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Liberia has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict or the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. However, Liberia’s laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 2.3 and 21.2 of the Decent Work Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 7 and Section 9.1 of the Children’s Law
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 21.4 of the Decent Work Act; Hazardous and Light Work List of 2023
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 2.2 of the Decent Work Act; Article 7, Section 8 of the Children’s Law; Article 12 of the Constitution; Article 1 of the Act to Ban Trafficking in Persons Within the Republic of Liberia
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 7, Section 8 of the Children’s Law; Article 1 of the Act to Ban Trafficking in Persons Within the Republic of Liberia
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 2.3 of the Decent Work Act; Article 3, Section 21 of the Children’s Law; Article 1 of the Act to Ban Trafficking in Persons Within the Republic of Liberia

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 2.3 of the Decent Work Act; Chapter 16 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 2.3 of the Decent Work Act; Article 3, Section 22 of the Children’s Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 3, Section 22 of the Children’s Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 3, Section 22 of the Children’s Law
Compulsory Education Age, 14 Years		Article 3, Section 9 of the Children’s Law; Chapter 4 of the Education Reform Act
Free Public Education		Article 3, Section 9 of the Children’s Law; Chapter 4 of the Education Reform Act

* Country has no conscription



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Liberia took actions to address child labor. However, funding issues may have hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Conducts worksite inspections and addresses child labor violations.

Ministry of Justice: Promotes and executes the rule of law for public safety, including the prosecution of child labor perpetrators.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Liberia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism is hindered by a lack of financial support.</p>	<p>National Commission on Child Labor (NACOMAL): Coordinates government and civil society activities concerning child labor. Led by MOL and comprising representatives from 16 organizations, including international and civil society organizations. Assists in coordinating child labor investigations. Seeks to reform national child labor laws and create a national child labor database, which would assist surveys on the extent of child labor issues in Liberia. During the reporting period, NACOMAL began mapping child labor incidents throughout the country in order to raise awareness and conduct training for the communities. Despite these efforts, NACOMAL reported insufficient funding to pursue its mandates and continuing coordination issues remained, specifically with the anti-human trafficking task force.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Liberia established policies related to child labor. However, it is unclear whether some of these policies are being implemented.</p>	<p>National Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labor: Aims to reduce child labor and the worst forms of child labor by 50 percent by 2030 through three strategic objectives, including increasing public awareness on the causes and consequences of the worst forms of child labor, strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks to reduce child labor, and increasing social services and protection for children of vulnerable households. During the reporting period, the government conducted a study on street children in Liberia which explored the reasons children were living and working on the streets. In addition, the study also examined the prevalence of children who were unhoused in different counties throughout the country.</p> <p>National Action Plan for Trafficking in Persons (2019–2024): Outlines the government's anti-trafficking efforts, including those for child victims, and creates benchmark goals related to human trafficking. Establishes roles and responsibilities for coordinating government assistance to human trafficking victims and provides shelter and care to children who may have been victims of human trafficking. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.</p> <p>Social Welfare Policy: Focuses on the implementation and enforcement of existing child protection laws and prioritizes the development of action plans and policies that aim to assist children subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Liberia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in domestic work, rubber, diamond mining, and commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Liberia.</i></p> <p><i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Anti-Trafficking Awareness Campaign:† Aims to raise public awareness of human trafficking through the use of radio and billboard messages. During the reporting period, with international support, Liberian security agencies conducted events for the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, which included trainings on human trafficking for security officials.</p> <p>Shelters:† The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection operates two shelters in Margibi and Montserrado counties. It also supports “one-stop centers,” which provide medical care, psychosocial support, and legal services for sexual and gender-based violence victims in other counties, including Lofa, Montserrado, and Nimba.</p> <p>Social Safety Net Program:† Aimed to establish the key building blocks of a basic national safety net delivery system and provide income support to households. The program was implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection and reached more than 25,000 households (about 105,000 individuals) in 4 counties (Bomi, Grand Kru, Maryland, and River Gee) with the Social Cash Transfer program and enrolled over 250,000 households in the Liberia Household Social Registry in five counties (Bomi, Bong, Grand Kru, Maryland, and Nimba). The program expired during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

MADAGASCAR

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Madagascar made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor targeted labor inspections in several regions and in the informal economy, resulting in the identification of 830 children working in stone quarries, domestic labor, vanilla farming, and mica mining. The Ministry of Education also provided school lunches to 1,262,000 children, helping to ensure children stay in school and reducing their vulnerability to child labor. In addition, the government in the Anosy region partnered with Pact Madagascar to conduct a survey on child labor in mica mining that found 780 children working in the sector. However, limited resources for the enforcement of child labor laws may impede government efforts to protect children from the worst forms of child labor, and Madagascar does not have a current national action plan for the elimination of child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	43.2% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	68.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	33.8%

Children in Madagascar are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced labor in domestic work. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the mica mining sector and in agriculture, including in the production of vanilla.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming vanilla and fishing.



Industry

Mining† mica, sapphires, and stones.



Services

Street work, including begging, washing cars, market vending, transporting goods, cleaning the marketplace, and scavenging garbage.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in mining, fishing, quarrying, begging, and domestic work; commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in the production of pornography.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Madagascar's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement

Publish complete labor law enforcement information related to child labor, including the number and types of labor inspections conducted, the number of violations found, and the number of penalties imposed and collected during the reporting year.

Ensure that labor inspectors receive adequate training on child labor in the informal sector, the 2018 updated hazardous work list, and indicators of trafficking in persons, including child trafficking.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 189 to 387 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 15.5 million workers.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate receives adequate funding, including for transportation, to conduct inspections in rural areas and the informal sector.

Develop, disseminate, and implement official standard operating procedures to identify and refer cases of human trafficking, and proactively screen vulnerable populations, including child laborers, for trafficking indicators.

Publish criminal law enforcement data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions, and whether penalties were imposed for violations concerning the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies have sufficient staff, equipment, and transportation to address the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that criminal offenses related to the worst forms of child labor are investigated and prosecuted under the relevant laws.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Committee to Combat Child Labor and regional child labor committees receive adequate funding to carry out their mandates.

Government Policies

Adopt a national policy to address child labor, including its worst forms.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including those in rural communities, by removing informal fees; improving school infrastructure, feeding programs, staffing, and transportation services; providing access to sanitation facilities and feminine hygiene products; and increasing birth registration rates.

Expand the scope of programs to address child labor in agriculture, domestic work, begging, mining, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Extreme weather events, including cyclones in early 2023 and several years of droughts in the southern region of Madagascar, have exacerbated food insecurity and poverty, increasing children's vulnerability to labor exploitation. Two cyclones displaced 88,000 people. In areas of southern Madagascar affected by drought, children were more vulnerable to food insecurity, malnutrition, and, interrelatedly, child labor. According to NGO reports, families made more vulnerable by climate change may attempt to supplement household income by exploiting their children in domestic servitude or sex trafficking.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Access to education is often limited for some children, which also increases their vulnerability to child labor. The birth registration system is not uniformly enforced, and unregistered children typically are not eligible to take official exams. While the constitution guarantees free compulsory education, some public schools require parents to pay informal fees to subsidize teacher salaries and operating costs. In addition, some girls face difficulties remaining in school due to a lack of appropriate hygiene facilities and menstrual hygiene products. Additional barriers to education include a lack of school infrastructure, insufficient numbers of teachers, food insecurity, and limited transportation to schools in rural areas.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Madagascar has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Madagascar's laws are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years	✓	Article 24 of the Constitution; Articles 100 and 261 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of Decree 2018-009
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 101 of the Labor Code; Article 10 of Decree 2007-563
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 101 and 261 of the Labor Code; Articles 10, 12, and 16–22 of Decree 2007-563; Article 19 of Decree 2018-009
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 4 of the Labor Code; Articles 1, 8, and 18 of Law 2014-040; Article 15 of Decree 2007-563; Articles 333 and 335 of Law 2007-038; Article 19 of Decree 2018-009
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 15 and 23 of Decree 2007-563; Articles 333 and 335 of Law 2007-038; Articles 1, 6, 8, 13, and 22 of Law 2014-040
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 13, 23, and 24 of Decree 2007-563; Article 335 of Law 2007-038; Article 1 of Law 2014-040
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 11, 14, and 23 of Decree 2007-563
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Article 11 of Ordinance No. 78-002
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 11 of Ordinance No. 78-002
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Articles 15 and 23 of Decree 2007-563
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years ‡	✓	Article 24 of the Constitution; Article 39 of Law 2008-011
Free Public Education	✓	Article 24 of the Constitution

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Madagascar took actions to address child labor. However, lack of staff, equipment, and transportation for both the labor inspectorate and criminal law enforcement agencies hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Civil Services and Labor's Division for the Prevention, Abolition, and Monitoring of Child Labor: Enforces child labor laws, coordinates and evaluates efforts to eliminate child labor, and oversees national and regional child labor coordination committees. In 2023, the labor inspectorate conducted target inspections in several regions specifically aimed at addressing child labor in the informal sector. However, research indicates that Madagascar does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties.

Ministry of Justice: Enforces laws pertaining to violence against children, including human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. During the reporting year, the cybercrime police unit investigated cases of online sexual exploitation involving 25 children, and the police investigated 33 criminal cases involving child domestic workers. However, due to lengthy judicial processes and lack of victim-witness assistance during criminal proceedings, families often choose to settle trafficking crimes through informal payment or conflict resolution arrangements outside of the formal court system.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **189** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections. The government conducted an **unknown** number of investigations and prosecutions, and it is **unknown** if perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Madagascar established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, coordination efforts at the national and regional levels were hindered by insufficient financial resources.

National Committee to Combat Child Labor: Coordinates programs, advises on child labor legislation and regulations, and supports regional child labor committees. Regional committees also work to identify activities to promote the elimination of child labor and gather data, as well as coordinate, monitor, and evaluate efforts. During the reporting period, the regional child labor committee of Fort Dauphin established a new work plan, supported the creation of local child labor committees in four communes, and coordinated efforts to support vulnerable communities in mica mining areas. However, the National Committee and the regional committees continued to lack sufficient funding to operate effectively.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Madagascar established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not include a comprehensive national child labor policy covering all worst forms of child labor in the country.</p>	<p>Joint Action Plan to Address Issues Affecting Children and Households in Mica Exploration in the Anosy Region: Aims to reduce child labor in the production of mica in the southern region. During the reporting year, the Regional Committee to Combat Child Labor of the Anosy region collaborated with Pact Madagascar for a survey on mica mining that led to the identification of 780 working children.</p> <p>National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons: Outlines strategy and policy to address trafficking in persons in Madagascar. Emphasizes prevention; social and economic services for survivors; prosecution of traffickers, including through improving front line law enforcement; coordination between government ministries and partners; and bilateral and multilateral partnerships in the field of diplomatic, judicial, police, and economic cooperation. During the reporting period, the government began exploring the development of an implementation plan for this policy.</p> <p>Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children in the Tourism Industry: Implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and supported by ILO and UNICEF, aims to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism sector. During the reporting period, the National Office of Tourism developed a training module for tourism operators on the code of conduct and trained 20 national trainers, including from the Ministry of Justice, the National Police, and the Gendarmerie.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Madagascar funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not fully cover all sectors in which child labor is present.</p> <p><small>† Program is funded by the Government of Madagascar.</small></p>	<p>Social Support and Reintegration Programs:† Include government programs that provide social and reintegration services for survivors of child labor exploitation, such as the Ministry of Labor's Manjary Soa Center, which provides educational support and other services to survivors of child labor, and the Center for Emergency Shelter Service (<i>Centre d'Accueil d'Urgence</i>) in Antananarivo, which assists children referred by the police, including children exploited in domestic work and other urban sectors. In addition, the Ministry of Population's Child Protection Networks coordinate with NGOs to provide lodging and other services to survivors of trafficking in persons, including children. In 2023, the Center for Emergency Shelter Service received 43 child domestic workers who had survived child trafficking.</p> <p>Elimination of Child Labor in Madagascar's Mica Sector: Implemented by Terre des Hommes, targets child labor in the mica sector in southern Madagascar by removing children from mines, facilitating education access for survivors of child labor, improving the mica supply chain, and providing families with income-generating alternatives.</p> <p>Education and School Canteen Programs: Provide access to meals in school and reintegrate out-of-school children into the education system. Include school canteen programs coordinated with the Ministry of National Education and funded by partners, including the World Food Program and the World Bank; <i>Mavitrika Mianata</i>, a school canteen program run by Catholic Relief Services and Global Communities with funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and remedial classes, run by the Ministry of Education with UNICEF support, to reintegrate out-of-school children into the public school system.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MALAWI

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Malawi made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted an updated Tobacco Industry Bill, which reaffirms its abolition of the tenancy system and mandates growers of tobacco to annually report on their efforts to prevent child labor in order to maintain their licenses to sell tobacco. The government also substantially increased resources for a program that provides cash transfers to households vulnerable to child labor by increasing the cash benefit level by 57 percent, expanding coverage from 10 to 15 percent, and introducing 3 months of cash transfers for 105,000 households in urban areas to cushion project participants from *kwacha* post-devaluation impact. In addition, the government approved an Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country policy roadmap, which outlines objectives to accelerate progress to eliminate child labor in Malawi through legal reforms, awareness raising, social protection, and other interventions. However, despite these efforts, minimum age protections do not cover children working in domestic households or on non-commercial farms. Many families also still work under the tenancy, which frequently leads to these families and their children falling into situations of debt bondage.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	26.3% (1,456,305)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	83.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	28.4%

Children in Malawi are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor in the farming of tobacco and in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Planting and harvesting tobacco,[†] production of tea and household crops, livestock herding, and fishing.



Industry

Construction.[†]



Services

Domestic work, vending, and begging.[†]



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced labor in herding animals, tobacco farming, domestic work, and work in small businesses such as rest houses and bars. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Malawi's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminally prohibit the use of a child in prostitution and establish criminal penalties for using boys ages 14 to 17 in prostitution.

Ensure that all forms of children's work, including work conducted by children in homes and on non-commercial farms, receive legal protection, including a minimum age for work that complies with international standards.

Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 18 to align with the compulsory education age.

Criminally prohibit the use of children by adults for illicit activities.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Publish information on labor law enforcement activities, including inspectorate funding, number of labor inspectors, training for labor inspectors, number of worksite inspections, the number of child labor violations identified through inspections, and the number of civil penalties imposed and collected for child labor violations.

Provide the labor inspectorate with sufficient human and material resources, such as vehicles, to conduct regular labor inspections, particularly in the agricultural sector, and to reduce the burden of labor arbitration responsibilities that limit time dedicated for onsite labor inspections.

Ensure that child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation do not fall victim to sexual extortion and are not arrested or detained.

Maintain and publish disaggregated information on criminal law enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, including the age of exploited children and the nature of their exploitation.

Provide criminal law investigators with additional fiscal resources and specialized training for responding to the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Standardize approaches for training and responding to child labor to strengthen coordination and case management among key stakeholders involved in the protection of children.

Ensure that the National Steering Committee on Child Labor is operating according to its mandates and publish information about its activities.

Government Policies

Implement national policies related to prevention and elimination of child labor and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the National Education Sector Plan and the National Youth Policy.

Social Programs

Develop social programs to support families and children transitioning from the tenancy system.

Take measures to address barriers to education, including by defraying auxiliary educational costs, improving school infrastructure, increasing the number of teachers, increasing schools and transportation resources serving rural areas, and instituting mechanisms to address sexual violence occurring within schools.

Ensure that all children are registered at birth and increase efforts to register children who were not issued birth certificates.

Support targeted programs that expand educational opportunities for orphan-headed households and families affected by HIV/AIDS.

Institute safeguards to ensure that households receiving support under the National Social Cash Transfer Program do not use the labor of their children, including by requiring school attendance for children.

Increase the scope of social programs to reach more children at risk of the worst forms of child labor and develop specific programs to target children in domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Some children work alongside family members who are tenants on tobacco farms. In the tenancy system, the quantity and quality of the tobacco sold to farm owners after the harvest season determines the pay tenants receive, incentivizing parents to use their children as workers to increase their earnings. Tenants often incur loans from farm owners during the growing season; in many cases they are unable to repay these debts, resulting in tenants, and often their families, falling into debt bondage. Although the government legally abolished the tenancy system in 2021, research indicates that children continue to be subjected to forced labor conditions while producing tobacco, indicating the need for targeted government programs and interventions to support the transition of tenant farmers and their families to alternative systems of livelihood. In addition, orphaned children may need to assume responsibility as heads of their households, including working to support their families. These children, especially those who become orphaned, are at increased risk of leaving school early and entering into the worst forms of child labor. Moreover, rural-based children are particularly at risk for extreme poverty and economic and climate shocks, likely resulting in higher prevalence of child labor.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although primary education is tuition-free, considerable barriers to education exist, including families' inability to pay required school-related expenses, such as books, uniforms, and examination fees. In addition, long distances, a lack of teachers, safety concerns related to sexual violence within schools, poor school infrastructure, and the lack of desks, water, electricity, feminine hygiene products, and sanitation facilities also negatively impact children's attendance at school. In 2023, schools in Malawi, particularly in the southern region, sustained substantial damage as a result of Cyclone Freddy, which resulted in \$30.2 million in damage to public education assets. Teaching was suspended during the disaster period, affecting over 724,000 learners.









LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Malawi has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Malawi's laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work, prohibition of using children in illicit activities, and prohibition of military recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Section 21 of the Employment Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Section 22 of the Employment Act; Section 23 of the Constitution
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Sections 1–9 and Paragraph 6 of the Employment (Prohibition of Hazardous Work for Children) Order
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Section 4 of the Employment Act (2021); Section 27 of the Constitution; Sections 141 and 257–269 of the Penal Code; Sections 79 and 82 of the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act; Sections 2 and 14–16 of the Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 140–147 and 257–269 of the Penal Code; Section 79 of the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act; Sections 2, 15, and 16 of the Trafficking in Persons Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 137, 138, 140, 142, 147, and 155 of the Penal Code; Section 23 of the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act; Sections 15 and 20 of the Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Section 19 of the Defense Force Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years		Article 13 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Articles 2 and 13 of the Education Act

*Country has no conscription

Section 21 of the Employment Act sets the minimum age for employment at age 14 for agricultural, industrial, or non-industrial work, but exempts work performed in homes and non-commercial farms, leaving children working at these sites without minimum age protections. The minimum working age also is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. In addition, Malawian law does not have criminal provisions for the use of children in illicit activities, such as the selling of drugs. In addition, Malawi's laws do not criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution nor do they assess criminal penalties for using boys between the ages of 14 and 17 in prostitution. Furthermore, although non-state armed groups are not known to recruit children for military activities in the country, Malawi law does not meet international standards because it does not explicitly prohibit this practice. In 2023, Malawi passed the updated Tobacco Industry Bill. The bill reaffirms abolition of both child labor and tenancy labor, and outlines mandates for tobacco growers to include their efforts to prevent child labor in their annual reports to the Tobacco Commission.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Malawi took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial and operational resources for labor inspectors hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Performs inspections and investigates all labor complaints, including those related to child labor and child trafficking. Through its Child Labor Unit, monitors and implements child labor law compliance through monitoring visits. Coordinates with the Ministry of Homeland Security and the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MGCDSW) to conduct investigations and refer children for social services. District child labor offices enforce child labor and human trafficking laws at the district level, including monitoring child labor data and school attendance. With support from the Eliminating Child Labor in Tobacco Foundation, a tobacco industry-funded foundation for elimination of child labor, the MOL is piloting a child labor monitoring system to strengthen data collection, improve identification of working children through school attendance data, and enhance coordination.

Malawi Police Service and Ministry of Justice: Investigate child labor and forced labor cases while providing support services for survivors. The Malawi Police Service is under the Ministry of Homeland Security. Coordinates with Ministry of Justice, which prosecutes criminal offenders of the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	N/A	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **165** labor inspectors conducted **1,096** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of labor inspections. It is **unknown** whether prosecutions related to the worst forms of child labor were initiated or whether perpetrators were convicted, although **27** investigations were conducted.



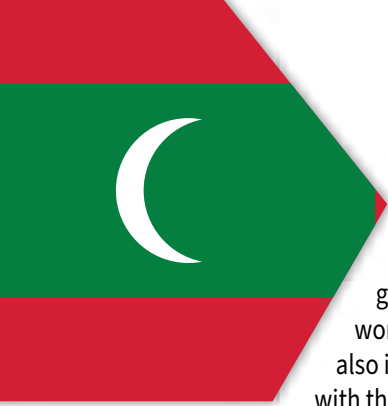
COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Malawi established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unknown whether this mechanism is carrying out activities as intended.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee on Child Labor (NSCCL): Provides policy guidance to support the elimination of child labor and oversees the implementation of the National Action Plan on Child Labor. Chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, with MOL acting as the main technical advisor and secretariat, and includes representatives from government ministries, including Homeland Security and MGCDSW, as well as trade unions, employers, development partners, and civil society organizations. Local coordination of child labor and child welfare issues occurs through District and Community Child Labor Committees. Although the government confirmed the NSCCL was active during the reporting period, it did not provide information on its activities.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Malawi has established policies related to child labor. However, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement these policies during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Action Plan on Child Labor (2020–2025): Outlines the government's strategies for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor, with a focus on six critical areas: (1) laws and policy; (2) institutional and human resource capacity of stakeholders involved in child labor elimination; (3) public education and awareness; (4) prevention, withdrawal, rehabilitation, and social re-integration of children in child labor; (5) mitigating HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses; and (6) improving the availability of information on child labor. During the reporting period, the government reviewed the National Action Plan on Child Labor for purposes of planning a successor policy when the Action Plan expires in 2025.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p><i>†This policy was developed during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Alliance 8.7 Strategic Roadmap:† Establishes priorities and areas of intervention for Malawi to achieve SDG Target 8.7 to eliminate child labor and forced labor, and outlines mandates and responsibilities of Malawi government agencies and development partners. Roadmap identifies the following areas for prioritization: review and institutionalization of legal and policy framework; strengthening enforcement; capacity building; provision of services; educational access; social protection; and coordination.</p> <p>National Child Labor Mainstreaming Guide: Provides guidance to government ministries, departments, and agencies, as well as other social partners in addressing child labor through integration of child labor elimination strategies into key policies. Aims to also enhance responsive planning and service delivery, and multisectoral collaboration in addressing child labor. Research was not able to determine if activities were undertaken to implement the policy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>In 2023, Malawi funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, insufficient integration of child labor strategies into a key government social protection program limited its efficacy in preventing and eliminating child labor.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Malawi.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor</i></p>	<p>National Social Cash Transfer Program (NSCTP):† MGCDWS-led program that supports low-income families in high-risk districts to enable children to stay in school and prevent child labor. Approximately 300,000 households, representing 1.4 million individuals, receive cash transfers from the program, which assists families in food security and payment of educational expenses. In its mid-year budget review held in November 2023, the government increased the cash benefit level by 57 percent, expanded coverage from 10 to 15 percent, and introduced 3 months of cash transfers for 105,000 households in urban areas to cushion project beneficiaries from <i>kwacha</i> post-devaluation impact. However, an evaluation of the program found that it had achieved little reduction of child labor as the work of children only shifted from external employment to labor within the household, due to families using funds from the program to expand their household agricultural activities.</p> <p>Education Assistance Programs:† Government-funded programs to provide educational assistance and support for vulnerable families by addressing educational barriers contributing to child labor. Includes the Complementary Basic Education Program, a \$1.1 million project that promotes school enrollment for children removed from child labor. Also includes MGCDWS 's Early Childhood Development Program that provides services to 2.4 million children through preschools and parenting groups. In 2023, the government provided school meals to more than 2 million primary school learners.</p> <p>ILO Programs: Include Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa (ACCEL), a Government of Netherlands-funded program, totaling \$9.7 million, aimed at promoting employment, inclusive growth, and social protection; acceleration of progress towards Sustainable Development Goals; elimination of child labor; and other issues related to work and social protection. In 2023, ACCEL conducted trainings for the communities on child labor, skills development for youth, and organized field visits. Also include ADDRESS, a Government of Norway-funded project focused on promoting decent work standards in Malawi's tobacco sector, including the elimination of child labor. In 2023, ADDRESS supported trainings and community engagements on a decent work agenda, elimination of child labor, and collective bargaining rights.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MALDIVES

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Maldives made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government amended the General Regulation on the Child Rights Protection Act to include both the types of work that are prohibited for children and those that are allowed under supervision and for training purposes. It also increased the number of labor inspectors from 32 to 52. In addition, the Anti-Trafficking Unit, in collaboration with the Maldives Police Service and Maldives Immigration, conducted a number of human trafficking awareness-raising workshops. However, information on children's work is limited because a national survey on child labor has not been conducted. Laws in Maldives also do not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation because the use, procurement, and offering of a child for pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited. In addition, Maldives lacks a policy to address all relevant forms of child labor and forced child labor in the country, including domestic work and drug trafficking.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	3.9% (2,364)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	79.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	4.0%

Children in Maldives are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, forced labor in domestic work, and use in illicit activities. Children also engage in child labor in domestic work.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Services

Domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in domestic work. Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking of drugs.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Maldives's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that laws prohibiting forced labor criminalize slavery.

Criminally prohibit all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children, including procuring, offering, and using children for pornographic performances.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require the use of force, fraud, or coercion.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)**Enforcement**

Provide labor inspectors with training on child labor issues.

Ensure that the Labor Relations Authority has institutional independence from the Ministry of Economic Development to fulfill its mandate and is not subject to influence from politicians.

Provide investigators with sufficient resources, including transportation and adequate number of staff, to investigate crimes related to the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and judges receive training on the appropriate handling of child labor, sex trafficking, and sexual abuse cases, as well as the proper application of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act to cases.

Impose penalties on individuals who are convicted of child labor crimes.

Investigate and prosecute government officials for their involvement in the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Coordination

Establish coordinating mechanisms to prevent and eliminate all of the worst forms of child labor, including the use of children for domestic work and drug trafficking.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy to address all relevant forms of child labor and forced child labor, including domestic work and drug trafficking.

Ensure that adequate standard operating procedures for victim identification and referral, as well as the provision of needed victim services, are developed and effectively implemented.

Approve and implement a new National Anti-Human Trafficking Action Plan.

Social Programs

Conduct and publish a national child labor survey that includes both Maldivian and migrant children.

Improve access to secondary education, particularly for girls, by ensuring adequate resources, secondary schools, and number of teachers, including for students with disabilities.

Publish information about activities undertaken to implement social programs, including activities carried out by the Family and Children's Service Centers.

Implement and provide sufficient resources for programs that address the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children, use of children for drug trafficking, and forced labor in domestic work.

Establish a permanent dedicated shelter for survivors of human trafficking.

**CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**









Children of undocumented migrants from neighboring countries like Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, are especially vulnerable to labor and sex trafficking. Reports indicate that children from Bangladesh who enter the country on work visas and falsified passports have been targeted for labor trafficking. In addition, Maldivian children from sparsely populated atolls are also vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Children living in the outer islands often migrate to the capital city of Malé for better opportunities in education, sometimes without their parents. Reports indicate that children migrating for educational opportunities have been targeted by gangs to carry out illicit activities like drug trafficking. Maldivian children from the outer islands are also brought to the capital for domestic work. Once there, some of these children may be more vulnerable to labor or sex trafficking.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS




The right to free primary and secondary education is provided to all children in Maldives; however, there is a shortage of trained teachers and classrooms, as well as of teachers and resources for students with disabilities. In addition, some families have difficulty paying for required school materials. Certain practices in schools, such as coeducational classrooms and music played in schools, are seen by some families as contradictory to their religious beliefs, making it difficult for these children to attend school. Girls are less likely to be enrolled in lower secondary education than boys, increasing their risk for child labor.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Maldives has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Maldives's laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children because the use, procurement, and offering of a child for pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited. Maldives's laws on child trafficking also do not meet international standards because they require the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Sections 6 and 12 of the Employment Act; Article 26 of the Child Rights Protection Act; Section 8 of the General Regulation on Child Rights Protection
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 7 and 12 of the Employment Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Section 10 of the General Regulation on Child Rights Protection
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Section 3 of the Employment Act; Sections 10–14, 16–18, 21, and 25 of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act; Sections 3–8 and 11 of the 2nd Amendment to the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act; Article 25 of the Constitution; Sections 26 and 122 of the Child Rights Protection Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 10–14, 17–18, and 21 of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act; Sections 3–8 and 11 of the 2nd Amendment to the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 17–19 of the Special Provisions Act to Deal with Child Sex Abuse Offenders; Sections 11 and 123 of the Child Rights Protection Act; Sections 13, 14, 17, 18, and 21 of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, Sections 4–8 and 11 of the 2nd Amendment to the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Section 133(c)(1) of the Drugs Act; Article 122 of the Child Rights Protection Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Legislation title unknown
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 36(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of Maldives; Article 14 of the Education Act; Section 21 of the Child Rights Protection Act
Free Public Education		Article 36(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of Maldives; Article 5(b) of the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children; Articles 17–20 of the Education Act

*Country has no conscription

In January 2023, the government enacted an amendment to a provision of the Child Rights Protection Act to specify the types of work children are prohibited from and permitted to engage in under supervision and for training purposes. However, the laws prohibiting forced labor in Maldives are not sufficient overall as they do not criminalize slavery. Laws prohibiting child trafficking are also insufficient because they require the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred. Moreover, laws in Maldives do not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation, because the use, procurement, and offering of a child for pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Maldives took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts. Local NGOs have also reported that the Labor Relations Authority lacks the institutional independence from the Ministry of Economic Development to fulfill its mandate.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Relations Authority, Ministry of Higher Education, Labor and Skills Development: Conducts labor inspections and issues fines for violations in accordance with the Employment Act. All labor inspections look for child labor violations related to minimum age requirements as well as forced labor and hazardous work, but there are no officers dedicated to child labor issues. Penalties can be assessed during or after inspections but are not applied during initial inspections. If violations are identified, a timeline is given to rectify violations. Follow-up inspections are then conducted to check compliance with the recommendations of the Labor Relations Authority. Penalties are imposed in the event of noncompliance. If the Labor Relations Authority identifies a child employed in violation of child labor laws during inspections, a referral letter is sent via government intranet to the Child and Family Protection Service, which then takes over the case. Inspections are carried out based on a schedule published at the beginning of every year, with a focus on sectors and establishments that employ large numbers of employees and on establishments that have a history of cases filed with the Labor Relations Authority.

Maldives Police Service: The Family and Child Protection Department investigates complaints of child labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Refers cases to the Prosecutor General’s Office for prosecution and to the Ministry of Gender, Family, and Social Services to provide survivor services. The police’s Anti-Human Trafficking Department investigates human trafficking-related offenses and enforces laws prohibiting trafficking in persons, including cases of child trafficking. In cases regarding child exploitation or trafficking, a victim support officer from the Prosecutor General Office’s Witness and Victims Support Service Unit and a prosecutor will join the case to identify imminent threats or probable risks and ensure the safety of the child survivor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

In 2023, **52** labor inspectors conducted **928** worksite inspections, finding **21** child labor violations. The government also conducted **72** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor and initiated **72** prosecutions.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Maldives established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it lacks a coordination body to cover all forms of child labor in the country, including domestic service.

National Anti-Human Trafficking Steering Committee (NAHTSC): Overseen by the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Office (ATO) and composed of senior government officials and civil society organization (CSO) representatives. NAHTSC is the lead interagency body responsible for coordinating the government's efforts to combat human trafficking and is responsible for organizing meetings and sharing information on human trafficking with its members. ATO is mandated to implement actions under the National Action Plan in collaboration with NAHTSC. Such actions include running a survivor's shelter, raising awareness, conducting baseline studies, and working with relevant authorities to provide protection and services to survivors of human trafficking. In 2023, ATO continued to offer shelter facilities to trafficking survivors, including children, and provided healthcare services, basic necessities, psychological support, translators, and legal support. In addition, the government began a process to assess which government agencies and CSO representatives should be part of the committee; this selection awaits approval by the President's Office.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Maldives established a policy related to child labor. However, not all of the country's child labor issues are covered by the Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan, including the use of children in domestic work and drug trafficking.

Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan: Aims to address human trafficking, including of children, by creating institutions, coordinating activities, raising awareness, and building capacity. The Anti-Trafficking Office drafted an updated version of the action plan during the reporting period and is currently awaiting further review and approval by NAHTSC.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Maldives funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including the use of children for commercial sexual exploitation, drug trafficking, or forced labor in domestic work.

Family and Children's Service Centers:† Nineteen Ministry of Gender, Family, and Social Services-operated centers that provide psychosocial support for child survivors of abuse and exploitation, four of which provide temporary shelter. These centers remained open during the reporting period.

Child Helpline (Number 1412):† A 24/7 toll-free hotline run by the Labor Relations Authority through which cases of child exploitation and violations of the Employment Act can be reported. In 2023, the Child Helpline received 12,068 calls and provided training to helpline staff on identifying child labor.

National Victim Support Hotline (Number 1696):† A 24-hour hotline dedicated to receiving reports of human trafficking and child labor operated by the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Office. In 2023, the government continued to operate the hotline.

† Program is funded by the Government of Maldives.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

MALI

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Mali made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The transition government enacted a new constitution that set the goal of prohibiting slavery, trafficking in persons, and the forced recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. It also enacted a new Anti-Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan. However, despite these initiatives to address child labor, Mali is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because the transition government continued to use children in its armed forces and police in violation of national and international law. In addition, Malian law does not explicitly prohibit the use of children for illicit activities and allows children under the age of 18 to be penalized for acts they were forced to commit as a direct result of being recruited and used by armed groups. The government also lacks a policy to address all worst forms of child labor that exist in the country, and social and rehabilitation services to assist survivors of child labor remain inadequate.

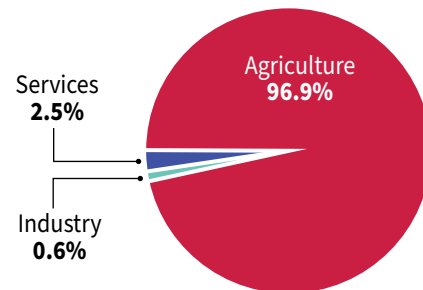


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	30.4% (1,891,233)
Attending School	5 to 14	50.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	19.1%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Mali are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in hereditary slavery, forced begging, and in armed conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, particularly in the production of cotton and rice. In addition, children participate in artisanal gold mining and the Armed Forces of Mali (FAMA) used children in its forces during the reporting period.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Cultivating,† harvesting,† ginning,† processing, transporting,† and applying chemical fertilizers and pesticides,† particularly in the production of cotton and rice. Cutting and collecting trees and hay. Also raising livestock† and fishing,† including collecting fish, throwing nets, and piloting small boats.



Industry

Working in artisanal gold mining,† including working with mercury.† Also working in quarrying,† construction,† and assembling of fishing canoes.†



Services

Domestic work† and street work,† including market vending,† begging,† and performing tasks in the

transportation sector. Use of voluntarily recruited children used in hostilities by state armed groups.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in artisanal mining, domestic work, street work, and farming, including in the production of rice. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Hereditary slavery. Forced begging by Koranic teachers. Use in illicit activities, including in the trafficking of drugs, and forced recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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.

In 2023, the Armed Forces of Mali (FAMA), as well as the gendarmerie and police recruited and used children in its forces. The transition government detained 14 children during operations and held five. Non-state armed groups also forcibly recruited and used children as combatants and for forced labor at some artisanal gold mines under their control in northern Mali.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Mali’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Guarantee free basic education to all children in Mali, including non-citizens.

Establish a minimum age no younger than age 13 for light work and specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken, in accordance with international standards.

Criminally prohibit the use, procurement, or offering of children for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs; and the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups for use in any armed conflict.

Revise the Interministerial Circular on the Prevention, Protection, and Rehabilitation of Child Soldiers to include the specific ages of children covered by the Circular, while ensuring that these ages are in compliance with international standards, and do not penalize children for acts committed as a result of being forcibly recruited into armed groups or used in armed conflict.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors to 162 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 6.5 million workers.

Collect child labor statistics regularly and create a centralized database to track data on the worst forms of child labor.

Provide adequate funding to labor law enforcement agencies and publish information on their efforts, including the number of child labor violations found and the number of inspections conducted at the worksite.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement, including whether new criminal investigators received initial training and whether refresher courses were provided, the number of investigations, violations found, and prosecutions initiated, and whether penalties for violations of the worst forms of child labor were imposed.

Implement the provisions of the Interministerial Circular and the UN-signed Protocol, which require that children in detention for their association with armed groups be transferred to social services or to UN child protection agencies for appropriate reintegration and social protection services.

Ensure that government officials are held accountable for interference in legal cases related to crimes concerning the worst forms of child labor, including in cases of slavery and the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Prosecute and convict perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor in accordance with the law.

Ensure that children under age 18 are not recruited into or used in the national armed forces, in compliance with national law; that all children currently serving in the national armed forces are demobilized; that children are not imprisoned due to association with armed groups; and that appropriate social services are provided to survivors.

Coordination

Clarify roles for the coordinating mechanisms addressing child labor and improve coordination among relevant agencies.

Government Policies

Adopt a national policy that addresses all forms of child labor that are prevalent in Mali.

Implement the Interministerial Circular and the Protocol on the Release and Transfer of Children Associated with Armed Groups and Armed Forces and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Implement key social programs to address child labor, make information about implementation measures publicly available on an annual basis, and institute new programs to address child labor in all relevant sectors, including domestic work, forced begging, and commercial sexual exploitation.

Expand the Child Travel Card Program, which provides identification to Malian children when they are traveling within and outside of the country, to cover children with foreign citizenship.

Make education accessible for all children, including girls and those living in conflict-affected areas, by removing school-related fees, expanding school infrastructure, increasing teacher availability, providing free school supplies, taking measures to ensure the safety of children and teachers in schools, and increasing birth registration rates to ensure that children have access to social services, including education.

Ensure that government social services have sufficient resources and facilities to provide the necessary care for survivors of the worst forms of child labor, including for children subjected to forced begging and children used in armed conflict.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children, especially from the Bellah community, are subjected to hereditary slavery in northern and southwestern Mali. Some children are born into slavery, while others are born free but remain in dependent status. As a result, these children, along with their parents, are forced to work for their parents’ former masters in exchange for food, money, and lodging. Enslaved children perform agricultural or domestic labor and are often sexually abused. In addition, research indicates that children were abducted from Timbuktu and Gossi to be used for exploitation in slavery during the reporting period. Children, particularly those of Songhai ethnicity, also work in debt bondage in the northern salt mines of Taoudenni. Moreover, at least 45,753 children in the north, south, and west are also involved in artisanal gold mining, during which they are exposed to toxic substances and extreme temperatures, transport heavy loads of water and minerals, and work long hours. Around mining sites, children also are victims of commercial sexual exploitation and domestic servitude and are involved in trafficking narcotics. Many of the children working in mines are from neighboring countries in the region. Some boys, including from neighboring countries, are placed in the care of Koranic teachers for education and forced by their teachers to beg on the street or work in fields, after which they must surrender their earnings.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The Constitution guarantees free and compulsory education for citizens; however, many children, especially girls, do not attend school because parents are expected to pay fees for registration, uniforms, transportation costs, and supplies, as well as teachers’ additional salary payments, all of which are cost-prohibitive for many impoverished families. Long distances between villages and schools, and lack of schools, classes, and teachers, are also significant barriers to education. In addition, many children in Mali are not registered at birth, which may prevent them from accessing services such as education. Research indicates that there are hundreds of thousands of children in Mali without birth certificates, and that while lack of documentation does not exclude children from schooling, these students may not be allowed to take national exams. Evidence also suggests that incidences of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, including corporal punishment, prevent some children from remaining in school. Furthermore, internally displaced children faced interruptions in their education and barriers to enrolling in school after fleeing their homes. By January 2024, ongoing insecurity and attacks on schools have resulted in as many as 1,657 school closures.










LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mali has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Mali’s laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of debt bondage, slavery, forced labor, or using children in illicit activities because these actions are not fully criminalized.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 326 of the Labor Code; Article L.187 of the Law 2017-021 modifying the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Hazardous Occupations List; Article 1 of the 2017-4388 Amendment to Hazardous Occupations List; Articles 326 and D.189.14 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Hazardous Occupations List; Article 1 of the 2017-4388 Amendment to Hazardous Occupations List; Article 189 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 4 of the 2023 Constitution; Article L.6 of the Law 2017-021 modifying the Labor Code; Articles 1 and 11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 244 of the Penal Code; Articles 1 and 7 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Article 63 of the Child Protection Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 228 of the Penal Code; Articles 1 and 7 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Article 57 of the Child Protection Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 183 of the Penal Code; Articles 18 and 50 of the Child Protection Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 17 of the Child Protection Code; Articles 31.23 and 31.31 of the Penal Code; Article 5 of the Military General Statute
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 17 of the Child Protection Code; Articles 31.23 and 31.31 of the Penal Code; Article 5 of the Military General Statute
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 31.23, 31.31, and 32 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Articles 26 and 34 of the Law of Education
Free Public Education		Article 11 of the 2023 Constitution; Article 4 of the Law of Education

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In July 2023, the transition government enacted a new constitution that sets the goal of prohibiting slavery, trafficking in persons, and the forced recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. Despite this effort, and although Mali’s Trafficking in Persons Law criminalizes the act of slavery, including human trafficking for the purpose of slavery, Mali’s Labor Code, while prohibiting forced labor generally, does not specifically prohibit hereditary slavery. In addition, Malian law does not prohibit using, procuring, or offering a child for the production and trafficking of drugs as established by international standards. While the Child Protection Code provides some protections for children under age 18, and the Penal Code establishes criminal penalties for several forms of child labor, some offenses included in the Child Protection Code do not carry criminal penalties, such as the prohibition of child recruitment by non-state armed groups. Moreover, although the Child Protection Code prohibits children under age 18 from participating in armed conflicts or joining the national armed forces, it only prescribes prison sentences for those who commit repeat offenses. Meanwhile, the Penal Code only provides criminal penalties for child recruitment if the children recruited are under age 15, rendering 16- and 17-year-olds unprotected. Article 28 of the Penal Code states that crimes committed out of self-defense or under a force that could not be resisted should not be penalized as prescribed in other articles of the Penal Code. Although a 2013 Interministerial Circular on the Prevention, Protection, and Rehabilitation of Child Soldiers states that Article 28 of the Penal Code is applicable to children involved in armed conflict, the Circular does not define the age range of the children it covers. This means that some children under age 18 who are affiliated with non-state armed groups may be penalized for crimes they were forced to commit as a direct result of being a victim of child labor.

The Education Law formally guarantees the right of education only for citizens, potentially making it difficult for non-citizen children to enroll in school. Articles 189.35 and 189.36 of the Labor Code allow children between the ages of 12 and 14 to perform domestic or light seasonal work, as long as it does not impede school attendance or exceed 4.5 hours of work per day. However, Mali’s light work framework does not meet international standards because it applies to children under the age of 13 and does not specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mali took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Civil Service and Social Dialogue (MOL): Investigates Labor Code infractions, including those regarding child labor. Chairs the National Unit to Fight Against Child Labor (CNLTE), which coordinates Mali’s efforts to eliminate child labor and includes representatives from other government ministries, civil society, and worker and employer organizations. One labor inspector in each region is designated as the point of contact for CNLTE staff to facilitate regional coordination.

Ministry of Justice’s Special Judicial Office and Specialized Investigation Brigade: Functions within the National Police and enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Mali established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism lacks the financial resources necessary to carry out its mandate.</p>	<p>National Committee to Track Child Labor (CDN): Functions under MOL and acts as the main coordinating body for the elimination of child labor in Mali. Composed of several ministries, NGOs, business organizations, and trade unions. During the reporting period, the CDN held regular meetings but activities to address child labor did not take place due to budgetary constraints.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Mali established policies related to child labor. However, the country lacks a policy that covers all worst forms of child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Anti-Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan (2023–2027):† Led by the Ministry of Justice, contains provisions for prevention, protection of victims, prosecution of perpetrators, and coordination.</p> <p>Interministerial Circular and the Protocol on the Release and Transfer of Children Associated with Armed Groups and Armed Forces: Provides a framework that highlights the responsibility of the government to prevent children’s involvement in armed conflict, and to protect and reintegrate those children who become involved. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement these policies during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Mali funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in domestic work, forced begging, and commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the transition Government of Mali.</i></p>	<p>Child Travel Card Program:[†] Program overseen by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family’s (MPFEF) Directorate for the Promotion of Children and Family (DPCF). The Child Travel Card Program (<i>Titre de Voyage pour Enfant</i>) is carried out as part of the Directorate’s efforts to address child trafficking by facilitating proper identification of children traveling within and outside Mali. Failure to show a child travel card prompts follow-up actions to confirm whether the child is a victim of human trafficking. Research indicates that this program does not cover foreign citizen children.</p> <hr/> <p>Program to Support Children in Armed Conflict:[†] Program overseen by the MPFEF’s Interministerial Committee to Prevent Grave Violations Against Children that carries out awareness-raising campaigns to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, implements reintegration programs for former child soldiers, and conducts joint missions with international partners to determine the presence of children in armed conflict. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the programs during the reporting period.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MAURITANIA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Mauritania made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor for 2023–2027, which aims to mainstream the implementation of existing legal frameworks and establish institutional mechanisms to address child labor. The government also held a series of trainings for both labor inspectors and local communities about its hazardous work list. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Mauritania is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because its Civil Status Code requires a copy of the biological parents’ marriage license for children to obtain a birth certificate. As a result, children born out of wedlock and many Haratine and Sub-Saharan ethnic minority children, including those of slave descent, have been prevented from being registered at birth. Because birth certificates are required for enrollment in secondary school in Mauritania, children as young as age 12 cannot access education, making them more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Research is also needed on the prevalence of child labor in the country, and social programs are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem. In addition, the government did not publish comprehensive information about its labor law enforcement efforts.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	19.7% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	68.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	15.8%

Children in Mauritania are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in indentured and hereditary slavery. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, particularly in herding cattle and goats.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Herding[†] and caring for livestock, including cattle and goats. Fishing, including accompanying fishermen on boats[†] and selling fish.



Industry

Construction[†].



Services

Domestic work[†] and working as car mechanics,[†] painters, and carpenters[†]. Garbage scavenging and street work, including vending, begging,[†] and in the transportation sector.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Domestic servitude and indentured and hereditary slavery. Forced begging, sometimes as a result of criminal gang recruitment and coercion by Koranic teachers. Commercial sexual exploitation and used in illicit activities, including the production and transportation of drugs, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Mauritania's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Specify the activities in which light work may be permitted.

Increase the compulsory education age from 14 to 16 to align with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Publish complete information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the number of child labor violations found, the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed, the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, and whether routine inspections were targeted.

Carry out inspections in the informal sector, and impose penalties for child labor violations, including violations for the worst forms of child labor.

Increase training, including on circular 104-2021, staffing, and financial resources for labor and criminal law enforcement agencies, including the anti-slavery courts, to adequately enforce labor laws, especially in remote areas and in the informal sector.

Increase efforts to ensure that cases of the worst forms of child labor, including hereditary slavery and forced begging, are fully investigated, brought to court, and prosecuted in accordance with the law.

Ensure judicial officials use the pre-trial detention process and leverage extradition agreements with neighboring countries to ensure perpetrators of slavery cases are held accountable.

Ensure that judicial officials can properly identify cases of slavery and trafficking and that they do not improperly dismiss or fail to refer appropriate cases to the anti-slavery courts.

Take appropriate corrective action to hold accountable any government officials who do not properly enforce, or who prevent the enforcement of laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including hereditary slavery.

Government Policies

Ensure that key policies related to child labor receive sufficient resources, including funds, for effective implementation.

Ensure activities are undertaken to implement the National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labor, National Child Protection Strategy, and the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Continue civil registration campaigns around the country and ensure that all children are able to obtain birth certificates, especially those born out of wedlock and to the Haratine and other ethnic groups, to increase their access to secondary education and reduce their vulnerability to child labor.

Ensure ongoing reforms to expand public education include enough schools and teachers, in order to provide every child with access to education.

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the Program to Eradicate the Effects of Slavery, Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood, and the Family programs, and Model *Mahadras* to address child labor during the reporting period and make information about implementation measures publicly available.

Expand the scope of programs to address child labor, including in agriculture, herding, domestic work, and hereditary and indentured slavery.

Conduct research and collect data on hereditary slavery and child labor to inform the development of effective policies and programs to identify and protect children who are at risk.

Increase funding dedicated to improving school infrastructure and teacher availability, especially in rural areas, to eliminate barriers to and make education accessible for all children, including those from families of enslaved descent, refugees, and ethnic minorities.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children in Mauritania, especially from the marginalized Haratine ethnic minority, continue to be exploited and forced to endure in slavery and slavery-like practices, particularly in rural and remote areas of the country. Some children are born into the illegal practice of hereditary slavery; others are born free but remain in a dependent status and are forced to work with their parents for their former masters in exchange for food, money, and lodging. Enslaved children herd animals, such as cattle and goats, and perform domestic labor. Young girls, from families disproportionately impacted by poverty, including the Haratine, Wolof, Halpulaar, and Soninké communities, are sometimes forced to work as domestic servants in Mauritania's urban areas. There is also a large number of refugees in Mauritania, primarily from Mali. Refugee children face heightened risks of child labor due to their displacement.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The 2011-003 Civil Status Code requires a copy of the biological parents' marriage license for children to obtain a birth certificate. As a result, children born out of wedlock and many Haratine and Sub-Saharan ethnic minority children, including those of enslaved descent, have been prevented from being registered at birth. While students no longer need to possess birth certificates to take part in national examinations to obtain the Certificate of Primary Education Studies, birth certificates are still required to take exams necessary to enroll in secondary school. As a result, many children as young as age 12 cannot access secondary education, making them more vulnerable to child labor. Moreover, although all families are required to register children for birth certificates, research found that the civil registration process, which includes obtaining birth certificates, is confusing and time consuming.

Mauritania's Education Reform Law was enacted in 2022, and it transitioned all students to public schools and ended private education. However, the reforms unintentionally created a new barrier to education access by creating an overwhelming demand for public education, and a structural scarcity of adequate public-school buildings, teachers, and textbooks, especially given that many school buildings continued to be used as emergency shelters after flooding events. The lack of school infrastructure and limited availability of teachers in rural areas also impedes access to education, which may increase children's vulnerability to child labor. In addition, children from families of enslaved descent, especially from the Haratine ethnic minority, face barriers to accessing education due to ethnic discrimination. Furthermore, refugee children may have difficulty obtaining birth certificates or finding available classrooms, which makes them particularly vulnerable to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mauritania has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict. In addition, children ages 14 through 16 are vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school but are not legally allowed to work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 76 of the General Child Protection Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 76 of the General Child Protection Code; Article 247 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 76 and 77 of the General Child Protection Code; Article 4 of the List of Hazardous Work Forbidden to Children

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 1, 3, and 4 of the 2003 Anti-Trafficking Law; Article 1 and 2 of the 2013 Law Against Slavery and Torture Crimes; the 2015 Bill modifying the Anti-Slavery Law; Article 54 of the Penal Protection Code for Children
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 1 and 3 of the 2003 Anti-Trafficking Law; Article 54 of the Penal Protection Code for Children; Articles 2 and 4 of the 2020 Law Regarding the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Victim Protection; Articles 18, 43, and 67 of the 2020 Law Regarding the Fight Against Migrant Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 72 and 76 of the General Child Protection Code; Article 1 of the 2003 Anti-Trafficking Law; Articles 24–26 of the Penal Protection Code for Children; Article 2 of the 2020 Law Regarding the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Victim Protection
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 3–5 and 14 of Law 93-37 on the Prohibition of Production, Trafficking, and Use of Drugs and Illicit Substances
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 7 of the 1962 Military Recruitment Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 43 of the Penal Protection Code for Children
Compulsory Education Age, 14 Years		Article 1 of the Basic Education Law
Free Public Education		Article 1 of the Basic Education Law

* Country has no conscription

The Labor Code allows children ages 12 and older to perform light work as long as it does not impede their school attendance, does not exceed 2 hours per day, and is authorized by the Ministry of Labor. However, the Labor Code does not specify the activities in which light work may be permitted. In addition, children in Mauritania are required to attend school only up to age 14. This leaves children ages 14 through 16 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school but are not legally allowed to work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mauritania took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of financial resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Professional Education’s Directorate of Labor and Inspection (MFTPMA): Enforces labor laws and investigates labor code infractions, including violations related to minimum wage and hazardous work. In 2023, the Ministry held meetings with labor unions, employers, civil society organizations, as well as UNICEF and the ILO to raise awareness about child labor laws.

Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice: The Ministry of the Interior’s (MOI) Special Brigade for Minors investigates crimes against children, including human trafficking, and monitors religious schools (*mahadras*) to ensure that children are not forced to beg on behalf of their teachers. Research was unable to determine whether the Special Brigade for Minors was active during the reporting period. Also part of the MOI, the National Agency for Population Registration (ANRPTS) registered over 600,000 people between July 2023 and February 2024. However, research indicates that thousands were unable to register with the agency, particularly members of minority groups such as the Haratine. The Ministry of Justice’s Anti-Slavery Courts prosecute crimes related to slavery, and provide free legal assistance to survivors, including children. While the government has increased resources to the Courts, research indicates that continued financial support is necessary for the anti-slavery courts to function effectively. During the reporting period, the Anti-Slavery Courts prosecuted several cases involving children.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **128** labor inspectors conducted **620** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. In addition, the government also conducted **7** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated an **unknown** number of prosecutions, with **9** perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Mauritania has established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unclear whether the Commissariat for Human Rights was active during the reporting period.

Commissariat on Human Rights, Humanitarian Action, and Civil Society Relations: Coordinates the development and implementation of government policies related to human rights, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. Carries out awareness-raising campaigns to combat slavery and human trafficking, and acts as a semi-autonomous body under the supervision of the Office of the Prime Minister, which is also a member of the Human Rights Inter-Ministerial Committee. Holds the power to act as a civil party on behalf of victims of slavery. Conducted several nationwide campaigns to raise awareness about hereditary slavery and its vestiges during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Mauritania established policies related to child labor. However, it is unclear whether all of the policies were implemented during the reporting period.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labor 2023–2027 (PANETE-RIM II):[†] Launched in February of 2023, aims to address forced child labor, forced child begging, commercial sexual exploitation, slavery, and other forms of child exploitation. Overseen by the Commissariat on Human Rights, Humanitarian Action, and Civil Society Relations.</p> <p>National Child Protection Strategy (2020–2025): Aims to protect children against violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Specifically includes children exploited at work, child survivors of human trafficking, children living on the streets, and children who are survivors of violence or sexual exploitation. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Child Protection Strategy during the reporting period.</p> <p>Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development (2016–2030): Overseen by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development, aims to increase birth registration and access to compulsory education, strengthen social protection systems for children, and support efforts to combat slavery, including its vestiges. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Mauritania funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address child labor in all sectors, including agriculture, domestic work, and for children in hereditary and indentured slavery.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Mauritania.</i></p>	<p>Program to Eradicate the Effects of Slavery:[†] Government program functioning under the <i>Taazour</i> Administration that supports the reintegration and rehabilitation of former slaves. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Program to Eradicate the Effects of Slavery during the reporting period.</p> <p>Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood, and the Family (MASEF) Office of Childhood Programs:[†] Government programs to protect vulnerable children, including victims of the worst forms of child labor. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood, and the Family (MASEF) Office of Childhood Programs during the reporting period.</p> <p>Model Mahadras Program:[†] Ministry of Islamic Affairs-funded program that provides monthly cash transfers of approximately \$27 to parents whose children are enrolled in Model <i>Mahadras</i>. Also operates adult literacy classes for 8,000 religious leaders (<i>imam</i>)s across Mauritania to raise awareness of children's rights, including information on child labor and child trafficking. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Model <i>Mahadras</i> Program during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

MAURITIUS

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Mauritius made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In January 2024, the government enacted amendments to its Combating Trafficking in Persons Act, which established a new specialized police unit to investigate trafficking crimes and a subcommittee in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to monitor cases of human trafficking. The government also held multiple trainings on victim sensitivity-focused interviewing techniques for enforcement officials. The government should consider strengthening its implementation of policies and social programs to improve the standard of care and availability of housing for victims of child commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, its police force lacks sufficient human resources and training in child-sensitive interview techniques for the investigation of child labor crimes. Lastly, some schools with poor accessibility and accommodations increased the likelihood of labor exploitation among children with disabilities.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Some children in Mauritius are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities, including selling drugs. Children also engage in child labor in construction and street vending.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including animal rearing. Fishing, including diving, and casting nets and traps.



Industry

Construction.



Services

Street work, including vending, begging, and working in the transportation sector.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation. Use in illicit activities, including trafficking of drugs.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Mauritius' implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Ensure that the law's light work provisions limit the number of hours for light work.

Enforcement

Conduct labor inspections in all sectors in which children work, including in the informal sector.

Conduct unannounced labor inspections as required by the Workers' Rights Act, including on private properties that operate farms and throughout the informal sector.

Increase the personnel, training, equipment, and funding for agencies responsible for enforcing criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including training related to child interview techniques and responding to commercial sexual exploitation.

Ensure that labor inspections are thorough and take steps to verify if child labor or hazardous work is taking place.

Coordination

Ensure that coordination mechanisms to address the worst forms of child labor share information, improve coordination, and prevent overlap in activities.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Policy and the National Sport and Physical Activity Policy and publish results from activities implemented.

Social Programs

Conduct a comprehensive study of children’s activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor.

Ensure that all children, including those with disabilities, have equal access to education.

Ensure that appropriate standards of care are in place for child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and that they receive comprehensive social services in facilities that are not overcrowded.

Publish activities undertaken to implement the Eradication of Absolute Poverty Program.

 **CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Reporting shows that children from low-income families in Mauritius engaged in child labor activities on construction sites and in street vending, domestic work, animal rearing, agriculture, and the transportation and selling of goods. Traffickers also exploit children from low-income communities, including via online platforms. Because Mauritius has never conducted a national child labor survey, information on the prevalence of child labor in the country is limited.

 **BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**

Children with physical disabilities have the right to attend public schools and have benefited since 2019 from supportive infrastructure following enactment of the 2018 Special Education Needs Authority Act. However, some children with physical disabilities still reportedly faced constraints because educational facilities had not been properly equipped to enable their access. Additionally, children with mental disabilities attended separate schools that reportedly lacked the necessary psychological and social support. However, the Ombudsperson for Children’s Office issued a report providing recommendations to improve these students’ education and hosted several workshops in 2023 on inclusive education.

 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Mauritius has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Mauritius’s Workers’ Rights Act permits children under age 16 to do light work in family businesses that are not harmful to their health, development, or education, but establishes no limit on the number of hours children can perform light work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 2 and 8 of the Workers’ Rights Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 2 and 9 of the Workers’ Rights Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Section 8 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 2, 11, 14, and 21 of the Combating Trafficking in Persons Act; Article 6 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 13A of the Child Protection Act; Articles 2, 11, 14, and 21 of the Combating Trafficking in Persons Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 13A and 14 of the Child Protection Act; Article 253 of the Criminal Code; Articles 2 and 11 of the Combating Trafficking in Persons Act; Articles 19–21 of the Children’s Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 30.1b–e, 38a, 41.1f, and 41.2 of the Dangerous Drugs Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 63 of the Criminal Code (15)
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 37.2 of the Education Act (18)
Free Public Education		Article 35 of the Education Act (18)

* Country has no conscription
 † Country has no standing military

A November 2023 amendment to the Combating Trafficking in Persons Act went into force on January 15, 2024, mandating the creation of a Combating Trafficking in Persons Unit within the police force to investigate human trafficking crimes. The Workers’ Rights Act specifies that a child under age 16 may not be employed to work in any occupation but allows for children to do light jobs in family businesses that are not harmful to their health, development, or education. However, the law does not limit the number of hours for light work.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mauritius took actions to address child labor. However, labor inspectors identified no child labor violations when conducting inspections during the year.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Human Resource Development and Training: Enforces all labor laws, including those related to child labor. Advises workers and employers of their rights and responsibilities while improving relationships between them. Can initiate civil and criminal proceedings on behalf of workers who have allegedly had their rights violated by employers.

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions: Coordinates with relevant ministries, such as the Brigade for the Protection of the Family, to investigate and prosecute crimes related to the worst forms of child labor. Following the creation of a Trafficking in Persons Unit within the Mauritius Police Force, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions established a subcommittee to monitor cases of trafficking in persons, including for child commercial sexual exploitation and forced child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

Between January and October of 2023, **122** labor inspectors conducted **7,950** worksite inspections, but identified **0** cases of child labor. There were also **3** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, although the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted is **unknown**.

 **COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Mauritius established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a continued need for improved interagency communication, data collection, information sharing, and cooperation in responding to child labor cases.</p>	<p>Child Services Coordinating Panel: Led by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (MOGE) and launched in October 2021. Includes representatives of six government ministries, the Mauritius Police Force, and NGOs. Responsible for the coordination of public services and collaborating with stakeholders. The panel met several times in 2023 and encouraged the amendment to the Trafficking in Persons Act that created the Trafficking in Persons Unit within the Police Force.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Mauritius established policies related to child labor. However, it is unknown whether activities were carried out to implement the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Policy and the National Sport and Physical Activity Policy.</p>	<p>Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Policy (2017–2030): Aims to enable all students to successfully complete 9 years of basic schooling and forms part of a package of reforms designed to strategically transform the education system in Mauritius. Implemented by the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology. Research was unable to determine specific activities undertaken during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2022–2026): Aims to protect human trafficking victims, prosecute perpetrators, and gather data on human trafficking crimes. The Inter-Ministerial Committee was reconstituted in August 2023 under the Minister of Labor and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating human trafficking issues, including the implementation of this plan.</p> <p>National Sport and Physical Activity Policy (2018–2028): Provides a structured sports program available to all ages. Focuses on children and young adults, offering after-school recreational activities to help reduce children’s vulnerability to child labor and illicit activities. Research was unable to determine specific activities undertaken during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Mauritius funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, gaps exist in these social programs, including inadequate service provision to child survivors of the worst forms of child labor.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Mauritius.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Children’s Council:[†] Overseen by MOGE, offers a wide range of services and facilities, including day care, shelters, creativity centers, children’s clubs, and school child protection clubs around the island. Awareness-raising campaigns on the exploitation of children reached approximately 7,050 primary and secondary school students from January to December 2023. The government has established the National Children’s Council to improve the effectiveness of institutional care facilities and shelters. Evidence suggests that there continues to be a lack of appropriate standards of care, inadequate provision of services, and overcrowding in some centers that house orphans, child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, and child survivors of other types of abuse.</p> <p>Eradication of Absolute Poverty Program:[†] Provides support to families living in absolute poverty through empowerment and income programs administered by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity. Activities include a monthly child allowance, provision of free school materials, examination fees support, medical screening, housing support, and counseling. The program was active in 2023.</p> <p>Awareness-Raising Programs on Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking:[†] Educate the public on preventing commercial sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking, created by MOGE. In 2023, MOGE’s Child Development Unit undertook 6 commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) awareness campaigns in local communities and youth organizations that reached 245 people. MOGE “drop-in” centers cared for CSEC victims and carried out 49 awareness campaigns that reached 6,199 people between January and October 2023.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MEXICO

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Mexico made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government approved amendments to the Federal Labor Law and Social Security Law to further safeguard workers' rights and ensure social security, written contracts, and access to essential services, such as childcare. The government also issued a resolution related to prohibiting the importation of goods manufactured with forced or compulsory labor, including forced child labor. In addition, the state secretaries of labor, the federal commission for addressing child labor, and the network of state-level commissions signed a national pact—*Pacto del Mayab*—that established high-level, shared objectives to combat child labor and forced labor in Mexico. Furthermore, the federal commission for addressing child labor issued a guide for employers on general working conditions, regulation compliance, and benefits for legal working adolescents, and a digital handbook to inform adolescents aged 15 to 17 about their labor rights. Lastly, the government published the results of the 2022 National Child Labor Survey. Despite these efforts, some state-level labor inspectors carry out inspections in the informal sector only in response to formal complaints. Further, the 529 federal labor inspectors are insufficient to cover the country's more than 59.2 million workers. Finally, the Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare lacks an internal system to track child labor violations.

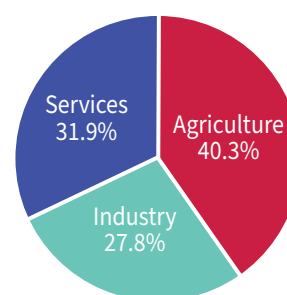


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	4.3% (924,176)
Boys		5.9%
Girls		2.6%
Urban		2.8%
Rural		8.4%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	20.1% (1,409,953)
Boys		27.3%
Girls		12.8%
Urban		16.0%
Rural		32.4%
Attending School	5 to 14	96.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	4.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Mexico are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in the production and trafficking of drugs. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, including in the production of chile peppers, coffee, sugarcane, and tomatoes.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture,† including in the production of beans (green beans), chile peppers, coffee, cucumbers, eggplants, melons, onions, sugarcane, tobacco,‡ and tomatoes. Cattle raising.



Industry

Manufacturing† garments and leather goods. Construction.† Mining.†



Services

Street work† as vendors, shoe shiners, beggars, car washers, and porters. Working in auto repair garages and bars.† Scavenging in landfills and recycling. Domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, street vending, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, including in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use by cartels to perform illicit activities, including the production of poppies for heroin, drug trafficking, stealing fuel, and carrying out armed attacks, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Mexico’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 18 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Increase the number of federal labor inspectors from 529 to 3,947 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 59.2 million workers.

Expand access to trainings for federal and state-level labor inspectors on child labor protocols and ensure that guidelines related to identifying, sanctioning, and referring for criminal investigation of child labor violations are followed.

Ensure that the Secretariat for Labor and Social Welfare and state-level labor inspectorates conduct targeted routine and unannounced labor inspections in all sectors, including in the informal sector and in rural areas.

Improve coordination and information sharing between federal and state-level labor inspectorates and among officials in different states.

Publish information at the federal and state levels on the number of child labor violations identified; fines for child labor violations that were collected; and worst forms of child labor investigations, prosecutions, and convictions.

Equip the Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare with a case tracking system to identify disaggregated data for child labor violations.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies and government service providers receive sufficient funding to conduct investigations and prosecutions related to alleged child labor crimes and to provide services to survivors.

Increase coordination and data sharing among government ministries to ensure adequate criminal prosecutions of suspected perpetrators of child labor crimes.

Increase training for enforcement officials and prosecutors on territorial jurisdictions and on how to perform prosecutorial and police investigative functions. In addition, train prosecutors and judges on prosecuting human trafficking crimes.

Coordination

Ensure the active participation and continued engagement of all states and relevant stakeholders within the framework of the Inter-Institutional Commission for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers of the Permitted Age in Mexico.

Government Policies

Adopt policies that address all worst forms of child labor, including the use of children in illicit activities.

Social Programs

Expand access to education by increasing funding to schools, extending school schedules, improving school infrastructure, providing education materials and instruction in native languages, ensuring migrant children have access to birth documentation, and fostering internet access for learning purposes.

Ensure that migrant children are screened for indicators of human trafficking and that children used by organized criminal groups are placed in child protection centers instead of detention centers, provided with adequate social services, and receive access to education.

Provide additional support to indigenous, migrant, internally displaced, and refugee children, and fund social programs to increase their access to education and reduce their risk for child labor.

Ensure that the Benito Juarez Wellbeing Scholarship Program provides sufficient cash transfers to vulnerable students. Also fully monitor and evaluate the This School is Ours program and all other educational programs to reduce mismanagement and increase transparency and prosecute those engaged in corrupt practices.

Expand social protection programs throughout the country for victims of child labor in all relevant sectors, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Indigenous and Afro-descendant children, migrant and refugee children, children from rural communities, and children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to child labor in Mexico, as they are more likely to face conditions of extreme poverty, homelessness, discrimination, and abuse, and have less access to education and social protection services. Girls in Mexico are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, as they make up 80 percent of victims. Migrant children traveling by themselves can be exposed to mistreatment and violence, pushing them into informal child labor while they seek sources of income. In addition, children from indigenous populations are more likely to work across all sectors than non-indigenous children. Organized criminal groups also force Mexican children to carry out assassinations, serve as lookouts, and produce, transport, and sell drugs, including opium poppies; an estimated 30,000 children have joined criminal groups in Mexico.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Mexico has committed to providing free and compulsory education for children. However, 5 million students, primarily from rural areas, dropped out of school from 2022 to 2023 due to the lack of schools and internet connectivity and/or computers for virtual learning. In addition, there are not enough schools in rural agricultural states, which has prevented children of agricultural workers, who are mostly migrants and/or of indigenous origin, from receiving an education. Indigenous children are also less likely to attend school due to the lack of schools near their homes, lack of educational materials and instruction in native languages, and the presence of organized crime at schools.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mexico has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Mexico's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 123 of the Constitution; Article 22 <i>bis</i> of the Labor Code; Article 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents; Article 6 of the General Education Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 23 and 175 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 175 and 176 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 1 and 5 of the Constitution; Articles 11, 12, and 22 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Article 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 10 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Article 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 200–205- <i>bis</i> of the Federal Penal Code; Articles 13 and 18 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Article 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 196 and 201 of the Federal Penal Code; Article 24 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 2, 4, and 5 of the Law on Organized Crime
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 5 of the Military Service Law

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 24 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 123 and 201 of the Federal Penal Code; Articles 16 and 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years		Articles 6 and 129 of the General Education Law
Free Public Education		Article 3 of the Constitution; Article 7, Section IV of the General Education Law

In 2023, the Mexican Congress passed amendments to the Federal Labor Law and Social Security Law that include significant fines for non-compliance. These amendments mandate that workers receive social security; written copies of their signed work contracts; access to food, water, and healthcare during the workday; safe transportation for workers residing at the workplace; and childcare services. However, Mexico’s minimum age for work at age 15 is lower than the compulsory education age of 18, which could encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mexico took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of unannounced labor inspections in all sectors, as well as insufficient financial resources, hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Secretariat for Labor and Social Welfare (STPS): Responsible for labor law enforcement in 22 industrial sectors under federal jurisdiction (including the sugar and tobacco industries), three types of enterprises, and labor matters affecting two or more states. The state-level labor inspectorates are responsible for labor law enforcement in all other situations. The STPS conducts unannounced inspections in the informal sector for child labor violations in response to complaints, and child labor inspections must be coordinated with representatives from the Secretariat of Health’s National System for Integral Family Development (SNDIF) and the local Office of the Attorney General of Mexico. The Federal Attorney for the Defense of Labor, a decentralized unit of the STPS, receives and prosecutes cases involving workers under age 18. Mexico’s Secretariat of Economy issued a resolution on February 23, 2023, prohibiting imports produced with forced labor. That resolution, which identifies the STPS as the agency responsible for investigating allegations of forced labor in imports, went into effect on May 18, 2023.

Office of the Attorney General of the Republic (FGR): The FGR’s Specialized Unit for Crimes against Women and Trafficking in Persons (FEVIMTRA) and the Specialized Unit on Trafficking in Minors, People, and Organs are responsible for investigating and prosecuting human trafficking cases at the federal level, while the Specialized Office for Organized Crime investigates and prosecutes cases linked to commercial sexual exploitation of children. In addition, all 32 states have specialized trafficking in persons prosecutors, who are responsible for cases of human trafficking at the state level. Federal and state trafficking in persons units also receive referrals from the National Institute of Migration and the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance. In August 2023, FEVIMTRA held its seventh national-level meeting for prosecutors and specialized units on trafficking in persons. In 2023, two individuals were sentenced to 15 years in prison for exploiting an indigenous child in forced labor. The government also rescued 82 victims of child pornography and arrested 93 sexual offenders. One of the highest sentences imposed was 82 years and 6 months in prison.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes†
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, 665 labor inspectors conducted 48,180 worksite inspections, finding an unknown number of child labor violations at the federal level. However, the state of Chihuahua labor inspectorate identified 42† child labor violations. While the government conducted investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor and convicted perpetrators of crimes, the total number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions is unknown.

† Data reported is state level data and does not reflect federal level information.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Mexico established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, inconsistent levels of participation by state authorities in coordinating mechanisms diminishes their effectiveness.</p>	<p>Inter-Institutional Commission for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers of the Permitted Age in Mexico (CITI): Coordinates Mexico's efforts to eliminate child labor. Meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the STPS. There are also state-level (CITI <i>Estatales</i>) and municipal-level committees. In October 2023, the first formal convening was held in Merida Yucatan between the federal and state commissions on child labor. During the 3-day event, the National Conference of Labor Secretaries and the ILO signed a national pact (known as the <i>Pacto del Mayab</i>) that established high-level, shared objectives to combat child labor and forced labor. In June 2023, CITI also issued a guide for employers on general working conditions, regulation compliance, and benefits for legal working adolescents, and a digital handbook to inform adolescents aged 15 to 17 about their labor rights. However, some states do not have active CITI committees, and not all states collaborated with CITI at the federal level. The Federal CITI has a Plan of Action on Child Labor (2021–2024), which requires the CITI Secretariat to conduct monitoring activities on a quarterly basis, but it lacks an accompanying budget for activities.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Mexico established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor.</p>	<p>National Program for the Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare (2020–2024): Seeks to strengthen workers' rights and increase the participation of workers in the formal sector. The program prioritizes addressing child labor as part of the STPS's social inclusion strategy. Between September 2022 and June 2023, the program carried out 31 actions in 68 agricultural centers, addressing issues such as recruitment and child labor prevention, benefiting 30,555 agricultural workers.</p> <p>National Program for Children and Adolescents (PRONAPPINA) (2021–2024): Aims to guarantee the rights of children by establishing mechanisms to support their growth and development. Has an accompanying action plan, as well as a Strategy for the Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. In September 2023, the Comprehensive Systems for the Promotion and Protection of Children and Adolescents (SIPPINNA) co-sponsored the program's fourth Inter-American forum. In their yearly report, PRONAPPINA highlighted several key achievements for 2023: Promoted proper nutrition, healthy lifestyles, water consumption, and physical activity; ensured access to and completion of compulsory education, including tailored plans for indigenous, disabled, Afro-descendant, and multilingual children and adolescents; designed and implemented programs to protect vulnerable children and adolescents, such as migrants, refugees, street children, child laborers, and adolescents in conflict with the law; and promoted discrimination-free and violence-free environments, training federal personnel on children's rights and cybersecurity for minors.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (PNTdP) (2022–2024): Published by the Secretariat of the Interior (SEGOB), guides the government’s public policy on human trafficking. The PNTdP has five key objectives: (1) strengthening the legal framework, (2) outlining coordination efforts, (3) strengthening services to survivors, (4) conducting research to inform actions and public policies, and (5) promoting the human rights of survivors. Also directs the work of the Interagency Commission to Prevent, Sanction, and Eradicate Crimes of Human Trafficking and for the Protection and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking. In 2023, the PNTdP proposed a reform of the general law on human trafficking, which is pending approval; established state-level coordination committees (CIES) mirroring the national Inter-Ministerial Commission to ensure consistent policy implementation, supported by training and national projects; enhanced victim care and reintegration via updated instruments and training programs, including the issuance of an operating manual for shelters and halfway houses that provide assistance to trafficked persons; disseminated new annual informational materials and collaborated with various sectors to raise awareness and promote reporting of trafficking; and created the Crime Prevention Group, where crime prevention actions with a territorial approach are promoted and carried out.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Mexico funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, there is a lack of programs to address child labor in all sectors and in all states.</p> <p>† Program is funded by the Government of Mexico. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Benito Juarez Wellbeing National Scholarship Program:† A \$39.3 million Secretariat of Public Education cash transfer program that offers scholarships for families living in poverty and students at risk of school desertion. The scholarship provides bimonthly payments of \$92 per household for all children under age 15 who are enrolled in school. Although the program reached over 10 million students in 2023, it has been criticized for providing insufficient cash transfers, lacking monitoring and evaluation, and having implementation issues.</p> <p>Education Programs:† Managed by the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples, the Indigenous Education Support Program (PAEI) promotes access to public education for children from indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities through scholarships, lodging, and nutritional assistance. With funding close to \$110 million, the program helped 81,944 students in 2023. The School is Ours (LEEN) program serves to build and improve educational infrastructure and provide meal services. However, an audit of the program’s 2021 expenses found instances of funds sent to deceased beneficiaries and accounts not registered in the database. It also discovered that support meant for a school committee in Chiapas was deposited into a different bank account, leading to its misuse. In addition, treasurers in 75 schools took resources without returning them. As a result, the audit recommended administrative sanctions and investigations into the irregularities by public servants involved in managing the program.</p> <p>Assistance for At-Risk Children and Adolescents Program (PAMAR):† Implemented by SNDIF at the state and municipal levels to assist youth at risk for child labor by providing shelters, psychosocial assistance, and training. PAMAR also provides educational assistance that allows participants to complete their schooling, vocational training such as cosmetology, guitar workshops, and sports and recreational activities. In 2023, four new centers were established in the State of Hidalgo in the neighborhoods of La Militar, PRI-Chacón, Campestre Villas del Álamo, and Colinas de Plata.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MOLDOVA

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Moldova made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government continued to implement a series of reforms to the State Labor Inspectorate, improving its authority to perform on-site and unannounced inspections, as well as increasing staffing and updating the inspectorate's technical equipment. In November 2023, the State Labor Inspectorate launched a nationwide inspection campaign to identify informal work, which resulted in 200 cases identified over the course of 2 months, including 14 cases involving children. In March 2024, the Parliament approved revisions to the Labor Code and Contraventions Code to provide penalties for employing children below the minimum age for work either with or without a contract. Additionally, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection announced a comprehensive reform of its social assistance programs designed to increase access to such programs and reduce poverty, especially among children. Finally, the government adopted a new statistical framework to measure child labor and signed a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF to carry out poverty reduction programs. However, despite these efforts, there is insufficient cooperation among social protection, health, and law enforcement entities with regard to providing appropriate services and reintegration assistance to child survivors of labor exploitation and trafficking in persons. Social programs to support child survivors of exploitation are also inadequate.

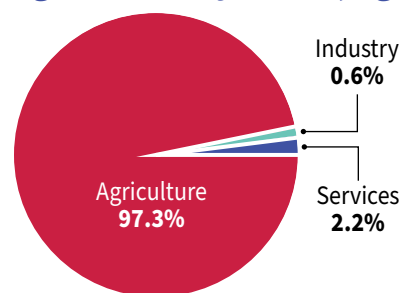


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	24.3% (102,105)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	92.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	29.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Moldova are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture,[†] including growing and harvesting crops, picking fruits, raising farm animals, forestry, including transporting heavy loads, and fishing, including feeding fish.



Industry

Construction,[†] including carrying heavy loads, manufacturing, working in the garment sector, and sanitation and waste management.



Services

Street work, including portering, begging, and washing cars, domestic work, working in hospitality, confectionary, retail, wholesale trade, restaurants, amusement parks, and transportation.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, forced begging, and use in illicit activities, including the trafficking of drugs.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Moldova’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law’s light work provisions in the new law or in its implementation regulations specify the conditions in which light work may be undertaken to prevent children from involvement in child labor.

Enforcement

Ensure that judicial authorities, prosecutors and investigators, including public lawyers, receive training on laws and maintaining a victim-centered approach to criminal justice, especially related to child trafficking.

Pursue prosecution of child labor crimes under appropriate statutes and maintain protection under the law for victims who commit crimes as a result of their exploitation.

Coordination

Improve cooperation among social protection, health, and law enforcement entities with regard to providing appropriate services and reintegration assistance to child survivors of labor exploitation and trafficking in persons.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Program for Child Protection and publish results from activities implemented during the reporting period.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs, including for the separatist region of Transnistria.

Provide adequate resources for schools in rural and poorer communities, as well as those serving children with disabilities.

Implement oversight of state residential children’s institutions to prevent exploitation of children by management.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education by removing informal fees for school supplies, including textbooks.

Institute targeted support programs that eliminate discrimination and violence against Roma children and promote equal access to education.

Ensure sufficient social, psychological, and financial support for child survivors of trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and abuse, and children working in agriculture.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Trafficking of children from rural or poor families continues to be a concern in Moldova, including in the separatist region of Transnistria, which is outside of the de facto control of the Moldovan government. Children abandoned by parents who have migrated abroad, children living on the street, or those who are refugees from Ukraine remain particularly vulnerable, and observers expressed concern that management in some state residential institutions, like orphanages, use children in domestic service or on farms. Online commercial sexual exploitation of children has increased in recent years. Children from Roma communities, especially girls and refugees from Ukraine, are also vulnerable due to discrimination, a low level of formal education, and conservative gender roles.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Moldova are guaranteed free transportation to school, and no fees are required for schooling through grade 9. However, students in grades 10 through 12 are often charged fees to rent textbooks. Children from Roma communities also continue to be less likely to enroll in school and are at higher risk of dropping out due in part to discrimination by school officials and distrust of public institutions by Roma families. Refugee children, including Roma children, may have had their schooling interrupted and require additional interventions before they can successfully integrate into mainstream schools. Schools in rural areas often lack a sufficient number of teachers, and public schools lack adequate resources to address the needs of children with disabilities.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Moldova has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Moldova's laws are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 46 of the Labor Code; Article 55 ¹ (2) of the Contraventions Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 255 of the Labor Code; Article 3 of the Collective Convention on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Government Decision No. 541; Articles 2 and 3 of the Collective Convention on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 103, 105, 255, and 256 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 44 of the Constitution; Articles 168(b) and 206 of the Criminal Code; Article 7 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2 and 25–30 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings; Article 206 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 175, 206, 208, 208.1 and 208.2 of the Criminal Code; Article 6 of the Law on the Rights of the Child
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 208 and 217 of the Criminal Code; Collective Convention on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 12 of Law No. 162-XVI on the Status of Military Servicemembers
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 28 of Law No. 1245-XV on the Preparation of Citizens for Homeland Defense
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 26 of the Law on the Rights of the Child; Article 206(d) of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 13 of the Education Code of 2014
Free Public Education		Article 35 of the Constitution; Article 9 of the Education Code of 2014

In March 2024, Moldova’s Parliament approved revisions to the Labor Code and the Contraventions Code, which specifically penalize the employment of a minor without the use of an employment contract. Additional revisions are in process which will address Moldova’s light work framework for children who are 15 years of age, but at present, the law does not specify the conditions in which light work may be undertaken.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Moldova took actions to address child labor. However, judicial authorities and investigators may not receive adequate training on handling cases involving children, particularly children who are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection’s (MHLSP) State Labor Inspectorate (SLI): Enforces child labor laws through inspections of labor relations of enterprises, institutions, and organizations. Publishes an annual report on the previous year’s activities. Also operates a dedicated children’s hotline that refers child survivors of trafficking for specialized legal, psychological, and social services under the National Referral System. In 2023, the government undertook several actions to implement and strengthen reforms of the labor inspectorate, beginning with passing a new law into effect in January that granted the labor inspectorate the authority to perform on-site, unannounced inspections beginning in March. As of July, inspectors gained the ability to issue civil penalties without receiving permission from a court. MHLSP also ran a recruitment campaign for labor inspectors, calling on interested applicants to “activate their superpowers.”

Ministry of Internal Affairs: Oversees law enforcement agencies such as the National Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP), which leads criminal investigations against perpetrators of human trafficking crimes, including the trafficking of children for labor or commercial sexual exploitation. CCTIP also cooperates with the Border Police Inspectorate, National Anti-Corruption Center, and Customs Service, and provides partial funding for the operation of a 24/7 trafficking in persons hotline. Also contains the Center for Combating Cybercrime, which investigates cybercrime, including online commercial sexual exploitation of children, and is the unit with primary responsibility for investigating these crimes at the National Inspectorate for Investigations of the General Police Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **58** labor inspectors conducted **1,895** worksite inspections, finding **18** child labor violations. The government also conducted **25** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated **63** prosecutions, and convicted **31** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Moldova established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there remains a lack of effective coordination among bodies responsible for identifying children in child labor and providing services for their rehabilitation.</p>	<p>National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons: Coordinates efforts to prevent and eliminate child trafficking and child sexual exploitation. Members include SLI, the Security and Intelligence Service, the Agency for Public Services, and other government departments. In April 2023, published a report on the previous year's activities.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Moldova established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Program for Child Protection (2022–2026): Sets the objectives and priority actions to strengthen children's social protection. Includes an Action Plan containing 72 actions to address child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, including through online means. In 2023, the government signed a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF to provide technical assistance to reduce child poverty as part of this program.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Moldova funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs lack sufficient services for resocialization and reintegration of child survivors of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.</p> <p><i>‡ Program is funded by the Government of Moldova.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>RESTART Social Assistance Reform Program:<i>‡</i> A series of reforms initiated in 2023 to government social assistance programs designed to improve access and reduce poverty, particularly among children. Through this reform, MHLSP plans to establish 9 territorial social assistance agencies, increase marginalized groups' access to social services by 35 percent annually, and ensure that social services meet minimum quality standards.</p> <p>Decent Work Country Program (2021–2024): ILO program that aims to gather statistics on the prevalence of child labor, build the capacity of the labor inspectorate, and eliminate labor exploitation in the construction and agriculture sectors. As part of this program, in 2023, ILO and the Government of Moldova launched a project that will run through 2024 to increase disadvantaged groups' access to employment, particularly among rural and youth populations, as well as decrease informal employment.</p> <p>Center for Protection and Assistance for Victims of Human Trafficking:<i>‡</i> Government-funded shelter for survivors of human trafficking from Moldova that offers accommodations, rehabilitation, and reintegration services, and which contains a special wing for child survivors. These shelters remained active during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MONGOLIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Mongolia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government reorganized and renewed the mandate of the National Committee for Children and increased the number of child rights inspectors from 13 to 41. The Law on Education also went into effect during the reporting period, which has a new section on the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. However, although Mongolia’s revised Labor Law legalized unannounced labor inspections that can result in sanctions, confusion remains amongst inspectors on whether unannounced inspections are permitted, which may impede the enforcement of child labor laws. Mongolia’s minimum age for work provisions also do not meet international standards because they do not provide penalties for violations of these provisions. In addition, the law prohibits only children younger than 8 years old from racing horses, which is far below 18 years old, the minimum age for hazardous work.

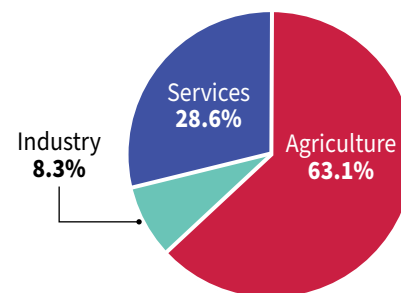


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	20.7% (147,850)
Boys		24.3%
Girls		16.9%
Urban		14.7%
Rural		34.9%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	43.5% (60,101)
Boys		51.9%
Girls		34.4%
Urban		35.1%
Rural		59.3%
Attending School	5 to 14	86.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	24.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Mongolia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in horse jockeying and in the agricultural sector.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Engaged in animal husbandry,† including herding.†



Industry

Construction,† and mining† of goods such as coal† and gold.



Services

Working in restaurants/canteens,† bars,† and food processing facilities.† Scavenging in garbage dumpsites, street work, begging, handling freight,† and ticket-taking for public transportation.† Domestic work and horse jockeying.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in begging, stealing, construction, mining, horse jockeying, animal husbandry, and contortionist work.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Mongolia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish legal penalties for violations of minimum age restrictions.

Prohibit children under age 18 from horse racing at all times of the year.

Allow unannounced inspections by addressing legal inconsistencies between the Law on State Inspection that requires notice before inspections and the Revised Labor Law that allows for unannounced inspections.

Enforcement

Train labor inspectors on evidence collection and provisions in the revised Labor Law.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 66 to 87 to provide adequate coverage of approximately 1.3 million workers.

Establish a functional, formalized mechanism for referrals between enforcement authorities and social services.

Allow anti-trafficking police and prosecutors to work with one another and ensure that evidence related to human trafficking cases is collected to support investigations.

Provide adequate funding for law enforcement agencies.

Conduct unannounced inspections and impose penalties for violations found.

Ensure that child trafficking victims are not fined, arrested, detained, or charged with crimes and administrative offenses as a result of having been subjected to human trafficking.

Train police officers and government officials on criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including the Child Protection Law and the Law on Petty Offenses, and on procedural checklists used to identify human trafficking victims, to ensure that child labor offenses are prosecuted fully, convicted traffickers are appropriately punished, and police discontinue the practice of detaining child victims.

Publish criminal law enforcement data, including the number of prosecutions and convictions, and whether penalties are imposed for violations relating to the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Create formal guidelines and referral procedures for the Multidisciplinary Task Force.

Government Policies

Implement a policy to address child labor in all its forms.

Social Programs

Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem and ensure that they are sufficiently funded and staffed.

Increase the number of schools to help eliminate overcrowding, increase the number of trained teachers, ensure that appropriate technology is available to all students, and provide infrastructure to allow full accessibility options for children with disabilities.

Increase the length of stay available for children in shelter homes.

Ensure that all government-run and -funded shelter homes separate children from adults, are provided proper oversight so children are protected from sexual abuse and are accessible to children with disabilities.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Unaccompanied children and homeless children are more vulnerable to child labor in Mongolia. Mongolian girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation in communities near mining towns or are recruited through social media. Girls from Mongolia are also forced to work as contortionists, both domestically and in Turkey.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Mongolian children encounter numerous education barriers due to an insufficient number of schools, overcrowding, a lack of trained teachers, and a lack of accessibility for children with disabilities. According to educators, infrastructure for children with disabilities is generally inadequate to allow full accessibility in schools, and there is a lack of educational facilities specifically designed for students with disabilities.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mongolia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, gaps exist in Mongolia’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor as children aged 8 and older can jockey horses, despite 18 years being the minimum age for hazardous work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 2, 3, 142.1, and 165 of the Revised Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 2-4 and 142.2 of the Revised Labor Law; Article 16.10 of the Criminal Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2 and 3 of the List of Jobs and Occupations Prohibited to Minors; Article 8 of the Law on the National Naadam Holiday
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 13.1, 16.4, and 16.10 of the Criminal Code; Articles 2, 3, 15, and 17 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons; Article 7 of the Law on Labor; Article 7 of the Law on the Rights of the Child
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 3 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons; Article 13.1 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 12.3, 13.1, 16.8, 16.9, and 115 of the Criminal Code; Articles 8.1.3 and 10.2 of the Combating Pornography and Prostitution Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 142.2 of the Revised Labor Law; Article 192 of the Criminal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 12 of the Law on Military
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 12 of the Law on Military

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 29 of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years		Articles 3, 10.2, and 40 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Article 16 of the Constitution of Mongolia; Article 38 of the Law on Education

The Government of Mongolia passed a new Law on Education in 2023, which includes a new section on the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. Mongolia’s minimum age for work provisions do not meet international standards because they do not provide penalties for violations of these provisions. While Mongolian law allows for penalties for certain forms of child labor that are “detrimental”, there is no penalty for working under the minimum age in general. In addition, Mongolian law also only prohibits children younger than 8 years old from racing horses, which is far below 18 years old, the minimum age for hazardous work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mongolia took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient authority, training, unclear mandates, and a lack of funding for labor and criminal law enforcement agencies hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP): The Family, Child, and Youth Development Agency (FCYDA) within the MLSP oversees child protection issues, including child labor. They can identify and remove children working under hazardous conditions. FCYDA also runs a child safety complaint hotline and maintains a database that tracks the case status and social service needs of vulnerable children. In 2023, the FCYDA hired an additional 28 child rights inspectors, bringing the total number to 41. The Labor Inspectorate, which also sits within the MLSP, is responsible for labor inspections, including inspecting for violations of laws on child labor. Reporting indicates that inspectors often do not conduct unannounced inspections due to inconsistencies between the revised labor law and other legislation. Inspectors also lacked training on what labor inspection information to collect that would be useful to prosecutors.

Criminal Police Department (CPD): Oversees several specialty units that enforce child labor laws including the Anti-Trafficking Unit and the Organized Crime Division, which identifies human trafficking victims and uses referrals to open criminal investigations into human trafficking and sexual exploitation cases. The Division for Combating Against Domestic Violence and Crimes Against Children comprises 10 officers who provide guidance to police units and protection services for survivors of child labor. The National Police Agency has assigned 53 police officers nationwide exclusively to mitigate crimes against children. Cybercrimes involving children are investigated by the Division to Combat Cyber Crimes. In 2023, the Anti-Trafficking Unit reported removing 11 child victims from exploitative situations and referring them to government- and NGO-run shelters and services. While the CPD has an 11-question risk assessment checklist to identify survivors of human trafficking, local police officers have not been trained to use this checklist to identify potential cases that should be referred to specialized investigators. There are concerns that many cases of child trafficking have been dropped at the district police level for this reason. Research indicates that lack of training for law enforcement officials on the Child Protection Law and the Criminal Code may enable perpetrators to evade punishment.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, 66 labor inspectors conducted 2,887 worksite inspections, finding an unknown number of child labor violations. The government also conducted 27 investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated an unknown number of prosecutions, and convicted an unknown number of perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Mongolia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the mechanism lacks formal guidelines and referral procedures to allow for criminal investigations or social services, which diminishes its coordination efforts.

National Committee for Children: Established in 2018, functions as the overarching national coordinating body for child protection efforts. Headed by the Prime Minister, with the Minister of Labor and Social Protection serving as Deputy Head, and the head of the FCYDA serving as the Secretariat. Includes robust membership from relevant ministries, NGOs, and civil society organizations. In 2023, the Cabinet reorganized the structure and renewed the mandate of the Committee. The newly reorganized committee then met to adopt policy and procedural papers for the Revised Child Protection Law.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Mongolia established a policy related to child labor. However, this policy does not address all forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture and horse jockeying.

Child Protection Compact Partnership (2020–2024): \$5.5 million partnership among the Government of Mongolia, the United States Government, and NGOs. Consists of 18 governmental and non-governmental organizations to fund victim-centered, collaborative, and sustainable approaches to identify child trafficking victims. Created the Multidisciplinary Task Force under the National Sub-Council on Trafficking in Persons. Works with the Crime Prevention and Coordinating Council and National Sub-Council on Trafficking in Persons. In 2023, NGOs coordinated with the Ministry of Education to implement afterschool programs to help high school students recognize and help prevent forced child labor and sex trafficking in 40 high-risk schools. The District Governors and municipal FCYDA also deployed 200 volunteer community home visitors who engaged communities directly on the topics of child protection, domestic violence, ensuring child school attendance, health and welfare, human trafficking, and victim identification.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Mongolia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, the programs lack sufficient funding and staffing to address the full scope of the problem.

† Program is funded by the Government of Mongolia.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

Enabling Equity to Advance Learning (EQUAL) (2022–2025): Supports children with disabilities in schools and improves school lunches and education. The Global Partnership for Education awarded this grant to the Ministry of Education. Reporting indicates this program was active during the reporting period.

Children’s Money Program: † Distributes a monthly stipend to vulnerable children under age 18 and aims to prevent child labor by offsetting costs related to food, school, and clothing. Operated by the General Agency for Social Welfare and Service, the General Agency for State Registration, and the Human Development Fund. Research indicates that economic challenges have rendered the program inadequate for covering basic needs of children from vulnerable groups, though the program was active during the reporting period.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MONTENEGRO

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Montenegro made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government built and opened the first state-funded and -operated shelter for child victims of human trafficking. In addition, the government continued its support of social inclusion programs for children from vulnerable communities, including providing healthcare and educational support for children in conjunction with the United Nations Children’s Fund Country Office in Podgorica. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Innovation received a 10 percent budget increase from the previous reporting period, and the number of Roma children enrolled in preschool education increased by 11 percent in 2023. However, despite these efforts, research found that the scope of programs to address child labor in street work in Montenegro is insufficient. Additionally, there were insufficient inspections for child labor in the agriculture and services sectors, and sectoral data on children’s work remains unavailable.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	17.3% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	20.5%

Children in Montenegro are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including use in illicit activities and in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the services sector, including street work.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Services

Street work, including vending small goods and begging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; forced begging; forced domestic work; and use in illicit activities, including the harvesting and trafficking of drugs.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Montenegro’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Establish a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address all worst forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to mainstream child labor issues into educational reform and social inclusion policies.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Social Programs

Build the capacity of schools and fund other services and programs to accommodate and expand education access for children with disabilities.

Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, especially in street work and forced begging.

Make additional efforts to bolster birth registration for children from the Ashkali, Balkan Egyptian, and Roma communities to ensure equity in children’s access to the educational and social welfare systems.

Consistently track and publish information about children involved in the worst forms of child labor, including data on the sectoral distribution of child labor.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Montenegro is a source, destination, and transit country for trafficking of children for forced labor, including forced begging, especially among Roma children. Some Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian girls from impoverished households in Montenegro are sold and forced into domestic servitude in both Montenegro and Kosovo. Children, especially girls, are victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation internally and transnationally within the region.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The inability to enroll in school makes some Montenegrin children vulnerable to child labor. Some Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian children, as well as some Kosovar children displaced due to conflict, have difficulty accessing education services (along with other social services) because they lack birth registration documents. In addition, some rural children and children with disabilities experience difficulty physically accessing educational facilities and have limited government social services available to them.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Montenegro has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Montenegro’s laws are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Article 16 of the Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Articles 17, 172, and 173 of the Labor Law
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 104 and 106 of the Labor Law; Articles 7 and 8 of the Regulations on Measures of Protection in the Workplace
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 444 of the Criminal Code; Articles 28 and 63 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 444–446 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 209–211 of the Criminal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 300 and 301 of the Criminal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Articles 47, 188, and 195 of the Declaration of the Law on the Army of Montenegro; Articles 162 and 163 of the Law on the Armed Forces
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Articles 47, 188, and 195 of the Declaration of the Law on the Army of Montenegro; Articles 162 and 163 of the Law on the Armed Forces
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 444 of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 4 of the Law on Primary Education
Free Public Education		Article 75 of the Constitution

*Country has no conscription



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Montenegro took actions to address child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Inspectorate: Leads and monitors the enforcement of labor laws, including those that protect working children. Part of the Inspectorate General and has 15 offices that proactively plan labor inspections. The Labor Inspectorate also maintains a national call center and an e-mail line for receiving complaints.

Ministry of Interior: Houses the Police Directorate and the Office for the Fight Against Trafficking in Humans (Trafficking in Persons Department). An eight-member unit within the Police Directorate investigates human trafficking, forced labor, and illegal migration. Also investigates reports of child begging, develops policy to prevent future cases of forced begging, and removes child beggars from the streets through the Beggar Task Force.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

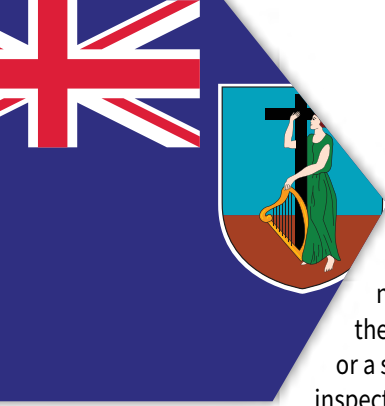
In 2023, **30** labor inspectors conducted **6,345** worksite inspections, finding **186** child labor violations. The government also conducted **12** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated **6** prosecutions, and convicted **1** perpetrator.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Montenegro established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it lacks a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address all worst forms of child labor in the country.</p>	<p>Coordination Body for the Protocol on the Treatment of Bodies, Institutions, and Organizations in Montenegro with Children Involved in Street Life and Work: Created to coordinate intergovernmental work on issues specifically affecting children engaged in street labor. During the reporting period, the Coordination Body conducted one formal meeting and facilitated three regional roundtables to encourage local government entities to implement activities related to the prevention of children’s involvement in hazardous street work.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Montenegro established policies related to child labor. However, child labor issues are not included in national policies on social inclusion and educational reforms.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking (2019–2024): Outlines objectives for addressing human trafficking by raising public awareness, strengthening the capacity for victim identification and services provision, improving interagency coordination, and raising the efficiency of prosecutions. In 2023, the government provided financial and logistical support for the construction of the new shelter for victims of child and youth trafficking, which opened in April 2024.</p> <p>Strategy for Exercising the Rights of the Child in Montenegro (2019–2023): Sought to enhance the ability of children to exercise their rights by improving the application of laws related to children; supported vulnerable children, including those with disabilities; and prevented violence against children and the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the government increased the national education budget by 10 percent, and the number of children covered by the universal child benefits program increased to 128,763.</p> <p>Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma and Balkan Egyptians (2021–2025): Aims to create social inclusion of Roma and Balkan Egyptians by increasing school attendance and birth registration while preventing child begging and human trafficking. Implemented by the Ministry of Justice, Human, and Minority Rights. During the reporting period, the government continued to implement the strategy by encouraging youth from vulnerable populations to pursue postsecondary educational opportunities. Additionally, in 2023 the government marked an 11 percent increase in the number of Roma children enrolled in preschool education.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>In 2023, the Montenegro funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors.</p> <p><i>*Program was launched during the reporting period.</i> <i>† Program is funded by the Government of Montenegro.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>UNICEF Country Program (2023–2027):* Addresses access to social services for children, synchronizes the legal framework with EU and UN standards, implements and monitors policies relevant to children, and applies the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Programming for 2023 included healthcare mediation for children from vulnerable communities and providing educational and psychological support to refugee children.</p> <p>Hotline for Victims of Human Trafficking:† SOS Hotline funded by the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, under the Ministry of Interior, and run by the NGO Montenegrin Women’s Lobby. Provides advice, connects victims with service providers, and raises public awareness. The Hotline was operational during the reporting period, receiving 2,282 calls through December 2023.</p>

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 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MONTSERRAT

NO ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Montserrat, in 2023, the government made no advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. In addition, labor inspectors do not have the authority to conduct unannounced inspections, as they must obtain either the business owner's consent or a search warrant to enter a business for the purposes of performing an inspection. The lack of unannounced inspections may leave potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected in workplaces. In addition, the Labor Code allows children as young as age 14 to engage in light work; however, Montserrat does not have a list of activities that constitute light work, nor does it specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken or limit the number of hours for light work. Furthermore, the government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children nor criminally prohibited the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Montserrat.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Montserrat's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that the law's light work provisions specify the activities/conditions in which light work may be undertaken by children as young as age 14 and limit the number of hours for light work.

Enforcement











Authorize the labor inspectorate to conduct unannounced inspections.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Each United Kingdom (UK) overseas territory has its own constitution, which sets out its system of government and its relationship with the UK, and provides for a governor or commissioner, an elected legislature, and ministers that are responsible for domestic affairs, such as internal security (police), immigration, education, and healthcare. They are self-governing, except in the areas of foreign affairs and defense. Domestic UK law does not generally apply unless explicitly extended to Montserrat. Under Article 35(4) of the ILO Constitution,

when the UK ratifies a Convention, the Territory must consider if it will accept the Convention. If the Convention is accepted, it is considered applicable to that Territory. No key international conventions concerning child labor have been accepted by Montserrat, including ILO C. 182, ILO C. 138, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Montserrat has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children or criminalized the use of children in illicit activities.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Parts 3 and 9 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Parts 3, 9, and 10 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Part 9 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Part VIII-A, Sections 138A, 138D, and 202D of the Penal Code; Part IV, No. 55 of the Constitution Order
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Part VIII-A, Sections 138A–D, and Part XIV-A of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Part VIII-A, Sections 138A and 138B of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 3 and 96(8) of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 3 and 96(8) of the Labor Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Chapter II, Part 3 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Chapter II, Part 1 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

The Labor Code allows children as young as age 14 to engage in light work; however, Montserrat does not have a list of activities that constitute light work, nor does it specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken or limit the number of hours for light work. The Minister of Labor for Montserrat is responsible for deciding what constitutes hazardous work; however, Montserrat has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. In addition, the law does not criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Montserrat has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor: Conducts labor inspections pursuant to the Labor Code under the Labor Commissioner. According to Article 8 of the Labor Code, labor inspectors must obtain either the employer's permission or a search warrant to enter a business for the purposes of performing an inspection. As a result, labor inspectors do not have the authority to conduct unannounced inspections.

Royal Montserrat Police Service: Enforces the laws of Montserrat, including worst forms of child labor laws. Responsible for criminal investigations and pursuing criminal proceedings in cases of child abuse of any kind.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies, programs, or a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MOROCCO

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Morocco made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Morocco adopted a roadmap to eliminate child labor by 2030 as part of its commitment as a Pathfinder country under Alliance 8.7 and adopted the National Plan to Combat and Prevent Human Trafficking (2023–2030), along with the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking. It also increased its number of labor inspectors from 500 in 2022 to 585 in 2023 and nearly doubled the number of labor inspections completed in a single year from 29,068 in 2022 to 48,123 in 2023. However, the Labor Code's minimum age for work provisions do not meet international standards as children 15 years of age and under are not protected when working in traditional artisan and handicraft sectors. Furthermore, barriers to education such as insufficient facilities, school fees, and lack of transportation can prevent children from attending school, increasing their risk of engaging in child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	4.5% (150,178)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	6 to 14	82.9%
Combining Work and School	10 to 14	0.7%

Children in Morocco are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in construction and mechanics. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, such as farming, fishing, and forestry.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, fishing, and forestry.



Industry

Construction.†



Services

Domestic work. Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic work, forced begging and forced labor in construction and mechanics. Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking of drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Morocco’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that all children aged 15 and under are protected by law, including children who work in the traditional artisan and handicraft sectors for family businesses.

Ensure that the law establishes 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military, with safeguards for volunteers.

Criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 585 to 813 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 12.2 million workers.

Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including information about labor inspectorate funding, penalties imposed, and collected for violations of the worst forms of child labor.

Impose penalties with consequences significant enough to act as a deterrent whenever child labor violations are found.

Reduce administrative burdens for inspectors referring children to services and streamline child labor enforcement procedures among government agencies.

Publish information, in a timely manner, on criminal enforcement efforts, including the number of convictions, penalties imposed, and penalties collected for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.

Establish referral mechanisms between labor law enforcement authorities and social services where they do not currently exist and strengthen existing informal networks for this purpose to ensure effective coordination on child labor cases.

Ensure that the human trafficking hotline is always operational.

Coordination

Establish a mechanism to coordinate government efforts to address all worst forms of child labor in the country.

Social Programs

Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including in rural areas and in forced domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

Conduct a comprehensive study of children’s activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor and to inform policies and programs, including in farming, forestry, domestic work, and the informal sector.

Remove barriers to education, such as insufficient facilities, fees, and lack of reliable and safe transportation, particularly in rural areas.

Provide child protection units with resources to provide appropriate care to victims, including hiring a sufficient number of social workers.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK













An estimated 100,000 children were impacted by the earthquake in the Al Haouz and Chichaoua regions on September 8, 2023, and are now more vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitative labor. Children in rural areas are also more vulnerable to child labor; approximately 75 percent of the children engaged in hazardous work live in rural areas. Initial reports from NGOs suggest that the practice known locally as *petites bonnes*, in which rural girls are recruited for domestic work in private urban homes, is no longer widespread and is believed to have declined in recent years as the 2016 Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers prohibiting this practice came into full effect in October 2023. Moreover, migrant children—both Moroccan natives and sub-Saharan Africans immigrating through Morocco—who travel to Europe are often unaccompanied and lack access to stable housing. As a result, this exposes them to poverty and social exclusion, and increases their vulnerability to child labor.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Morocco, particularly in rural areas, face barriers to education, including the cost of school materials, poor facilities, and transportation issues. Approximately 85 percent of working children do not attend school. Some children must reside in boarding houses to attend school to avoid long commutes, and some families are reluctant to allow children—particularly girls—to make the daily journey for fear of exposure to risks associated with traveling to school. Other barriers to education include fees associated with after-school activities and the required documentation for school enrollment. For example, identification documents are sometimes denied to children who are born to unmarried parents. Migrant children may also face language barriers in education, as few speak the language of instruction, Arabic. Efforts have been made to expand language access such as providing textbooks in Amazigh, another common language in Morocco.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Morocco has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Morocco’s laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work because the law does not cover children working in businesses with fewer than five employees. In addition, there is no minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 4, 143, and 151 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Law No. 19-12
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 147, 150 and 181 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Law No. 19-12
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Hazardous Child Labor List, Decree No. 2-10-183; Articles 179 and 181 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings; Articles 10 and 12 of the Labor Code; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 497–499 and 503-2 of the Penal Code; Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Law number 1-73-282; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code; Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 4 of Law No. 44-18
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 1 of Law No. 04-00
Free Public Education		Article 1 of Law No. 04-00

The Labor Code does not apply to children who work in traditional artisan or handicraft sectors for family businesses with five or fewer employees.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Morocco took actions to address child labor. However, an insufficient number of labor inspectors and a lack of referral mechanisms between labor law enforcement authorities and social services hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills (MEIPEEC): Enforces child labor laws with its 54 inspection offices throughout the country. Partners with civil society organizations working to remove children from child labor and provide them with an education or vocational training. MEIPEEC's priorities in the 2023 National Labor Inspection Plan included addressing child labor and focusing on the agricultural, construction, handicraft, textile, and automotive sectors. Reporting from last year noted that some of Morocco's labor inspectors were contractors. However, new reporting clarifies that these inspectors are trainees going through a probation period and are directly employed by the government. Between January and September 2023, MEIPEEC removed 302 children—43 under 15 years of age and 259 between 15 and 18 years of age—from exploitative labor conditions.

General Prosecutor: Prosecutes criminal offenses against children and processes cases involving children in the court system. Serves independently as a judiciary body separate from the Ministry of Justice.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **585** labor inspectors conducted **48,123** worksite inspections. There were also **57** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, although the number of prosecutions initiated, and perpetrators convicted, is **unknown**.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Morocco established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this coordinating mechanism does not address all forms of child labor in the country.

National Commission for the Coordination of Measures to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Persons (CNCLT):

Coordinates the government's efforts to address trafficking in persons. Led by the Ministry of Justice, with 22 members representing various ministries and civil society organizations. In March 2023, the CNCLT adopted the National Plan to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings (2023–2030), which provides Morocco's overarching vision to prevent human trafficking while aligning with Pathfinder sustainable development goals. The CNCLT also adopted the National Strategy to Address Trafficking in Persons (2023–2026) in March 2023, which details specific goals to evaluate progress on implementation of the National Plan. The National Plan includes the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking to coordinate trafficking victim identification and referral to services. The CNCLT organized 12 plenary and working group meetings in 2023.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Morocco established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Roadmap to Eliminate Child Labor in All Its Forms by 2030:[†] Has three main strategic priorities which include: (1) addressing poverty, education, and professional skills, (2) improving national regulations of working children, and (3) improving governance, monitoring, and evaluation. Through these actions, seeks to eliminate child labor among those under 15 years of age and stop children between the ages of 16 and 18 from participating in hazardous work. Accepted by MEIPEEC in June 2023.</p> <p>Ministry of Solidarity, Social Inclusion, and Family (MSISF) Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children: Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to respond to the exploitation of children and other issues. The MSISF operates 41 child protection units that exist to protect children from all kinds of abuses, including child victims of trafficking. NGOs have raised concerns that there are not enough social workers to support these units.</p> <p>National Strategy to Address Trafficking in Persons (2023–2026):[†] Aims to raise awareness of human trafficking and improve the identification and referral of victims to services. Strategy provides for regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that objectives are being met and describes stakeholder responsibilities. Enacted in March 2023 with assistance from international partners. Meetings held in 2023 to begin strategy implementation, including provision of temporary housing assistance to victims.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Morocco funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address child labor in all sectors.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Morocco.</i></p>	<p>Social Cohesion Support Fund:[†] Includes programs that aim to improve access to education. Also provides direct support to orphans and others in vulnerable situations. These efforts continued throughout the reporting period. Included the MSISF-funded Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program, which provided direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children met school attendance criteria. These cash transfers continued until the program ended in November 2023.</p> <p>Government-Funded Education Projects:[†] Projects that aim to assist vulnerable children, including the After-School Program for a Second Chance, which provides students with after-school educational assistance as part of non-formal education programs. There are 161 centers involved in the program, which remained active in 2023. The Child to Child program was also active in 2023; it promotes school enrollment and assists students who have dropped out of school. A related program, Caravane for Direct Integration, worked with 7,835 students who had dropped out of school to complete end-of-studies exams in the 2022–2023 school year.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



MOZAMBIQUE

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Mozambique made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In August 2023, the government enacted Law No. 13/2023 that raised the minimum working age to 18, absent permission given by a legal guardian, and the Council of Ministers approved the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons 2023–2027. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security also carried out 856 awareness-raising talks on the worst forms of child labor. However, the established minimum age for work is not in compliance with international labor standards because it does not extend to informal employment. Lastly, existing social programs are insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem in Mozambique.

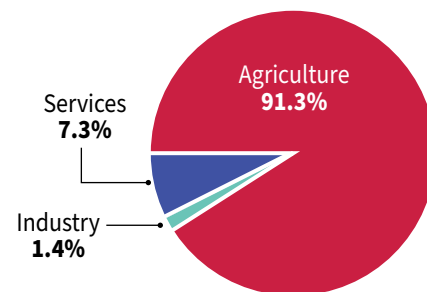


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	16.2% (1,270,866)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	63.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	10.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Mozambique are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in the production of tobacco.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in farming, including the production of tobacco in small-scale farms,[†] and handling dangerous pesticides and tools, and herding livestock. Working in fishing,[†] including catching and transporting bait and fish, handling nets, and cleaning boats. Engaged in forestry,[†] including cutting and climbing trees, and hunting, including small and wild animals.



Industry

Engaged in artisanal mining[†] and working in construction.[†]



Services

Engaged in domestic work,[†] including childcare.[†] Engaged in street work, including street vending, and car washing.[†]



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced labor in domestic work, farming, mining, and vending. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, stealing, assisting poachers in the illegal poaching industry, and recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

[†] 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.

In 2023, children were forcibly recruited and used as soldiers, cooks, and laborers in northern Mozambique by the United States government-designated terrorist group ISIS-Mozambique.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Mozambique’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish a compulsory education age of 18, the minimum age for employment.

Extend minimum age protections for all children, including children working outside of formal employment relationships.

Raise the minimum age for light work from 12 years old to 13 years old to comply with international labor standards.

Enforcement

Publish data on labor law enforcement and criminal law enforcement efforts, such as the number of prosecutions initiated, convictions secured, and whether penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor were imposed.

Provide labor inspectors with adequate financial resources, including vehicles and fuel, to ensure their capacity to enforce child labor laws.

Coordination

Ensure that responsibilities between the Multisectoral Group on Child Labor and the National Reference Group are clearly defined, and strengthen coordination between the two agencies.

Ensure that there is an effective approach to address and eliminate child labor in the informal sector.

Social Programs

Take measures to ensure that all children, including children in displaced communities, have access to education by providing supplies, uniforms, and an adequate number of schools, classroom space, and trained teachers; address barriers for children from rural areas; take preventative steps to protect children from physical and sexual abuse in schools.

Institute programs to address child labor in domestic work, and expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

By the end of 2023, approximately 850,000 people, many of them children, were internally displaced due to increased terrorist-related violence in Cabo Delgado Province and natural disasters, placing them at a higher risk of child labor. Children with HIV/AIDS or who are orphans of parents who passed away due to AIDS are particularly vulnerable to child labor and its worst forms.















BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although primary education is tuition-free through the ninth grade, families must provide school supplies, uniforms, and, in most cases, meals. Barriers to education for children also include a lack of schools and classroom space, poor school infrastructure, a lack of meals at most schools, and an overall lack of school resources. Many students, particularly in rural areas, face difficulties traveling long distances to get to school. In addition, physical and sexual abuse is common in schools, and research found that some male teachers coerce female students into sex. The government estimates that only 49 percent of children complete their primary education. Further, some LGBTQI+ students faced discrimination at secondary schools, leading many to drop out before completing schooling. Children with disabilities also faced discrimination, in addition to a lack of accommodations. The increased rate of displacement due to insecurity in Cabo Delgado Province creates additional barriers to secondary education for some children due to a lack of secondary schools or overcrowding. Security forces occupied and used three schools in 2023.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mozambique has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Mozambique’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the law does not cover children working outside of formal employment relationships.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Article 29 of the Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 29 of the Labor Law; Article 3 of the Hazardous Work List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children, 18 Years		Hazardous Work List
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 10, 11, and 17 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 196 and 198 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 5, 10, and 11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 5, 10, and 11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 33 and 40 of the Law on Drugs
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 23 of the Law on Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 2 of the Law on Military Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 5 and 10 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 41 of the Law of Basic Child Protection; Article 7 of the Law on the National System of Education
Free Public Education		Article 41 of the Law of Basic Child Protection; Article 7 of the Law on the National System of Education

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In August 2023, the new Law No. 13/2023 raised the minimum working age to 18, with exceptions granted for children aged 15 or older if permission is given by a legal guardian. The Labor Law’s minimum age protections do not meet international standards as they do not apply to children working outside of formal employment relationships. The Labor Law also states that children between the ages of 12 and 15 may work under certain conditions defined by the Council of Ministers, and the Regulations on Domestic Work allow children between the ages of 12 and 15 to perform domestic work with the permission of their legal guardian. However, this minimum age of 12 for light work is not in compliance with international standards, as the age for light work should be 13 years old.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mozambique took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of resources to conduct labor inspections, including vehicles and fuel, hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MITESS): Enforces child labor laws and regulations. Monitors implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Ministry of the Interior and the Attorney General’s Office: The National Police Force functions under the Ministry of the Interior and enforces all criminal laws, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. Through its National Criminal Investigation Service, investigates and refers cases of human trafficking and violence against women and children to the Attorney General’s Office. The Attorney General’s Office coordinates the government’s efforts against human trafficking and child labor, leads the National Reference Group for the Protection of Children and Combating Trafficking in Persons, and operates a phone hotline for reporting child labor cases.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** whether Mozambique’s 156 labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found in 2023. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

 **COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Mozambique established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unknown whether this mechanism took actions to coordinate efforts to address child labor during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Multisectoral Group on Child Labor: Led by MITESS, serves as the main coordinating mechanism for child labor and is responsible for implementing the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Includes representatives from every ministry, reports to the Prime Minister, and submits regular reports to the Council of Ministers. In collaboration with the National Reference Group—the entity responsible for addressing Mozambique’s human trafficking problem—assists children found in child labor. Research was unable to determine whether the Multisectoral Group on Child Labor was active during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Mozambique established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Aimed to address the underlying reasons for child labor in the geographic regions of concern (the provinces of Tete, Manica, and Maputo, and Maputo City), and focused on principal sectors in which child labor occurs (mining, domestic work, and agriculture). Included activities such as mapping 70 percent of occurrences of the worst forms of child labor by province and withdrawing 20,000 children from the worst forms of child labor and enrolling them in the Basic Social Subsidy program. Called for improved coordination between several key government agencies, including the Attorney General’s Office and the Office for Assistance to Families and Children Victims of Violence in the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action, among others. Also created a multisector group comprising representatives from the government, civil society, unions, and employers in the formal and informal sectors to collaborate on issues identified in the plan. In 2023, the government trained frontline officials and community leaders, working with NGO partners, to provide services for children removed from child labor, and held 856 awareness-raising talks on combating the worst forms of child labor in all 11 provinces, focused on places where child labor is known to occur.</p> <p>National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons (2023–2027):† Established in August 2023, aims to respond to trafficking in persons through the prevention, detection, investigation, and protection and assistance of victims. Also intended to reinforce coordination among stakeholders. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Mozambique participated in a program that includes the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, this social program is inadequate because it does not address the problem in all sectors.</p>	<p>Memorandum of Understanding to Combat Child Labor in Tobacco Growing (2018–2024): \$1.2 million, 3-year project funded by the Eliminating Child Labor in Tobacco Growing Foundation, focusing on education, awareness raising, institutional capacity building, and revision of the government’s legal framework. Incorporates training for law enforcement officials. During the reporting period, the government conducted at least one working visit to a remote province to assess the progress of anti-child labor efforts.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



NAMIBIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Namibia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted a National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons, which includes the goal of raising public awareness to protect children from trafficking. The government also sentenced two individuals to prison for child trafficking crimes and allocated USD \$34 million to provide relief for children and households impacted by drought, which is a cause of child labor in the country. However, despite these efforts, the government did not publish data on labor law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. Namibia also does not have a comprehensive policy that covers all worst forms of child labor in the country nor social programs that address child labor in agriculture and domestic work.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Namibia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agricultural work, domestic work, and street work.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and fishing.



Services

Domestic work and street work, including vending.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, including organized begging, selling of drugs, smuggling of fuel, diamonds, and wildlife products; forced labor in agriculture, fishing, and domestic work.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Namibia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that Namibia’s light work framework prescribes the number of hours children ages 14 to 18 may work.

Enforcement

Publish information on criminal and labor law enforcement efforts undertaken during the reporting period, including labor inspectorate funding, number of labor inspectors, training for labor inspectors and criminal investigators, number and types of labor inspections conducted, child labor violations found, child labor-related penalties imposed and collected, number of criminal investigations, prosecutions initiated, and information about reciprocal referral mechanisms.

Ensure that training is provided to labor inspectors, including training of new inspectors and refresher courses, and ensure that training is provided to criminal law enforcement investigators on laws related to child labor, including training for new investigators.

Increase the number of labor inspectors to 65 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 968,400 workers.

Publish information on the Ministry of Labor, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation’s SMS hotline, including the number of child labor complaints reported through the mechanism.

Ensure clear procedures at the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation for receiving, consolidating, and preparing child labor-related data submitted by stakeholders and publish data stratified by source to ensure information transparency.

Establish a mechanism to compile and publish comprehensive statistics related to labor and criminal law enforcement, including convictions for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Ensure that all Gender-Based Violence Protection Units and government shelters have adequate resources, including consistent funding, to operate according to their intended mandates.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies are sufficiently funded and resourced in order to adequately address worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure the National Advisory Council on Children, including its Interministerial Committee on Child Labor, is funded, fully active, and able to carry out its intended mandate of coordinating policies and efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement policies relevant to child well-being, including the Social Protection Policy, and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as forced child labor in fishing, agriculture, street vending, and domestic work.

Social Programs

Conduct a comprehensive study of children’s activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor.

Enhance efforts to make education accessible and affordable for all children, particularly in rural areas, including by expanding social support to orphaned children, reducing long travel distances to schools or improving transportation to schools, increasing the number of qualified teachers, and addressing the needs of students with disabilities and special learning needs.

Expand opportunities for birth registration and national documentation for all children to improve access to education and social programs.

Ensure that the Social Protection Grants program, Shelters and Victims Services, and Decent Work Country Program (2019– 2023) are active, and publish activities undertaken during the reporting period.

Institute programs or expand existing programs to address child labor in agriculture and domestic work, including for children of the San, Zemba, and Himba ethnic groups.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

An extended drought and economic downturn in northern Namibia and southern Angola have likely affected children’s vulnerability to child labor, including its worst forms. Children from rural areas move to urban centers, such as Windhoek, in pursuit of supplemental income for their families, and some of these children are forced into selling drugs, begging, and commercial sexual exploitation. Growing numbers of migrant children from Angola are living in informal settlements where they are often at risk of being coerced into street vending, farming, or domestic work. Additionally, children of refugee status along the border of Namibia and Angola are increasingly trafficked and forced to smuggle drugs, fuel, diamonds, and wildlife products. Children of the San, Zemba, and Himba ethnic groups are particularly vulnerable to forced labor on farms and in homes.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Both primary and secondary education are free by law; however, long distances to schools, particularly in rural and remote locations, may deter some children from attending school and increase their vulnerability to child labor. The Education Act stipulates that no child be denied education due to documentation. However, reporting indicates inconsistent regional implementation of this law and that undocumented children face difficulty securing identification documents, which sometimes results in delays in enrollment and school admission. Finally, reports also highlight that the educational needs of children with disabilities or special learning needs have not been addressed due to the lack of specialized inclusive education teachers, disability friendly infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, and assistive technologies.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Namibia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Namibia’s laws do not meet the international standards on light work because its light work framework does not prescribe the number of hours children ages 14 to 18 may work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years	✓	Chapter 2, Article 3(2) of the Labor Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Chapter 2, Article 3(4) of the Labor Act; Article 2(2) of the Labor Act (Regulations Related to Domestic Work); Article 15(2) of the Constitution
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Chapter 2, Articles 3(3)(d) and 3(4) of the Labor Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 9 of the Constitution; Articles 200, 202, 234(1)(a) and 234(7) of the Child Care and Protection Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Sections 202 and 234 of the Child Care and Protection Act; Chapter 2, Article 1 and 3 of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Section 200(1)(a) and 234 of the Child Care and Protection Act; Articles 1 and 3 of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Section 234 of the Child Care and Protection Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Section 17 of Defense Act 1 of 2002 (Government Notice 189 of 2010)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Section 234(1)(b) of the Child Care and Protection Act
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years	✓	Section 9 of the Promulgation of Basic Education Act, 2020
Free Public Education	✓	Sections 67 of the Promulgation of Basic Education Act, 2020

* Country has no conscription

Namibia’s light work framework for children ages 14 to 18 includes a list of prohibited activities for children, such as work done underground, in construction or demolition, in places in which goods are manufactured, in places in which electricity is generated or distributed, and any work at nighttime. However, Namibia’s light work framework is insufficient because it does not prescribe the number of hours children ages 14 to 18 may work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, criminal law enforcement agencies in Namibia took actions to address child labor. However, there were no documented actions by labor law enforcement agencies.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation: Oversees the country’s labor inspectorate and ensures adherence and compliance to the Labor Act, 2007, including the prohibition of child labor. Operates a hotline that receives labor complaints, including child labor, via text message.

Ministry of Justice: Responsible for, along with the Namibian Police Force, enforcing criminal laws against forced child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, recruitment/use of child soldiers, or use of children in illicit activities. In 2023, two people were sentenced to prison for human trafficking crimes involving children.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, it is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted or whether prosecutions were initiated, although 2 perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Namibia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the government did not report specific activities undertaken during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Advisory Council on Children: Coordinates government efforts on child welfare and rights. Comprises the Children’s Advocate and the Executive Directors of the Ministries responsible for health, education, youth, justice, labor, home affairs, and more. The Council houses an Interministerial Committee on Child Labor.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Namibia established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor in fishing, agriculture, and domestic work.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Social Protection Policy (2022–2030): Launched by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (MGEPEWSW), aims to improve coordination of social protection mechanisms and provides a framework to strengthen child grants through optimizing child grant-related data, reviewing and developing the implementation mechanism, and creating linkages between relevant government agencies.</p> <p>National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons (2022–2027):† Launched during the reporting period, the National Action Plan aims to strengthen and improve legislation related to trafficking in persons, secure sustainable financing for anti-trafficking in persons efforts, and enhance victim identification procedures, among other goals. The Plan places emphasis on the protection of child victims of trafficking in persons.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Namibia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in the agriculture sector and domestic work.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Namibia.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Social Protection Grants:† MGEPEWSW-funded grants to support vulnerable children and households. Include child maintenance grants, place-of-safety allowances, and foster care grants. Child maintenance grants provide monthly stipends to single-parent families and are contingent upon school enrollment of all school-age children; place of safety and foster care grants provide support for people and places that provide temporary care for children. Research was unable to identify specific activities undertaken related to these grants during the reporting period.</p> <p>Shelters and Victims Services:† Government and NGO shelters provide safe accommodations, meals, clothing, toiletries, psychosocial support, legal assistance, medical services, and access to education. Registered residential childcare facilities provide services for children experiencing mistreatment and neglect. The government provides subsidies, either per child or as a percentage of operating expenses, for private shelter facilities. Research was unable to identify specific activities undertaken by government and NGO shelters during the reporting period.</p> <p>Decent Work Country Program (2019–2023): ILO-funded program which promoted decent work in Namibia, including the elimination of child labor, through employment promotion, enhanced social protection, and social dialogue and collaboration. Prioritized institutional capacity for implementation of child labor policies, and research and data collection on child labor and trafficking in persons. Research was unable to identify specific activities undertaken to implement the Decent Work Country Program during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



NEPAL

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Nepal made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government allocated approximately \$35,380 for activities to eliminate child labor, including by making contributions to the Child Labor Elimination Fund and awareness programs. The government also finalized a cooperative agreement to implement the School Education Sector Plan, which will provide \$7.2 billion dollars over 5 years to enhance education of children and youth in Nepal. In addition, responding to complaints received through a government-run hotline, it rescued 560 children from child labor. However, Nepal's laws do not meet international standards for the prohibition of child trafficking because it does not clearly criminalize recruitment, harboring, receipt, or transportation in the absence of force, fraud, or coercion. The law prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities is also insufficient because it does not prohibit the use of children in the production of drugs. In addition, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security lacks sufficient budgetary resources and labor inspectors to adequately enforce laws related to child labor.

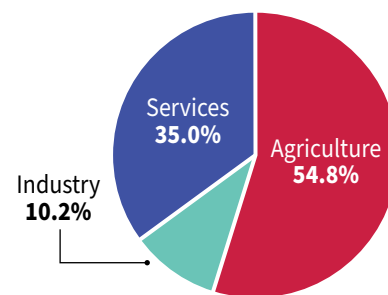


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	20.4% (1,093,497)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	93.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	22.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Nepal are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging. Children also perform dangerous tasks in producing bricks, embellished textiles, stones, and weaving carpets.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including tending livestock.



Industry

Construction.† Producing bricks, including loading and unloading of mules and donkeys. Embellished textiles (*zari*)† and embroidery. Quarrying, collecting, and breaking stones.† Weaving carpets.†



Services

Domestic and transportation work.† Working as shop keepers, shop sales assistants, and tailors. Working in hotels,† restaurants,† and tea shops; in entertainment,† including as dancers;† and in mechanical repair shops for cars and motorbikes.† Portering and collecting recyclable waste.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in embellishing textiles (*zari*), weaving carpets, and domestic work. Forced labor in agriculture, producing bricks, quarrying, and breaking stones. Use in illicit activities, including the cultivation and trafficking of drugs. Forced begging.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Nepal’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for entry into hazardous work to 18 years old.

Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive and include sectors in which there is evidence of child labor, including brickmaking and breaking stones.

Criminally prohibit the human trafficking of children without requiring proof of the use of force, fraud, or coercion.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the production of drugs.

Establish criminal penalties for the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Increase training of criminal law enforcement officials on victim-centered approaches for investigating and responding to cases of child trafficking while ensuring that human trafficking cases are consistently registered and prosecuted, instead of resolved through mediation.

Increase the Ministry of Labor’s budget and the number of labor inspectors from 11 to 218 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 8.7 million workers.

Increase complaint-based and routine targeted inspections, including unannounced inspections, to all sectors, including the informal sector and small factories that employ less than 10 workers.

Institutionalize regular training for labor inspectors on laws related to child labor, including its worst forms.

Publish data on criminal law enforcement actions, including training for criminal investigators and the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, and penalties imposed for child labor crimes.

Create and utilize a centralized database to track and monitor cases of child labor, disaggregated by type of activity and gender, including labor court data related to child labor.

Increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and, where appropriate, convict and sentence perpetrators of worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure the Child Labor Prevention and Occupational Safety Section is able to carry out its intended mandates.

Government Policies

Develop a policy framework for implementation of services and delegate responsibilities for responding to child labor under the new federalist system.

Social Programs

Provide timely support and interventions for survivors calling the National Child Labor Helpline.

Eliminate barriers to education by increasing the availability of sanitation facilities at schools, addressing long distances to schools, enrolling and providing services to meet the needs of children with disabilities, increasing the availability of documentation for refugee children, and offsetting fees associated with schooling.

Provide timely rehabilitation, restitution, and victim services for the freed Haruwa-Charuwa bonded laborers, including proper release certification and identity card distribution.

Increase the budget for social programs for children, including rehabilitation services for survivors of child labor.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children living on the streets are highly vulnerable to human trafficking, including sex trafficking. Moreover, children in Nepal’s unregistered shelters are exploited in forced begging. These children are also trafficked into exploitative or fraudulent orphanages where they are used to solicit money from foreign donors. The majority of children working in seasonal brick kilns in Nepal are from migrant families from India. Children from the Dalit and Madhesi communities are also highly vulnerable to human trafficking because of poverty, as well as political and economic exclusion. Climate-related disasters, such as flooding and landslides, have increased Nepali children’s vulnerability to child labor in sectors such as brick kilns, domestic service, and carpet manufacturing.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children, particularly girls, face barriers to accessing education due to a shortage of sanitation facilities, geographic distance, costs associated with schooling, household chores, and an absence of parental support. In Nepal, a lack of separate toilet facilities for girls deters them from attending school, especially when they are menstruating. Children with disabilities face additional barriers to accessing education, including denial of school admission. Refugee children in Nepal face obstacles in enrolling in school because of lack of access to official documentation required by the Nepali government. The government, however, allows NGOs to provide primary- and secondary-level schooling to refugee children without documentation.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Nepal has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Nepal’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for hazardous work, the prohibition of child trafficking, and the prohibition of the use children in illicit activities, such as the production of drugs.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Section 3 of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 17 Years		Section 3 of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Schedule 1 of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Section 4 of the Bonded Labor (Prohibition) Act; Section 4 of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act; Sections 2–4 and 15 of the Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act; Section 4 and 164 of the Labor Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 3, 4, and 15 of the Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 66(3)(d) and 72(3)(c) of the Act Relating to Children 2018; Sections 3, 4, and 15 of the Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act; Sections 16(2) and 16(3) of the Children’s Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Section 16 of the Children’s Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Section 7 of the Military Service Regulation 2069

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 39 of the Constitution
Compulsory Education Age, 14 Years		Article 31 of the Constitution; Section 6 of the Free and Compulsory Education Act
Free Public Education		Section 16D of the Education Act; Section 20 of the Free and Compulsory Education Act; Article 31 of the Constitution

* Country has no conscription (33)

The minimum age for hazardous work is not consistent with international standards, because it does not prohibit children aged 17 from engaging in hazardous work. Furthermore, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not include brickmaking and stone breaking, sectors in which there is evidence that work involves carrying heavy loads and being exposed to hazardous substances. However, Nepal’s National Master Plan on Child Labor (2018–2028) has identified children working in brick kilns as a group particularly vulnerable to hazardous child labor. In addition, the law related to child trafficking is insufficient because it does not clearly criminalize the recruitment, harboring, receipt, or transportation of children in the absence of force, fraud, or coercion. The law prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities is insufficient because it does not prohibit the use of children in the production of drugs. Furthermore, although the Constitution prohibits the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups, there is no specific legislation penalizing this practice.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Nepal took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resources at the federal and state levels hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor and Occupational Safety (DOL), Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MoLESS): Enforces labor laws, including those involving child labor. Conducts studies, provides training on child labor prevention, and monitors Nepal’s child labor prevention program. They were active during the reporting period.

Nepal Police: Investigate crimes involving women and children, including crimes related to human trafficking, through the Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau (AHTB). Assist in children’s rescue, rehabilitation, and coordination for the arrest of perpetrators in cases of the worst forms of child labor. In cases of hazardous child labor, coordinate with and hand over cases to MoLESS. From July 2022 to July 2023, the Nepal Police registered 75 cases of child trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **11** labor inspectors conducted **2,467** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. While the police registered **75** cases of child trafficking, it is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Nepal established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unclear whether that coordinating mechanism carried out any activities during the reporting period.

Child Labor Prevention and Occupational Safety Section, MoLESS, and MWCSC: Coordinates policymaking and monitors implementation of child labor inspection guidelines. Consists of an Under Secretary, one section officer, and one factory inspector. Confers with the Monitoring Action Committees, Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MWCSC), the National Child Rights Council, MoLESS, and District Labor Offices.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Nepal established policies related to child labor. However, Nepal lacks a policy framework to direct and coordinate provincial-level services and activities related to child labor despite a constitutional transition to federalism.

National Master Plan to End Child Labor (July 2018–July 2028): Prioritizes ending all forms of child labor by 2025 and includes a strategy to establish a fund at the local and provincial levels to help survivors of child labor. The plan designates the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives, and Poverty Alleviation as the lead ministry to establish targeted programs for children involved in forced child labor, particularly in the agricultural sector. The Ministry carries out awareness programs through cooperatives at local and provincial levels and monitors child labor by analyzing the results of child labor surveys. In 2023, the government allocated approximately \$35,380 (45.3 million NRS) for activities to eliminate child labor, including by providing contributions to the Child Labor Elimination Fund and awareness programs.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

School Education Sector Plan (2023–2032):† Expands access to education for all children, improves the quality of education, and facilitates improved management and governance of schools. In 2023, the government implemented the School Education Sector Plan, which includes a roadmap to ensure that children from high-risk communities can access education. The government also finalized cooperation for the School Education Sector Plan with eight development partners to enhance education of children and youth in Nepal. The initial joint funding will provide \$7.2 billion over 5 years.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Nepal funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem because of gaps in funding and implementation.

Child Rights, Rescue and Rehabilitation Program:† Nepal Child Rights Council (NCRC) coordinates and facilitates monitoring, evaluation, and reviewing of local child rights at the provincial and local levels. Local children’s funds have been established in approximately 243 local governments across the country. In 2023, NCRC established child rights protection and promotion procedures for local governments. The NCRC also provided various services to 9,410 children rescued from child labor in fiscal year 2022–2023.

† Program is funded by the Government of Nepal.

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

Helpline and Hotline Programs:† Child Helpline–1098 is an MWCSC- and Child Workers in Nepal-funded helpline. Responds to calls about missing children, child abuse, child labor, child trafficking, and child sexual abuse in 18 locations in Nepal and Bangladesh, Bhutan, and India. NGO and government officials stated that the response time to investigate allegations of child labor reported through the helpline is slow. National Center for Children at Risk–Hotline No. 104 is a hotline operated from Kathmandu, which is jointly run by the Central Child Welfare Board and Nepal Police. These hotlines cover cases for 74 out of the total 77 districts in Nepal. Responding to complaints received through the hotline, NCRC rescued 560 children from child labor in fiscal year 2022–2023.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



NICARAGUA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Nicaragua made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government provided training to high school students on their labor rights as adolescent workers and continued providing assistance to children and their families to address the root causes of child labor, including by providing school supplies and school meals. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Nicaragua is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because the government continues to impede the work of civil society organizations, including those that provide social services to address the root causes of child labor and aid child labor survivors, forcibly closing and expropriating the assets of thousands of organizations deemed in opposition to the government. In addition, the country's laws do not establish a clear compulsory education age, and the government lacks adequate services for human trafficking survivors, such as shelters. Labor and criminal law enforcement agencies also lack the financial and human resources necessary to fulfill their mandates. Furthermore, the government does not have a specific and consistent mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

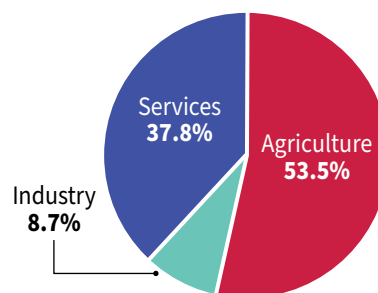


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	47.7% (342,076)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	10 to 14	88.3%
Combining Work and School	10 to 14	40.3%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Nicaragua are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture and mining.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including in harvesting coffee, bananas, and tobacco.† Raising livestock.† Fishing,† including collecting shellfish.†



Industry

Construction.† Quarrying† of pumice, and mining† of gold. Production of gravel (crushed stones).†



Services

Domestic work and street work. Work in transportation,† tourism, the hotel industry, and restaurants.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, construction, mining, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including in drug production and drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.

Research indicates that the government continues to impede the work of civil society organizations by threatening them with fines or closure if deemed in opposition to the government. The Nicaraguan government has forced the closure of more than 3,600 national and international civil society organizations since 2018, seized their physical and financial assets, and threatened, arrested, and exiled their staff. The government closed more than 3,100 of these organizations in 2022 alone. Many of the organizations affected by the closures provide social services to prevent child labor and aid to child labor survivors, as well as other services to children survivors of violence. In particular, NGOs associated with the Nicaraguan Coordinating Federation of NGOs that Work on Children and Adolescent Issues have been threatened by the regime and risk closure themselves. As a result, numerous civil society organizations were forced to close or suspend their activities in the country in 2023, which may increase the vulnerability of children to exploitation.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Nicaragua’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish a compulsory education age of 14 years old to align with the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Employ at least 213 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 3.2 million people, especially in rural areas and the informal sector.

Ensure that all criminal investigators receive training on child labor and its worst forms.

Collect and publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the number of labor inspectors and whether they received training, the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites, the number of child labor violations found for which penalties were imposed and collected, whether routine inspections were conducted and targeted, and if unannounced inspections were conducted.

Ensure that the Ministry of Labor has sufficient funding to enforce labor laws, including those related to child labor.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement efforts are sufficient to address the scope of the problem and that agencies have the funding and resources necessary to carry out their duties.

Establish an adequate mechanism for identifying human trafficking victims, particularly children, among high-risk populations.

Publish information about investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, prosecutions initiated, and convictions on an annual basis.

Make publicly available information about the extent of use and effectiveness of the reciprocal referral mechanism between criminal authorities and social services in the country.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Social Welfare System effectively and consistently coordinates interagency efforts to address child labor, including with NGOs, and is fully funded, and publicly report on these efforts.

Ensure that the National Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons works with relevant local stakeholders to address human trafficking issues, and ensure that it establishes a person in the position of Executive Secretariat, as mandated by the Law Against Trafficking in Persons.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the Good Government Plan and the National Strategic Plan for the Prevention, Care, Investigation, Persecution, and Sanction of Human Trafficking, and that data on these activities are published on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Collect and publish updated data on the prevalence of child labor in the country.

Expand birth registration programs to ensure that children have the necessary documentation required for access to basic services.

Ensure that children are able to access education, including children from indigenous groups and of African descent; remove barriers to education, such as transportation and the costs associated with school supplies for all children, particularly those from poor backgrounds and rural areas; and improve school infrastructure and access to learning materials.

Provide and improve government services and infrastructure in rural areas and indigenous communities.

Implement social programs that address the full scope of the worst forms of child labor in the country, including in commercial sexual exploitation.

Develop social services for human trafficking survivors, such as shelters and specialized services, and ensure that services are available throughout the country, especially in areas where children are most vulnerable.

Ensure that civil society organizations and NGOs working on child labor and children’s issues are able to carry out their work freely and independently.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children in rural areas, particularly indigenous children from the Northern and Southern Caribbean Regions, are particularly vulnerable to child labor due to a lack of government oversight and services, poor infrastructure, sparsely populated areas, poverty, and cultural and language differences. In addition, children from the northwestern border of Nicaragua are increasingly vulnerable to child labor due to changes in weather patterns that have negatively affected agriculture and increased food insecurity in the region. Children from poor rural areas, those in the Caribbean Autonomous Regions, and migrants from Northern Central American countries are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, as well as children in Granada, Managua, and San Juan del Sur. In addition, children who lack identification documents, sometimes due to a lack of birth registration, may not have access to social services and are at an increased risk of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Education is free and compulsory in Nicaragua; however, the costs associated with school supplies and transportation make it difficult for some children, particularly those from poor backgrounds and rural areas, to attend school. Another barrier facing children from rural areas is long distances and a lack of secure transportation. There are also reports of poor preschool education, particularly among disadvantaged rural households, insufficient learning materials, and a lack of teachers, as well as limited school infrastructure. Only 50 percent of schools in the country provide basic drinking water, and school infrastructure is very susceptible to damage or destruction during natural disasters. Children from indigenous groups and of African descent face significant discrimination in accessing education.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Nicaragua has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Nicaragua's laws do not meet international standards on the compulsory education age as they are not clear regarding the age up to which education is compulsory.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Articles 130 and 131 of the Labor Code; Articles 2 and 73 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 84 of the Constitution
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 130, 133, and 135 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of Ministerial Agreement No. JCHG-08-06-10; Articles 2 and 74 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 1 and 6 of Ministerial Agreement No. JCHG-08-06-10; Articles 133 and 135 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 40 of the Constitution; Part III and Articles 2, 5, 6, and 61 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 16, 182, 182 <i>bis</i> , and 315 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Part III and Articles 2, 3, 6, and 61 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 16, 182, and 182 <i>bis</i> of the Penal Code; Article 40 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Part II and Articles 2, 6 and 61 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 175, 176, 178–180, 182, and 182 <i>bis</i> of the Penal Code; Articles 5 and 26 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 6 and 61 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 182, 182 <i>bis</i> , 349, 351, 352, 359, and 362 of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Annex 1 of the Code on the Organization, Jurisdiction, and Social Welfare of the Military
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 509 of the Penal Code; Article 79 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 95 of the Constitution
Compulsory Education Age, 12 Years ‡		Article 121 of the Constitution; Articles 19 and 23 of the Education Law; Article 43 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Free Public Education		Article 121 of the Constitution; Articles 8, 19, and 23 of the Education Law; Article 43 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Nicaraguan law is not clear regarding the age up to which education is compulsory. Article 121 of the Constitution states that primary school education is compulsory; however, it does not specify an age. Under Articles 19 and 23 of the Education Law, education is compulsory only through the sixth grade, which the law specifies is up to age 12 and the end of primary school. The Education Law defines secondary education as between the ages of 12 and 17. Meanwhile, Article 43 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code states that both primary and secondary school education are compulsory. If the compulsory education age is 12, children ages 12 to 14 may be vulnerable to child labor and its worst forms because they are not permitted to work but are also not required to be in school. However, if the compulsory education age is 17, the lower minimum age for work may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Nicaragua took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation to the Ministry of Labor (MITRAB), along with deficient structures for investigation planning hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MITRAB): Enforces labor laws and sets child labor policy priorities. Conducts labor inspections through its General Labor Inspectorate and conducts child labor inspections through its Child Labor Inspections Unit. Maintains a mailbox in each of Nicaragua’s 17 departments to receive complaints of child labor violations. In 2023, MITRAB provided high school students trainings on their labor rights as adolescent workers. However, the labor inspectorate has insufficient funding and personnel to carry out their mandated duties, and some reports indicate that MITRAB does not adequately respond to labor complaints brought against employers.

Prosecutor’s Office: Prosecutes cases of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities. Contains 2 national-level and 35 department-level prosecutors who prosecute these cases and other crimes. However, there are very few, if any, investigations that result in prosecutions. Moreover, there are very few victims identified by the state.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, an **unknown** number of labor inspectors conducted routine labor inspections, however the total number of worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found is **unknown**. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Nicaragua established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it does not consistently coordinate efforts to address child labor and lacks adequate funding to carry out its mandate.

National Social Welfare System (SNBS): Coordinates child labor efforts and ensures that government institutions provide social services to children. Comprises various government ministries, including MITRAB; the Ministry of the Family, Adolescence, and Childhood (MIFAN); the Ministry of Education (MINED); the Ministry of Health (MINSAs); and the Ministry of Governance. There is limited coordination among constituent ministries and a lack of financial resources dedicated to addressing child labor. Although research indicates that this coordinating system was active during the reporting period, the government did not report specific activities carried out related to its efforts to address child labor.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Nicaragua established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country.

National Strategic Plan for the Prevention, Care, Investigation, Persecution, and Sanction of Human Trafficking (2023–2027): Seeks to implement actions to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and sanction human trafficking, as well as to provide assistance and protection to survivors in a comprehensive manner. As part of these efforts, it carries out awareness raising campaigns, trainings, and capacity-building activities. It also seeks to generate and improve coordination mechanisms between agencies to efficiently respond to complaints. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.

The National Plan for the Fight Against Poverty and for Human Development (2022–2026): Sets development goals for government ministries, including MITRAB, MINED, and MINSAs. Prioritizes reducing poverty and inequality in the country by taking comprehensive steps such as increasing access to education, improving school infrastructure, and providing assistance to individuals and families of limited economic resources. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Nicaragua funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Nicaragua.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Love Program (Programa Amor):[†] MIFAN program which supports vulnerable or impoverished children, including children involved in child labor such as street work. Provides support through various means, including educational assistance and vocational training for parents. It also promotes school attendance, extra-curricular activities, and carries out house-to-house and school visits. Its Love Program for the Smallest Ones includes children from birth to age 6. Reports indicate that this program was active in 2023 and continued to provide services to children.</p> <p>Educational Bridges (Puentes Educativos):[‡] MITRAB and MINED public-private partnership, implemented by World Vision, which provides education to children of coffee workers to prevent child labor during coffee harvests. In 2023, it continued to provide services by providing day care and schooling to children of coffee workers while their parents worked in the fields.</p> <p>School Supply and Meal Programs:[‡] Aim to assist children in the country in an attempt to improve school attendance and completion rates. The Integral School Meal Program (<i>Merienda Escolar</i>) is a MIFAN and World Food Programme initiative that provides children and adolescents with meals at school to address poverty and improve attendance. Reports indicate that the government continued to provide school meals through this program in 2023 by providing thousands of quintals of rice, beans, cereals, corn, and other foodstuff products that benefit over 1 million children to schools throughout the country. The National School Supply Program (<i>Paquetes Escolares Solidarios</i>) is a MINED program that distributes packages of school supplies to preschool, primary, and secondary school children in the poorest districts to increase attendance and completion rates. In 2023, the government once again provided over 1 million school supply packages to students, as well as briefcases to teachers.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

The government did not adequately enforce laws protecting freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, resulting in impunity for some violators. The government also interfered in union activities and arrested union leaders. These actions may create a climate of fear that hinders workers’ ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

NIGER

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Niger made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government reopened a limited number of schools that were previously closed due to security issues. However, despite this effort, the government's minimum age for work law does not meet international standards because it does not apply to children in the informal sector. The government made limited efforts to address the ongoing practice of *wahaya*, a form of child slavery that was upheld as illegal by a Nigerien court in 2019. It is also unknown whether labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Niger took actions to address child labor in 2023.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	42.9% (2,516,191)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	7 to 14	48.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	22.1%

Children in Niger are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in hereditary slavery and mining, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks herding livestock.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in farming, including herding, and caring for livestock. Also working in fishing, including river net casting.



Industry

Engaging in quarrying[†] and mining[†] for trona, salt, gypsum, and gold. Working in construction,[†] tanneries,[†] slaughterhouses,[†] and metal working.[†]



Services

Domestic work and street work, including street vending and begging.[†] Garbage scavenging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Hereditary and caste-based slavery, including for cattle herding, agricultural work, domestic work, and sexual exploitation. Forced labor in domestic work, begging, and mining. Use in illicit activities, including trafficking drugs. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Niger's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law's minimum age for work provisions and protections apply to self-employed children and those in unpaid or non-contractual work.

Establish a compulsory education age equal to the minimum age for work of 14 years.

Enforcement

Ensure that inspections and enforcement efforts take place in the informal sector, and in remote locations, where most child labor occurs.

Publish complete information and data on the government's enforcement of child labor laws, including the number of worksite inspections conducted, violations found, and penalties imposed and collected.

Increase resources, including funding and training available to enforcement agencies, increase the number of labor inspectors from 61 to 246 to ensure adequate coverage of a labor force of approximately 9.8 million workers, and increase the number of criminal investigators to provide adequate inspection coverage.

Publish complete information on the number of criminal investigations, prosecutions, and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.

Adequately enforce the Nigerien Supreme Court's ruling banning the practice of *wahaya*.

Ensure that survivors of slavery are returned to their families, and have access to reintegration services, as appropriate, including educational opportunities and counseling.

Coordination

Ensure the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor and Forced Labor is active and able to carry out its intended mandates.

Government Policies

Adopt and implement a national action plan to address child labor, including in mining and agriculture, as well as stemming from the unlawful practice of hereditary slavery.

Publish information about efforts to implement the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the National Social Protection Strategy on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including girls, refugees, internally displaced children, and children in rural communities, by increasing school infrastructure, increasing the number of teachers, removing school fees, and providing more school supplies.

Ensure that all children are able to obtain birth certificates, including refugees, to increase their access to education and reduce their vulnerability to child labor.

Expand the scope of programs to address the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture, herding, mining, and caste-based servitude.

Implement a program to target and assist children exploited by religious instructors.

Ensure that government social service providers have sufficient resources and facilities to provide the necessary care to all children withdrawn from forced labor and publish information on these activities.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children in Niger, especially boys and girls from the Arab, Djerma, Peulh, Tuareg, and Toubou ethnic minorities, continue to be exploited in slavery and endure slavery-like practices, particularly in the regions of Tahoua and Agadez. Some children are born into slavery while others are born free but remain in a dependent status and are forced to work with their parents for their former masters in exchange for food, money, and lodging. A particular form of slavery in Niger is the *wahaya* practice, in which men buy girls born into slavery, often between ages 9 and 14, as “fifth wives” for exploitation in forced labor. Even though Niger’s Supreme Court set a legal precedent by ruling *wahaya* to be illegal in 2019, the government has made limited efforts to inform the public of the court’s ruling. Child slavery victims, including those exploited in *wahaya*, are forced to work long hours as cattle herders, agricultural workers, or domestic workers, and are often sexually exploited. As with those involved in hereditary slavery, the children of *wahaya* wives are considered enslaved, and are passed from one owner to another as gifts or as part of dowries.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the Constitution guarantees free education, children require identity documents, including birth certificates, to attend school. Children who lack documentation and refugee children who are not formally registered with the government are denied access to education. School fees are also regularly required, making education prohibitively expensive. A lack of school infrastructure and school materials, and the limited availability of teachers, especially in rural areas, impedes access to education, which may increase the vulnerability of children to child labor. Furthermore, schools do not have the resources to educate children with disabilities, placing them at higher risk of dropping out and making them more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Niger has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Niger's laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work because the current law does not apply to workers in the informal sector, including children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Article 106 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 159 of Decree No. 2017-682
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 159–161 and 164–171 of Decree No. 2017-682; Article 181 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 14 of the Constitution; Articles 4 and 107 of the Labor Code; Article 158 of Decree No. 2017-682; Article 270 of the Penal Code; Articles 2 and 10 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 107 of the Labor Code; Article 158 of Decree No. 2017-682; Articles 2 and 10 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 107 of the Labor Code; Article 158 of Decree No. 2017-682; Articles 291 and 292 of the Penal Code; Articles 2 and 10 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 107 of the Labor Code; Article 158 of Decree No. 2017-682; Article 181 of the Penal Code; Articles 10 and 16 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 107 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 107 of the Labor Code
Compulsory Education Age		Article 8 of Decree No. 2017-935; Article 2 of the Law on the Orientation of the Educational System
Free Public Education		Article 23 of the Constitution; Article 8 of Decree No. 2017-935; Article 2 of the Law on the Orientation of the Educational System

* Country has no conscription

Although the Labor Code establishes age 14 as the minimum age for work, it does not apply to workers in the informal sector, which does not conform to international standards requiring all children to be protected under the law. In addition, Article 2 of the Law on the Orientation of the Educational System in Niger guarantees education for all children ages 4 to 18, and Article 8 of Decree No. 2017-935 states that the government is required to promote access to compulsory education, particularly for young girls. However, Niger’s law does not clearly articulate to which age groups the latter provision applies, thereby leaving some children at risk of not being covered and increasing the risk of children’s involvement in child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, it is unknown whether labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Niger took actions to address child labor. Enforcement agencies also lack financial and human resources to carry out their duties.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment, Labor and Social Security (MELSS): Enforces labor laws and investigates Labor Code infractions, including those related to child and forced labor. Conducts awareness-raising programs to address child labor.

Morals and Minors Brigade: Investigates criminal cases involving minors, including issues pertaining to human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and hereditary slavery. Functions within the National Civil Police Force, which is housed under the Ministry of Interior and Public Security.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **61** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Niger established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unclear whether that coordinating mechanism carried out any activities during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee to Combat Child and Forced Labor: Led by MELSS, includes 17 Nigerien ministries and agencies tasked with finalizing the next phase of Niger’s National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor. Also intends to develop a new hazardous work list. Research was unable to determine whether the National Steering Committee to Combat Child and Forced Labor was active during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Niger established policies related to child labor. However, gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including a lack of policies covering all worst forms of child labor in the country.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2019–2023): Included goals to enhance the legal framework to prevent human trafficking, enforce the law, and provide effective protection and care for victims, including children. Led by the National Agency to Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migrant Transport. While the National Action Plan continued to be implemented during the reporting period, research was unable to determine what activities were undertaken to implement the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons.</p> <p>National Social Protection Strategy: Aims to improve the quality of, and access to, basic education and health services; includes strategies to address child labor. Overseen by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Child Protection. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Social Protection Strategy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Niger funded and participated in a program that includes the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, this social program is inadequate because it fails to address the problem in all sectors, including agriculture, herding, mining, and caste-based servitude.</p> <p><i>‡ Program is funded by the Government of Niger.</i></p>	<p>Centers for the Prevention, Protection, and Promotion of Persons:[‡] Government program replacing the Judicial and Preventive Education Services, in collaboration with UNICEF, to provide food, shelter, education, and vocational training to street children, many of whom are survivors of child labor. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Centers for the Prevention, Protection, and Promotion of Persons Program during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

NIGERIA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Nigeria made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government, through the International Labor Organization’s Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa Project, renovated Oke Agunla Community School and enrolled 110 children at risk of child labor. However, Nigeria’s minimum age for work protections do not meet international standards as they do not apply to children who are self-employed or working in the informal economy and the state of Kano does not prohibit the use of children in illicit activities. The government also lacks the necessary number of labor inspectors to cover the labor force and research was unable to determine if the government’s coordinating mechanism or policies were active during the reporting period.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	15.0% (6,798,456)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	78.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	10.4%

Children in Nigeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and use in armed conflict. Children also engage in quarrying granite and artisanal gold mining.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of manioc/cassava, cocoa, and herding livestock.



Industry

Mining and quarrying of granite and gravel; harvesting sand; artisanal gold mining; and construction, including carrying construction materials.



Services

Domestic work; collecting money on public buses, washing cars, and automotive repair; and street work, including vending, begging, and scavenging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, including use in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; forced labor in begging; domestic work; street vending; mining and quarrying gravel and granite; agriculture, including in the production of cocoa; and recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict and in non-conflict support roles, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Nigeria’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from 12 to 15 to align with the compulsory education age.

Ensure that the minimum age for work applies to children working in the informal sector and who are self-employed.

Harmonize the Child’s Right Act and the Labor Act to ensure that their legal provisions are not contradictory, including provisions on minimum age for work and light work.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Criminally prohibit using, procuring, and offering a child for the production and trafficking of drugs in all states.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that provisions related to light work conform to international standards by putting restrictions on domestic and agricultural work.

Amend the Terrorism Prevention Act to prohibit the punishment of children for their association with armed groups.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 733 to 4,885 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 73,273,000 workers.

Ensure that labor inspectors and enforcement agencies receive sufficient resources, including funding, resources for inspections, office facilities, transportation, fuel, and other necessities, to enforce child labor laws.

Establish a mechanism to enforce existing protections for children working in the informal sector.

Publish information on child labor law enforcement, including labor inspectorate funding, whether training for labor inspectors is provided, the number of child labor violations found, whether penalties were imposed for child labor violations, the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, and whether routine, targeted, and unannounced inspections were conducted.

Publish disaggregated information on criminal law enforcement, including training for criminal investigators, number of investigations, prosecutions initiated, convictions, and penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Steering Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor is active and able to carry out its mandates as intended.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement government policies, including the National Social Behavioral Change Communication Strategy for Elimination of Child Labor in Nigeria, the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking in Nigeria, and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, and that data on these activities are published during the reporting period.

Social Programs

Increase access to education by ensuring all states adopt programs to offer free education, assist the transfer of children in *Almajiri* schools into government-recognized schools, eliminate school fees, provide sufficient infrastructure for schools including increasing the number of sanitation facilities, address sexual harassment, and establish programs to ensure girls are afforded the same educational opportunities as boys.

Establish a robust mechanism to ensure that children are provided birth documentation so they are able to attend school.

Ensure that there are proper protection protocols in place to keep schools safe, including from acts of terrorism and sexual violence.

Ensure that the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters and related agencies provide appropriate facilities and resources, including livable stipends and adequate housing, to survivors, and that survivors are not held against their will in shelters.

Establish programs that prevent and remove children from all relevant worst forms of child labor, including armed conflict and commercial sexual exploitation.

 **CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Children in and near Benin City are at higher risk of being trafficked as Benin City is a major human trafficking hub in Africa, with children trafficked for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Further, children from primarily rural areas within the country are at higher risk of being subjected to child labor, with girls recruited for domestic work and sex trafficking, while boys are recruited for street vending, domestic work, mining, agriculture, and begging. Despite notable military advances and proclamations of Boko Haram’s defeat by government forces, the group remained a security threat in 2023, with escalating attacks by both Boko Haram and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) West Africa in Nigeria’s northeastern regions. These attacks have contributed to the displacement of more than 2 million Nigerians, of which 56 percent are children.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Research suggests that one-third of all Nigerian children are out of school. Northeastern and northwestern states have female primary net attendance rates of 47.7 percent and 47.3 percent, respectively. Rapid population growth in Nigeria is also driving the informal education sector, with several million boys in the north going to Quranic schools known as *Almajiri*. The government does not officially recognize these schools, and students attending *Almajiri* schools are officially considered to be out of school. The *Almajiri* system includes a component of child labor, with some teachers tasking older children with menial jobs and other children forced into begging. Reports also suggest that children lacking birth certificates or other formal documentation have been denied access to public schools. Although it is unclear how widespread this issue is, research suggests that it is most common in the northeastern region and rural areas. In addition, the widespread increase in kidnappings, killings, village raids, and cattle-rustling throughout the Northwest and North Central regions led by organized criminal groups has also contributed to the intermittent closure of schools throughout the region, with these challenges being more acute in rural areas. Although free and compulsory education is federally mandated by the Education Act, little enforcement of compulsory education laws occurs at the state level. School fees are often charged in practice, and the cost of materials can be prohibitive for families. When families experience economic hardship, the enrollment of boys is typically prioritized over the enrollment of girls. Other barriers to education include a lack of trained teachers, sexual harassment, inadequate sanitation facilities, poor infrastructure, and fear of abduction or attack by Boko Haram while at school, particularly for girls in the northeastern part of the country.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Nigeria has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Nigeria's laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work as the Labor Act does not apply to children who are self-employed or working in the informal economy. In addition, the Labor Act permits children of any age to do light work in agriculture and domestic work if they are working with a family member, which does not meet international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 12 Years		Sections 59(1) and 91 of the Labor Act; Sections 28, 29, and 277 of the Child's Right Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 59 (5) and (6) of the Labor Act; Sections 28, 29, and 277 of the Child's Right Act; Sections 23 and 82 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Sections 59–61 and 91 of the Labor Act; Section 28 of the Child's Right Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 13, 21–25, and 82 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015; Sections 28, 30, and 277 of the Child's Right Act; Article 34 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 13, 16, 17, 21–25, and 82 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015; Sections 30, 33, and 277 of the Child's Right Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 13–17 and 82 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015; Section 23 of the Cybercrimes Act; Sections 30, 32, and 277 of the Child's Right Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Sections 25, 26, 30, and 277 of the Child's Right Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Section 28 of the Armed Forces Act; Sections 34 and 277 of the Child's Right Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Section 19 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Sections 2 and 15 of the Education Act; Section 15 of the Child’s Right Act
Free Public Education		Sections 2 and 3 of the Education Act; Part 2 Section 15 of the Child’s Right Act

*Country has no conscription

In Nigeria, 35 of the 36 states have adopted and implemented the Child’s Right Act (CRA), leaving the state of Kano in northern Nigeria with a legal statute that does not meet international standards for the prohibition against the use of children in illicit activities. Furthermore, under the CRA, certain provisions of the Labor Act that are not in compliance with international standards may remain in force. This includes Section 59, which sets the minimum age for employment at age 12 in contradiction to the CRA, which only permits children under age 18 to engage in light work for family members. The minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age of 15, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. In addition, the Labor Act permits children of any age to do light work in agriculture and domestic work if they are working with a family member, which does not meet international standards. Furthermore, the minimum age protections in the Labor Act do not apply to children who are self-employed or working in the informal economy. Lastly, children are not excluded from the Terrorism Prevention Act’s penalty of life imprisonment for assisting in acts of terrorism and are implicitly included as people in the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Nigeria took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient funding for enforcement agencies hinders enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Inspectorate, Ministry of Labor and Employment (MLE): Deploys labor inspectors across 36 state labor offices and the federal capital territory to enforce federal child labor laws.

Nigeria Police: Enforce all laws prohibiting forced child labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Collaborate with the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) to address human trafficking issues.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **733** labor inspectors conducted **17,068** worksite inspections, finding **453** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Nigeria established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee for the Elimination of Child Labor (NSCCL): Coordinates efforts to address child labor and is led by MLE; comprises representatives from seven governmental agencies, faith-based organizations, NGOs, ILO, and UNICEF. Members are charged with leveraging resources for project implementation from their institutions and identifying synergies with other existing programs.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Nigeria established policies related to child labor. However, research was unable to determine if these policies were active during the reporting period.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms (2021–2025): Outlines the steps toward achieving the elimination of the worst forms of child labor by 2025 and child labor in its entirety in 2030. During the reporting period, the MLE held a 3-day capacity building for the NSCCL in January 2023 and July 2023, in commemoration of the 2023 World Day Against Child Labor. Quarterly meetings at national and state levels were also held. In addition, domestic airport workers and airlines throughout the country were provided anti-trafficking trainings.</p> <p>National Action Plan on Human Trafficking (NATIP) in Nigeria (2022–2026): Provides a framework for anti-human trafficking programming, with an emphasis on enforcement, prosecution, and provision of services to survivors. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out to implement the policy in 2023.</p> <p>National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Designed to end the recruitment and use of children by the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Aims to promote the protection of children’s rights, ensures that suspects under age 18 are treated in accordance with international law, and provides for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration for children previously associated with CJTF. The UN and CJTF, with the support of the government, continued to reintegrate children in 2023. Since the signing of the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, the UN has reported nearly no use of children by CJTF.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Nigeria funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified.</p> <p><i>‡ Program is funded by the Government of Nigeria.</i></p>	<p>NAPTIP Shelters for Human Trafficking Victims:[‡] Government-funded program that operates 10 shelters in Nigeria, capable of housing up to 315 trafficking survivors. Shelters provide legal, medical, and psychological services, as well as vocational training and business management skills, along with referring survivors to NGOs for additional care. However, research found concerns regarding the conditions in shelters housing human trafficking survivors, including poor housing facilities, a lack of food, and insufficient stipends, along with reports of survivors being held against their will for extended periods at shelters run by NAPTIP.</p> <p>Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa (ACCEL Africa): ILO-sponsored regional project which aims to eliminate child labor in supply chains, with particular focus on those involved in the production of cocoa, coffee, cotton, gold, and tea. In 2023, ILO-ACCEL renovated Oke Agunla Community School and enrolled 110 children at risk of child labor.</p> <p>World Bank-Funded Programs: Projects aimed to improve access to education. Include the Additional Financing for Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment, a \$700 million project aimed at improving secondary education opportunities for girls that was approved in 2023.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



NIUE

NO ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Niue, in 2023, the government made no advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The government has not established adequate legal protections to prevent the worst forms of child labor. For instance, the law does not criminally prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution; the production of pornography, or pornographic performances, or the use of children for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs. In addition, Niue has not established a minimum age for work and lacks a law that prohibits hazardous occupations and activities for children.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists on Niue.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Niue’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify ILO Convention 182, the convention concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Establish a minimum age for work of at least age 16 that equals the compulsory education age.

Establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work and identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit forced labor, including debt bondage and slavery.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the trafficking of children domestically and internationally for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, and do not require that the use of force, fraud, or coercion be established for the crime of human trafficking.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, and pornographic performances.












Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the forced or compulsory recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Niue is self-governing in free association with New Zealand. Since 1988, no treaty signed, ratified, accepted, approved, or acceded to by New Zealand extends to Niue, unless it was done expressly on behalf of Niue. Niue has not ratified ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. Niue’s laws do not meet international standards for the minimum age for work, the minimum age for hazardous work, or the identification of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work		Article 24 of the Niue Public Service Regulations
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 3 and 37 of the Terrorism Suppression and Transnational Crimes Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 3 and 37 of the Terrorism Suppression and Transnational Crimes Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 3 and 37 of the Terrorism Suppression and Transnational Crimes Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 17 Years		Article 33 of the Government of New Zealand's Defense Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles 2 and 24 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 19 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription
 † Country has no standing military

Niue’s Public Service Regulations prohibit the permanent employment in public service of any person under age 18, but a minimum age for work in the private sector has not been established. Niue also has not determined the minimum age for hazardous work nor the types of work that are hazardous for children. Furthermore, the government does not prohibit slavery or slavery-like practices such as forced labor. Niue’s human trafficking provision does not clearly criminalize domestic trafficking or the trafficking of children in the absence of force, fraud, or coercion. In addition, the government does not criminalize the use, procuring, or offering of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances. Niue has not specifically criminalized the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. Finally, although there are no armed forces in Niue, the law does not criminally prohibit non-state armed groups from recruiting children under age 18.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Niue has established an institutional mechanism for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Niue Police Department: Enforces laws related to child labor.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor. However, Niue established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to prevent child labor.</p>	<p>National Coordinating Committee on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Monitors and implements child protection policies, including policies related to child labor.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor.</p>	

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



NORFOLK ISLAND

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Although research found that no child labor exists on Norfolk Island, in 2023, the government made moderate advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. In June 2023, the Government of Australia ratified the International Labor Organization’s Minimum Age Convention of 1973 (No. 138), which entered into force on June 13, 2024. However, despite this effort, the government has not established laws that sufficiently protect children from commercial sexual exploitation because the use of a child for prostitution is not prohibited.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists on Norfolk Island.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Norfolk Island’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of a child for prostitution in line with international standards.

Establish a minimum age of 13 for light work and specify the activities in which light work may be undertaken by children.

Establish free education by law for all children on Norfolk Island, including those who are not citizens, permanent residents, nor children of permanent residents.

Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Norfolk Island is non-self-governing and is included as part of the territory of the Australian Commonwealth. Under the Acts Interpretation Act 1901 (Cth), all laws of the Commonwealth are applicable to Norfolk Island as if it were a part of mainland Australia. Australia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. Norfolk Island is subject to the laws and regulations related to child labor of the Commonwealth of Australia and some of the laws related to child labor of the state of Queensland. Some laws specific to Norfolk Island also remain in force. However, Norfolk Island’s laws do not meet the international standard related to the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children as child prostitution is not prohibited. In addition, its light work framework does not set a minimum age for light work or specify activities in which light work may be permitted.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 24 of the Employment Act 1988 (NI)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Section 81 and 89 (2) (d) of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Qld) (NI)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Chapter 4 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Qld) (NI)
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 270.1A-270.7 and 270.8 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 270.3, 270.7, 271.1, 271.4, 271.7, and 271.7F-7G of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 271.4, 271.7, and 271.7F-7G of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Divisions 309 and 310 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth); Sections 303–305 of the Criminal Code 2007 (NI)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Canberra Act 2600
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Canberra Act 2600
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Sections 268.68 and 268.88 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Sections 4 and 9 of the Education Act 2006 (Qld)
Free Public Education		Section 50 and 51 of the Education Act 2006 (Qld)

* Country has no conscription

Although Norfolk Island’s Criminal Code 2007 and the Commonwealth Criminal Code prohibit the offering and procuring of a child for sex, the law does not prohibit the use of a child for prostitution. Additionally, the Employment Act 1988 (NI) does not set a minimum age for light work or specify activities in which light work may be permitted, which is not in compliance with international standards. However, local authorities have reported that no children under age 15 are currently employed on Norfolk Island. Norfolk Island also does not meet the international standard for free public education because under the newly applicable Queensland Education Act, 2006, free education is only available to Australian citizens, permanent residents, or children of citizens of permanent residents. Fees may be charged to attend school for people outside those categories. Lastly, the minimum age for work, 15, is lower than the compulsory education age, 16.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, in 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies on Norfolk Island took actions to prevent child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Australia Federal Police: Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Lead the Australian Center to Counter Child Exploitation.

Norfolk Island Labor Inspectors: Inspect places of employment for violations. Authorized to issue stop-work orders when violations are found, including child labor violations.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor. However, Australia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Trafficking and Slavery: Deals with child labor law enforcement and policy, including the worst forms of child labor, from a counter-trafficking perspective. Comprises 11 government agencies, including the Australian Federal Police, Department of Employment, and Department of Foreign Affairs, and is chaired by the Department of Home Affairs. The Committee meets at least twice a year, including once at the ministerial level, and includes an Operational Working Group subcommittee that met five times in 2023 and refers emerging policy issues for consideration.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor. However, Australia established a policy related to child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020–2025: Sets five strategic priorities for addressing modern slavery, which the National Action Plan defines as trafficking in persons, slavery, slavery-like practices, and the worst forms of child labor. Priorities include: (1) prevention; (2) disruption, investigation, and prosecution; (3) support and protection for victims; (4) partnerships; and (5) research.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, Australia established programs that include the goal of preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Cash Assistance Programs: The Child Care Subsidy Program provides support for the care of children aged 13 or younger using an approved childcare service, and the Parenting Program provides an income-support payment for the principal caretakers of a child under age 8.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



NORTH MACEDONIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, North Macedonia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Labor Inspectorate implemented a new digital recordkeeping system, improving inspectors' ability to monitor the progress of ongoing cases. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy also expanded its outreach to vulnerable migrant populations by opening two new migrant assistance centers along the northern and southern borders of the country. In addition, the government increased the monthly child allowance amount paid to eligible families and introduced a new education allowance to offset the costs of attending school for children in low-income households. However, North Macedonia's minimum age for work does not meet international standards because protections do not apply to children who are self-employed or working outside formal employment relationships. In addition, because the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	18.8% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	97.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	20.6%

Children in North Macedonia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in forced begging.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming.†



Services

Street work, including vending small items, cleaning vehicle windshields, scavenging, and begging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging. Forced domestic work. Forced labor as wait staff and dancers in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in North Macedonia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that minimum age for work protections apply to all children, including self-employed children and children working outside formal employment relationships.

Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to age 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Ensure that the State Labor Inspectorate conducts inspections in sectors at higher risk of child labor, including in agriculture and street work.

Social Programs

Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children engaged in child labor in order to inform the development of social programs supporting children at highest risk for economic exploitation.

Increase the efficacy of programs dedicated to addressing child labor and ensure that child beggars, especially Roma children, receive the support needed to be removed from street work permanently.

Reduce barriers to education by increasing the number of teachers who can provide education in the Romani language.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Roma, Balkan Egyptian, and Ashkali children are at risk to be exploited in street work. Child trafficking victims in North Macedonia are usually girls, between the ages of 12 and 18, who have been subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs. Roma girls are vulnerable to trafficking for forced marriages, as a result of which they are subjected to sexual and labor exploitation. Migrant children from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Syria, Pakistan, and other states continue to transit through the country and are vulnerable to human trafficking for labor and commercial sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Many Roma children have difficulty accessing education due to a lack of birth registration and identity cards, which are required for attending school in North Macedonia. Additionally, the government continues to face challenges in meeting the educational needs of Roma and other ethnic minority children due to an ongoing shortage of qualified teachers who can provide instruction in Romani, Turkish, and Bosnian.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

North Macedonia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, North Macedonia’s laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 42 of the Constitution; Sections 63, 66, and 67 of the Labor Relations Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 265 and Sections 63, 66, and 67 of the Labor Relations Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Rulebook on the Minimum Occupational Safety and Health Requirements for Young Workers
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 11 of the Constitution; Articles 418, 418(a), 418(c), and 418(d) of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 418(c) and 418(d) of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 191, 193, 193(a), 193(b), 418(a), and 418(d) of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 201(4) of the Criminal Code; Article 12(3) of the Law on Child Protection
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 62 of the Law on Defense
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 62 of the Law on Defense
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 122, 322a, and 404 of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles 4, 5, 47, and 172 of the Law on Primary Education; Article 3 of the Law on Secondary Education
Free Public Education		Article 44 of the Constitution; Articles 4,5, and 47 of the Law on Primary Education

* Country has no conscription

North Macedonia's minimum age for work protections do not meet international standards because they do not apply to children who are self-employed or working outside formal employment relationships. In addition, because the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may also be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in North Macedonia took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of inspections in sectors at higher risk of child labor may hinder enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP): Collaborates with the police and the Office of the Ombudsman to conduct investigations and identify children living and working on the streets, and monitors cases of forced child labor through the Department of Social Inclusion. Refers children to 30 Centers for Social Work throughout the country, which serve to counsel, educate, shelter, and assist children in need and victims of trafficking in persons.

Ministry of the Interior (MOI): Enforces laws related to hazardous child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation through the Office of the Ombudsman's unit for organized crime, corruption, and human trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **115** labor inspectors conducted **20,831** worksite inspections, finding **5** child labor violations. The government also conducted **63** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated **41** prosecutions, and convicted **24** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

North Macedonia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Coordination Body for Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect: Tasked with implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Abuse and Neglect of Children. Comprises representatives from government agencies, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and civil society organizations. During the reporting period, the Coordination Body collaborated with UNICEF to develop and implement child protection programming for caregivers and social workers.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

North Macedonia established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.

National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling (2021–2025): Focuses on preventing human trafficking by reducing the vulnerability of at-risk populations, improving the identification of victims, and increasing efforts to address human trafficking and forced child begging. In 2023, the government collaborated with the Council of Europe to establish its first national legal aid program to specifically address the needs of survivors of trafficking, and a number of activities to raise children's awareness about the risks of trafficking in persons, including trafficking for the purpose of forced begging, were undertaken at schools around the country.

National Action Plan for Education (2018–2025): Aims in part to expand inclusive education and improve education for the Roma community. Seeks to increase the number of Roma students in preschools and elementary schools and decrease the number of Roma students who, based on ethnicity, are enrolled in primary schools for children with special needs. In 2023, the Ministry of Education and Science initiated reforms to the primary education system.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>National Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Abuse and Neglect of Children (2020–2025): Presents the vision, goals, and strategic approach of the government and the activities to be undertaken annually to further the prevention and protection of children from all types of violence. Prepared by the National Commission for the Prevention and Countering of Abuse and Neglect of Children. In 2023, the Coordination Body met to both evaluate the efficacy of activities completed under the policy through the end of 2022 and to develop a new action plan.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>North Macedonia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not comprehensively address the full scope of the problem.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of North Macedonia.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>MLSP-Operated and -Funded Centers and Shelters:[†] Provide support and services, sometimes in coordination with NGOs, to victims of human trafficking and vulnerable populations such as street children. MLSP also funds the Center for Victims of Human Trafficking (operated by NGO Open Gate/<i>La Strada</i>), a transit center for asylum seekers, and the MOI-operated Transit Center for Illegal Migrants. During the reporting period, the government continued to provide financial support for daycare centers and shelters for vulnerable children and also opened two temporary centers for migrants in Kumanovo and Gevgelija.</p> <p>SOS Human Trafficking Hotline: Operated by NGO Open Gate/<i>La Strada</i> to provide expedient legal, psychosocial, and emotional support to victims of trafficking, in addition to shelter and family reunification assistance. During the reporting period, the hotline received two human trafficking calls regarding child victims.</p> <p>Child Allowance Program:[†] Government-supported program providing monthly child allowance payments to low-income households and families receiving other forms of government assistance. In 2023, the government increased the monthly child allowance amount and introduced a new education allowance for children in low-income households attending a primary or secondary school.</p>

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 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



OMAN

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Oman made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted a new labor law that reaffirmed preexisting articles on child labor. The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking launched a two-month human trafficking public awareness campaign called *Insan*, which included billboards, airport displays, websites, and social media posts in several languages. Additionally, it overhauled its social insurance policies, establishing a singular, unified welfare framework administered under the Social Protection Fund. The fund now includes a monthly child benefit of \$26 (10 Omani rial) for all Omani children until age 18, with additional benefits for orphans and widows, as well as stipends for lower-income families that vary by family size. Child labor is not visible in Oman, although a small number of children may work informally with their families, including in fishing and farming. Survey data are needed on the extent and nature of child labor to inform law enforcement, policies, and programs.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Oman engage in child labor in farming and fishing.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and fishing.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Oman's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children in rural and coastal areas of Oman may be vulnerable to child labor in farming and fishing.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Oman has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Oman’s laws are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 1 and 98 of the Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 45, 46, and 71 of the Child Law; Article 2 of Ministry of Manpower Order 217/2016

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 5 of Ministry of Manpower Order 217/2016
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Anti-Trafficking Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Anti-Trafficking Law
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Anti-Trafficking Law; Articles 254, 255, and 267 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 58 and 74 of the Child Law; Article 43 of the Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Article 55 of the Child Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓*	Article 55 of the Child Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Articles 1(f), 55, and 72 of the Child Law
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years‡	✓	Article 36 of the Child Law
Free Public Education	✓	Article 36 of the Child Law

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In June 2023, the government enacted a new labor law reaffirming preexisting articles on child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Oman took actions to address child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Monitors and enforces child labor laws, conducts labor inspections, and shares information with the Royal Oman Police on labor and criminal law violations when penalties are pursued. According to the government, MOL conducts yearly inspections of all private institutions and re-inspections of workplaces found to be in violation of labor laws. Labor inspections are also conducted following a complaint. If a violation is found, the institution is given a set period of time to address the problem. If an institution fails to address the violation, a fine may be levied. MOL can refer cases of child labor to the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) if the child is under the minimum age for work. MOL and MOSD can also coordinate with the Royal Oman Police to shelter child victims in a MOSD-run facility and refer suspected violators for criminal investigation. In addition, the labor inspectorate has a specialized unit composed of two people to conduct inspections related to suspected human trafficking. The unit is charged with bringing indicators of trafficking to the ministry and transferring cases to the Public Prosecutor's Office for further investigation.

Royal Oman Police: Monitor and enforce the Child Law, including its provisions related to child labor, and refer cases to the Office of the Public Prosecutor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

Between January 1, 2023, and June 24, 2023, **370** labor inspectors conducted **4,149** worksite inspections, finding no child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted or prosecutions were initiated. The government convicted **2** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Oman established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Child Protection Committee: Consists of representatives from MOSD, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Royal Oman Police. Receives complaints and reports of child labor and investigates reported cases to determine whether children are engaged in prohibited activities or whether working has negative effects on their health or education. Also refers children who are victims of abuse, neglect, or other related issues to social services. Continued to work with UNICEF on several projects related to child protection during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Oman established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2021–2023): Aimed to educate stakeholders on their rights and responsibilities, train authorities on addressing human trafficking, coordinate government services for survivors, and develop new policies and best practices. Overseen by the National Council on Combating Human Trafficking, which consists of relevant government ministries, the Oman Human Rights Council, the Oman Chamber of Commerce, and the General Federation of Oman Workers. In 2023, recommended modifications and additions to the national action plan to combat human trafficking. Additionally, the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking launched a 2-month human trafficking public awareness campaign called <i>Insan</i>, which included billboards, airport displays, websites, and social media posts in several languages.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Oman funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, Oman has not collected or published data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Oman.</i></p>	<p>Social Security Cash Transfer Program:† Provides assistance to children in low-income families, including educational services. In 2023, Oman overhauled its social insurance policies, establishing a singular, unified welfare framework administered under the Social Protection Fund. The fund includes a monthly child benefit of \$26 (10 OMR) for all Omani children until age 18, with additional benefits targeted at orphans and widows. It also includes a family income support benefit for lower-income families calculated based on a target income which varies with family size.</p> <p>Dar al-Wifaq Shelter:† MOSD operates a shelter, Dar al Wifaq, for women and child victims of human trafficking; 15 of the shelter's beds are allocated for children. The shelter provides a number of services for victims of human trafficking that include psychological counseling, health care, and pro bono legal advocacy through the Lawyers Association. In 2023, the shelter reported assisting 36 people, including 2 boys.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



PAKISTAN

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Pakistan made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Punjab’s provincial assembly passed the Punjab Home-Based Workers Act of 2023, which prohibits the employment of children under 15 years in home-based work. Labor inspectors in Punjab also conducted over 85,000 child labor inspections, yielding 87 arrests, and carried out 8,580 inspections in brick kilns, finding 771 child labor violations, resulting in 34 arrests. Further, Child Protection and Welfare Bureaus across Pakistan rescued around 10,000 children from child labor and reunited them with families or placed them in shelters. In addition, in January 2024, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa labor department released the results of its 2022–2023 child labor survey and the government’s Child Protection Helpline 1121 received 1,292 calls, leading to the rescue of 600 children. Pakistan’s federal and provincial laws do not meet international standards for minimum age for work or hazardous work, as they both do not extend to all children in the country. Furthermore, Pakistan has neither federal nor provincial laws prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities. In addition, provincial labor inspectorates lack sufficient human and financial resources, and national enforcement data are unavailable. Finally, police corruption, particularly the taking of bribes from suspected perpetrators to ignore child labor crimes, and a lack of willingness to conduct criminal investigations, hindered Pakistan’s ability to address child labor throughout the country.

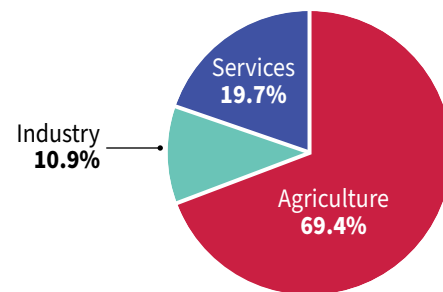


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	9.8% (2,261,704)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	10 to 14	78.0%
Combining Work and School	10 to 14	0.8%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Pakistan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, and brick manufacturing.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including planting, harvesting, and tending crops such as cotton, sugarcane, wheat, and rice. Fishing, including deep-sea fishing,† sorting, and peeling fish. Livestock farming, including raising bovines.



Industry

Manufacturing glass bangles† and surgical instruments.† Weaving carpets,† producing garments and textiles, and tanning leather.† Producing furniture, bricks, baked goods, and dairy products. Mining coal† and gemstones, and crushing stone.† Construction.



Services

Domestic work. Working in hotels, wedding venues, food stalls, small shops, restaurants, gas stations. Automobile



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Pakistan’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.



repair, and shoe shining. Scavenging† and sorting garbage and recyclables, begging, and street vending.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in brickmaking, carpet weaving, and coal mining. Forced domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict. Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking and production of drugs.

† 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.

Legal Framework

Extend minimum age protections to all sectors, including the informal economy, at the federal level as well as in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh Provinces.

Prohibit the employment of children under age 18 in hazardous work, such as brickmaking and mining, at the federal level and in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh Provinces; and domestic work at the federal level and in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh Provinces.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs, at the federal level and in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment and use of children under age 18 by non-state groups, including at the federal level and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan Provinces.

Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Establish a minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military in accordance with international standards.

Enforcement

Ensure that there are at least 4,388 labor inspectors to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 65.8 million people, and that provincial labor inspectorates have enough financial and human resources to conduct inspections, including funding for travel outside of major cities.

Establish District Vigilance Committees in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces and ensure that they can conduct public outreach and report and file bonded labor cases.

Create a centralized repository for enforcement data and a mechanism for reporting enforcement data, including information about funding for provincial labor inspectorates; the number of labor inspectors, worksite inspections conducted, child labor violations found, and unannounced inspections conducted; and whether penalties were imposed and collected.

Establish a referral mechanism between law enforcement authorities and social service providers in all provinces.

Conduct unannounced inspections, hold accountable individuals preventing labor inspectors from accessing worksites, and provide labor inspectors with regular training on child labor issues.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies have adequate human and financial resources and training to carry out investigations and prosecute perpetrators. Publish information about investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, and sentences imposed.

Establish sufficient laws to end police corruption, particularly the taking of bribes from suspected perpetrators to ignore alleged human trafficking crimes and not to pursue criminal cases against released bonded laborers.

Ensure that workers, including workers in rural areas, can formally register their employment at brick kilns with the government and access social welfare benefits under provincial laws. Prosecute and penalize those who employ bonded laborers and ensure that survivors are protected from future retaliation for bringing their cases to court.

Investigate, prosecute, and when appropriate, convict and sentence members of non-state armed groups complicit in facilitating child labor, including the recruitment of children.

Coordination

Establish an adequate number of Child Protection Units in all provinces and ensure they receive sufficient human and financial resources.

Social Programs

Improve and expand existing programs to address the scope of Pakistan’s child labor problem, including providing adequate protection and rehabilitation services for child domestic workers, bonded child laborers, children working and begging in the streets, and other children working in the informal sector.

Provide rehabilitation and reintegration services for children who were kidnapped or forcibly recruited from *madrassas* by non-state militant groups.

Establish programs that ensure children are protected from sexual abuse in schools, including *madrassas*.

Ensure that all children, including children from minority ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and undocumented stateless children, have access to free and compulsory education, as required by law, by implementing programs to address teacher absenteeism, inadequate facilities, school fees, lack of transportation, lack of classes in minority languages, unreliable internet access in rural areas—especially in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province—and the use of corporal punishment.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Some children from Pakistan are kidnapped or sold into organized begging rings, domestic servitude, gangs, and sex trafficking in Iran. Traffickers also force Afghan, Iranian, and Pakistani children into drug trafficking, drug and contraband production, and smuggling of goods in the border areas. Climate-related disasters have increased Pakistani children’s vulnerability to child labor. In the aftermath of the nationwide flooding that occurred in July 2022, more children entered domestic work to pay for food and to service family loans. Stateless children, many of whom are ethnic Bengali born in Pakistan, as well as Afghan and Rohingya refugee children, are vulnerable to child labor in the fishing industry near coastal areas due to a lack of identity documents that limits their access to government services. Afghan refugee children engage in scavenging, whereas Pakistani children with disabilities are used for begging, exposing them to criminal organizations. Moreover, non-state armed groups reportedly kidnap children as young as age 12, coerce parents with threats, and recruit children forcibly from *madrassas*—Islamic religious schools that provide free education and meals to Pakistan’s poorest children—to spy, fight, and carry out suicide attacks.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

In 2022, an estimated 22.8 million children in Pakistan were out of school. Insufficient internet coverage in rural areas, especially in the newly merged tribal districts of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas, hampers children’s access to learning. Many other children face barriers to education, including teacher absenteeism, inadequate facilities, lack of transportation, school fees, corporal punishment, and sexual abuse, all of which may deter them from attending school. Children from minority ethnic groups, including native speakers of Sindhi, Pashtun, Saraiki, Baloch, and others, have difficulty accessing education, which is offered in Urdu and English. Non-Muslim and Ahmadi Muslims are sometimes denied enrollment in schools because of their religious identity. For cultural and religious reasons, some parents do not send girls or transgender children to school, and some schools may deny them enrollment. Most schools in Pakistan are not accessible to children with disabilities. Stateless children, including ethnic Bengali children born in Pakistan and Afghan and Rohingya refugee children, cannot access school due to lack of identity documents. Sexual abuse of children in *madrassas* is also of significant concern. The 2022 floods further affected children’s access to schools, particularly in rural areas, where 27,000 schools were severely damaged. Schools in Pakistan are also vulnerable to attacks by armed groups, disrupting children’s learning.









LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Pakistan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, its laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the federal law and the laws in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh Provinces do not extend to informal employment; minimum age for hazardous work as the age at the federal level and in Balochistan Province is less than age 18; and the use of children in illicit activities because federal and provincial laws in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa do not prohibit the use of children in drug production and drug trafficking.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Section 50 of the Factories Act; Sections 2, 20, and 27 of the West Pakistan Shops and Establishments Ordinance; Sections 2 and 26 of the Mines Act; Sections 3 and 11 of the Road Transport Workers Ordinance; Sections 2, 3, 7, and 14 of the Pakistan Employment of Children Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 14 Years		Sections 2 and 3 of the Employment of Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Parts 1 and 2 of the Schedule of the Employment of Children Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 2, 4, 11-12 of the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act; Sections 367, 370, and 374 of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 366A, 366B, 370, 371, 371A, and 371B of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 366A, 366B, 371A, 371B, and 377A-B of the Penal Code; Sections 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A*	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Section 3 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act
Free Public Education		Section 3 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act

*Country has no conscription

In January 2023, Punjab Province enacted the Punjab Home-Based Workers Act of 2023 that, among other things, prohibits the employment of children under 15 years in home-based work. However, the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provincial minimum age for work laws do not extend to informal employment, such as domestic work. In addition, the minimum age for hazardous work at the federal level and in Balochistan Province is less than age 18, which does not meet international standards. While the federal government and the four provinces have identified hazardous occupations and activities for children, hazardous work prohibitions do not cover brickmaking, for which there is evidence that children are exposed to environmental health hazards, or child domestic work, for which there is evidence that children are exposed to physical abuse. Punjab limits domestic work for children ages 15 to 18 to part-time work that is not likely to harm their health, safety, and education, but does not prevent children under age 18 from engaging in this work. Although laws in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh Provinces prohibit children under age 18 from working in underground mines or above-ground quarries, federal law—which also applies in Balochistan—does not prohibit children ages 15 to 18 from working in mines, and there is evidence that children in Balochistan are engaged in coal mining, where they are exposed to hazardous substances, underground work, and lethal accidents.

Research was unable to locate laws explicitly establishing a minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment or prohibiting the compulsory recruitment of children by the state military. The federal and provincial governments in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have not enacted laws that prohibit the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict by non-state groups. In addition, federal and provincial laws in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces do not prohibit the use of children in drug production and drug trafficking. Moreover, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

 **ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR**

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Pakistan took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resources, as well as corruption, hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Provincial and Regional Labor and Criminal Law Enforcement Agencies: Pakistan’s provinces are responsible for enforcing labor laws. Provincial labor inspectors inspect industrial areas and markets to identify child labor violations, pursue legal action against employers, collect enforcement data at the district level, and refer children taken into custody to Child Protection Officers. Provincial labor courts assess penalties for labor violations. In addition, provincial and regional police enforce violations of federal and provincial criminal laws concerning child labor.

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Anti-Trafficking Unit: Operates under the Ministry of Interior and enforces transnational human trafficking-related laws, particularly the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act. Oversees the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (2021–2025) and publishes an “Annual Red Book” of the government’s most wanted human traffickers and smugglers.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, it is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found at the federal level or in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, or Sindh Provinces. It is also **unknown** how many investigations into suspected child labor crimes were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted either at the national or provincial levels. However, Punjab inspectors conducted **85,188** child labor inspections under the Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act and **8,580** inspections under the Punjab Prohibition of Child Labor at Brick Kiln Act 2016, finding **1,585** violations, filing **1,562** First Investigation Reports, making **121** arrests, and initiating **47** prosecutions.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Pakistan established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is inadequate funding and human resources at the provincial level for Child Protection Units to initiate interventions against child labor.

Child Coordination Bodies: Provincial Child Protection Units (CPUs) coordinate interventions at the provincial level; take into custody at-risk children, including those rescued from exploitative labor situations; provide case management services; and present cases to the Child Protection Court or other authorities. There are 14 CPUs in Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with additional CPUs in Punjab. In addition, Pakistan has several provincial child protection commissions, bureaus, and authorities in each province with different mandates related to enhancing safety and rights of children, such as Child Protection and Welfare Bureaus (CPWBs) and Child Protection Institutes (CPIs). In 2023, the CPWBs across Pakistan rescued around 10,000 children from child labor and reunited them with families or placed them in shelters.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Pakistan established policies related to child labor.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Labor Policy: Seeks to eradicate child labor, collect child labor statistics, enforce the compulsory education law, assist children through referral mechanisms, and educate families and other stakeholders about the negative effects of child labor. In January 2024, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Labor Department released the results of its 2022–2023 child labor survey.

Punjab Labor Policy: Seeks to improve working conditions; eradicate child and bonded labor, including in brick kilns; and establish social safety nets for workers and their families. Implemented by independent monitoring groups that include members of government, police, and civil society and are responsible for carrying out inspections, victim identification, and rehabilitation of survivors. In 2023, the Punjab Labor Department hired 10 new inspectors, established “Helpline 1314,” and referred 472 child laborers to 9 CPIs across the province.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

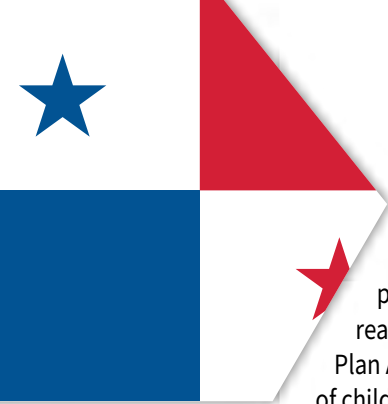
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>Sindh Labor Policy: Seeks to protect vulnerable workers by enforcing hazardous child labor laws, extending the minimum age for employment to domestic and home-based work, ensuring minimum wages for working children, and increasing access to education and training. In 2023, the Sindh government released funds to continue its child labor survey, undertaken since 2021, with door-to-door canvassing scheduled for January 2024.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Pakistan funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs do not address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including providing services for child victims of bonded labor and domestic work.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Pakistan.</i></p>	<p>Bait-ul-Mal Programs:† Aim to remove children from child labor and increase access to education. Includes the Schools for the Rehabilitation of Child Labor, which enrolled over 17,000 children in 159 schools. In 2023, the program provided social protection and education to orphaned girls, including cash transfers of \$21 to \$42 (PKR 6,000 to PKR 12,000) to each family per fostered orphaned girl.</p> <p>Hotlines: Ministry of Human Rights-operated helpline for reporting human rights violations, including child labor, and for providing referrals to legal aid and a network of NGOs. The ministry also operates the Zainab Alert mobile application, used by district police stations to track missing children and child labor cases. In 2023, this application received over 2,000 complaints, including reports of child labor. The FIA also operates a 24/7 hotline to address human trafficking. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has a dedicated helpline for child protection and labor issues. In 2023, government’s Child Protection Helpline 1121 received 1,292 calls and referred cases to the CPWBs, leading to the rescue of 600 children.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Pakistan imposes restrictions on unions, authorities often fail to register unions within the legally required timeframe, and the government has failed to investigate and prosecute cases of anti-union discrimination. This can create a climate of fear that hinders workers’ ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



PANAMA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Panama made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Panama passed Law 409, which establishes judicial procedures for cases involving children and adolescents and reaffirms a child’s right to education and protection from child labor. The government also approved the National Plan Against Trafficking in Persons for a 5-year period and extended its policy to convert Panama into a country free of child labor for the 2022–2024 period. In addition, the government continued to implement the “Child Labor Free Districts” strategy to identify cases of child labor in local municipalities. However, labor law enforcement agencies lack the financial and human resources necessary to fulfill their mandates. Moreover, Panamanian law allows minors to perform hazardous work within training facilities starting at age 14, in violation of international standards. Existing social programs are also insufficient to address the full scope of the child labor problem in the country, in particular for children living in rural areas and from indigenous, migrant, and Afro-Panamanian communities.

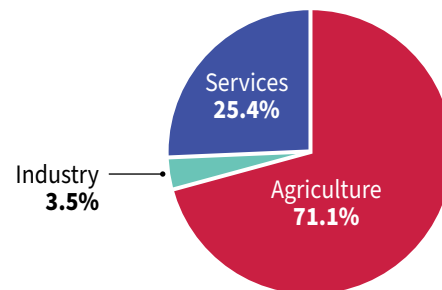


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	4.5% (33,594)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	5.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Panama are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including in the production of coffee and melons. Raising livestock and fishing.†



Industry

Construction,† including in painting and carpentry.



Services

Domestic work and street work† as vendors,† shoe shiners,† car washers, and collecting recyclables.† Working in waste collection in garbage dumps.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, including in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including in drug production and drug trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Panama’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish a uniform minimum age of 18 for hazardous work or require adequate training in the type of work being done and protection mechanisms for training programs that are in line with international standards.

Establish regulations that define the types of activities that children ages 12 to 14 can undertake as light work.

Raise the minimum age for work from age 14 to age 15 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Allocate sufficient funding for resources such as telephones, laptops, and vehicles so that the labor inspectorate can meet its commitments for coordination, implementation, and monitoring related to child labor.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 100 to 130 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 1.9 million workers.

Collect and make available information on the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions obtained, and penalties imposed and collected related to the worst forms of child labor.

Provide additional training for judges on laws related to forced labor, the worst forms of child labor, and human trafficking to ensure that these crimes can be effectively prosecuted.

Ensure that the number of inspections conducted by labor inspectors is appropriate to ensure the quality and scope of inspections.

Social Programs

Eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children from rural areas, children from indigenous, migrant, and Afro-Panamanian communities, and children with disabilities, by increasing the availability of schools in rural and remote areas, hiring additional teachers, improving existing infrastructure, and offsetting transportation costs.

Establish programs and ensure sufficient funding to programs that provide services to human trafficking survivors, including high-risk communities such as indigenous and migrant children.

Report on specific activities taken to implement the Network of Opportunities Plan.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Indigenous, Afro-Panamanian, and migrant children are particularly vulnerable to child labor. Children from indigenous communities are especially vulnerable to child labor in the services and tourism-industry sector, including carrying suitcases and acting as guides in the jungle. Cases of commercialized sexual exploitation also occurs in the three largest indigenous regions (*comarcas*). NGOs have reported that nearly half of the children found working in urban areas were migrants without proper documentation.













BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the Panamanian Constitution recognizes the right to education without discrimination, indigenous, migrant, and Afro-Panamanian children in rural communities face barriers to accessing education due to a lack of transportation, documentation, infrastructure, quality sanitation, technology, and teachers, particularly in autonomous indigenous areas. Some schools lack potable water and electricity, and in some cases, students in different grades are forced to share the same classroom. Children of indigenous descent often live in difficult-to-reach areas and face severe inequity in education access. Indigenous children have very low school enrollment rates, especially in secondary and higher education. Panamanian law requires that schools integrate children with disabilities, but most public schools do not have adequate facilities for these children.

 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Panama has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Panama’s laws do not meet international standards on the worst forms of child labor, including regulations that permit children to perform hazardous work starting at age 14 while participating in training programs.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Article 70 of the Constitution; Articles 508, 509, and 716 of the Family Code; Articles 117, 119, and 123 of the Labor Code; Articles 202 and 203 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 510 of the Family Code; Article 203 of the Penal Code; Article 4 of Executive Decree No. 19 of 2006; Article 118 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2, 2A, and 2B of Executive Decree No. 19 of 2006; Article 118 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 207, 456-A, and 456-D of the Penal Code; Article 489 of the Family Code; Articles 4 and 63 of Law 79 on Human Trafficking; Article 21 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 205–208 and 456 of the Penal Code; Article 489.17 of the Family Code; Article 63 of Law 79 on Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 179–187, 190, 202, 203, 207, and 456-A of the Penal Code; Article 63 of Law 79 on Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 202, 203, 318, 333, and 336 of the Penal Code; Article 489.16 of the Family Code; Article 2.16 of Executive Decree No. 19 of 2006
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 448 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Articles 34 and 45 of the Law on Education; Article 489 of the Family Code; Article 95 of the Constitution
Free Public Education		Articles 34 and 41 of the Law on Education; Article 95 of the Constitution

† Country has no standing military

Panama has a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children under age 18, but it permits children to perform hazardous work in training programs starting at age 14, in violation of international standards. Although the Constitution, Family Code, and Labor Code set the minimum age for employment at age 14, the Family Code and Labor Code specify exceptions for agricultural work. Article 119 of the Labor Code allows children between the ages of 12 and 15 to perform light work in agriculture if the work is outside of regular school hours. The Labor Code, however, does not define the kinds of activities children may perform as light work, particularly in agriculture and domestic work. In addition, the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Panama took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resource allocation and a lack of enforcement data hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor: Enforces child labor laws through two directorates with direct authority over child labor matters: the Directorate Against Child Labor and for the Protection of Adolescent Workers (DIRETIPAT), and the Labor Inspection Directorate. DIRETIPAT is responsible for overseeing compliance with laws related to working children, planning and executing public policies, and carrying out education programs on child labor for employers, parents, and children. DIRETIPAT refers cases of children found in exploitative work to the Child and Adolescent Courts, or to the National Secretariat for Childhood, Adolescence, and Family (SENNIAF), which conducts inspections in the informal sector. The Labor Inspection Directorate enforces the Labor Code in areas in which children may be working, particularly in the formal sector.

Attorney General's Office: Investigates and prosecutes crimes of sexual exploitation. Investigations are initiated by the Judicial Investigative Directorate, after which cases are passed to the prosecutors.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **100** labor inspectors conducted **10,672** workplace inspections, finding **19** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Panama established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Committee for the Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers (CETIPPAT): Public-private institution led by the First Lady of Panama that includes the Ministry of Labor, the Ministries of Education, Health, and Agriculture, and representatives from civil society and organizations of workers and employers. The committee conducts various efforts to address child labor, including national child labor surveys. During the reporting period, CETIPPAT maintained its calendar of quarterly meetings to review actions on its roadmap and evaluate specific actions carried out by its commissions. Provincial CETIPPAT subcommittees also carried out inspections, home visits, and planning meetings during the year.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Panama has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>Direct Government Action Program for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor: Provides a network of social and economic services to child workers and children at risk of child labor, including food and scholarships, support for sports activities, and monitoring areas in which children are at risk of child labor to ensure that they attend school. Led by the Ministry of Labor and implemented through the Institute for Training and Utilization of Human Resources. During the reporting period, the government provided over 60 scholarships to students in the province of Veraguas as part of the Direct Government Action Program for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Panama has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents: Seeks to prevent and eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, including by providing services to survivors, strengthening the National Commission for the Prevention of Crimes of Sexual Exploitation (CONAPREDES), and raising awareness. Implemented by CONAPREDES, with support from the Public Ministry. During the reporting period, the government held a forum on Advances and Challenges in the Eradication of Child Labor in Panama, with the topic being commercial sexual exploitation of children. The aim of the forum was to raise awareness among members of the Confederation of Workers of Panama.</p> <p>National Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2022–2027): Addresses human trafficking through prevention, victim assistance, and international cooperation. Includes provisions to protect child victims of human trafficking. During the reporting period, the Government of Panama approved the National Plan Against Trafficking in Persons for a 5-year period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Panama funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they lack the ability to reach the most vulnerable populations, including indigenous, Afro-Panamanian, and migrant children.</p> <p><small>† Program is funded by the Government of Panama.</small></p>	<p>SENNIAF Programs:† Provide services to children engaged in the worst forms of child labor. The Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor program identifies children engaged in the worst forms of child labor, removes them from exploitative situations, and connects them to a network of social and economic services. Maintains a case processing system to efficiently manage reports and help reduce report processing times. The Prevention and Care for Child and Adolescent Victims of Sexual Violence program identifies children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation, removes them from exploitative situations, and provides them with social services. Conducts training workshops nationwide for professionals providing direct care to child and adolescent survivors of sexual violence. SENNI AF programs were carried out in urban and rural areas during the reporting period. SENNI AF coordinated with the Ministry of Labor to launch public awareness campaigns about children who work, which were disseminated on social networks and traditional media. Other public awareness campaigns took the form of convening forums, organizing an interinstitutional family fair, distributing flyers and creating murals, and touring areas that are particularly vulnerable to child labor.</p> <p>Network of Opportunities:† Ministry of Social Development program that provides families in extreme poverty with cash transfers that are conditioned on their children’s participation in health and education services and the acquisition of a birth certificate. Offers training to project participants to improve income-generating opportunities. Although research indicates that this program was active during the reporting period, the government did not report specific activities conducted to implement the program.</p> <p>El Plan Colmena:† Seeks to reduce poverty and inequality via a multisectoral strategy that includes local governments, public institutions, the private sector, civil society, and community leaders. The plan prioritizes 12 areas of intervention, including comprehensive childhood care, improved nutrition, access to clean water and basic sanitation, health, education, and the development of productive capacities to ensure the sustainability of communities. In 2023, the government implemented the “Child Labor Free Districts” strategy, as part of the <i>Colmena</i> Plan, which seeks to engage with local municipal governments to identify cases of child labor.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Papua New Guinea made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased funding for the Government Tuition Fee Subsidy Policy and pledged to cover all school fees for students, increasing access to education. However, Papua New Guinea's hazardous work prohibitions do not comply with international standards because they allow children ages 16 and older to engage in hazardous work, which is below the international standard of 18 years old. In addition, it does not have laws that sufficiently protect children from commercial sexual exploitation because using, procuring, and offering a child for pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited. Further, prohibitions against child trafficking are not sufficient because the law requires that threats, the use of force, or coercion be established for the crime of child trafficking. Lastly, although exact funding levels are unknown, the labor inspectorate does not have sufficient resources to adequately enforce labor laws.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Papua New Guinea are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in mining and deep-sea fishing.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including on palm oil plantations, fishing, and herding.



Industry

Work in manufacturing, mining, and quarrying.



Services

Domestic work and street work, including begging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, including selling drugs; forced labor in domestic work, the tourism sector, manual labor, street vending, portering; forced begging, and forced mining.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor per se under Article 3(a)-(c) of International Labor Organization Convention 182.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Papua New Guinea's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Raise the minimum age for light work from age 11 to age 16 and identify the types of activities and the number of hours per week that this work may be undertaken.

Raise the minimum age for hazardous work from age 16 to age 18 and identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children.

Criminally prohibit child trafficking regardless of establishment of threats, the use of force, or coercion.

Criminally prohibit the use, procurement, and offering a child for pornographic performances and for illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.

Establish a law that criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Raise by law the education age to 16, the minimum age for employment, and establish by law free basic public education.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Enforcement

Publish information on law enforcement efforts, including labor inspectorate funding, the number of labor inspectors, training for labor inspectors, the number of inspections conducted at worksites, and whether routine and unannounced labor inspections were conducted. Also publish the number of child labor violations found and the number of child labor penalties that were imposed and collected.

Establish a referral mechanism for child labor complaints, a data monitoring system to track child labor cases, and a referral mechanism between labor and criminal law enforcement authorities and social services agencies to ensure that victims of child labor receive appropriate support services.

Employ at least 209 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 3.1 million people.

Provide inspectors with the funding necessary to conduct routine and targeted inspections, in addition to those that are complaint driven, in all areas of Papua New Guinea, especially outside of urban areas.

Institutionalize and fully fund training on the worst forms of child labor for labor inspectors and criminal investigators, including training for new labor inspectors at the beginning of their employment.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts undertaken, including the number of child labor investigations initiated, the number of child labor penalties imposed, and the number of criminal law enforcement convictions secured.

Standardize prosecutorial and law enforcement practices and increase funding for prosecutorial and law enforcement bodies, such as the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Anti-Human Trafficking Committee is active and meets regularly to implement measures to address human trafficking. Ensure that there is senior governmental leadership and participation at meetings, and per the Committee's mandate, all anti-human trafficking stakeholders, including NGOs, are invited to participate.

Establish a coordinating mechanism to prevent and eliminate all worst forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Ensure that all policies are funded and implemented according to their mandate, including the National Child Protection Policy.

Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as use in illicit activities, including selling drugs and forced labor in domestic work.

Social Programs

Institute a national program to increase birth registration and provide identification documentation to children who are undocumented.

Increase funding for school infrastructure improvements, including essentials such as textbooks, electricity, and technology. Ensure that teacher salaries are paid; transportation challenges for students are addressed; programs are instituted to address gender-based violence against girls in schools; and all schools have reliable water supplies.

Implement and fully fund programs and services that assist children engaged in the worst forms of child labor in all relevant sectors, especially commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, and mining.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Ensure that Child Care Centers are active, fully funded, and publish their activities undertaken on an annual basis.

 **CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Undocumented children in Papua New Guinea are at an increased risk for exploitation, including human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. Only approximately 15 percent of children in the country have their birth registered.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Papua New Guinea face multiple barriers to education. Unpaid teachers, a lack of transportation, aging infrastructure, and a lack of reliable water supplies and sanitation facilities have been exacerbated by the government frequently failing in its obligation to provide schools with sufficient funding. Natural disasters, such as flooding, volcanos, earthquakes, and disease outbreaks present acute risks to education access because almost 80 percent of schools lack electricity, limiting remote and online-based learning opportunities. Girls are at an increased risk of being subjected to gender-based violence, which affects school attendance. In total, 25 percent of primary and secondary school-aged children do not attend school.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Papua New Guinea has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the UNCRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Papua New Guinea's laws related to the minimum age for hazardous work do not meet international standards because Article 104 of the Employment Act sets the minimum age for engaging in hazardous labor activities at age 16 rather than age 18.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 103 of the Employment Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 16 Years		Article 104 of the Employment Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 23 and 43 of the Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea; Sections 208A – 208G of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 208A – 208G of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 229J–229O, 229R, and 229S of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years		Section 30 of the Defense Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age		
Free Public Education		

* Country has no conscription

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Papua New Guinea's existing legal framework governing child labor does not meet international standards in a number of areas. Although Papua New Guinea meets international standards for the minimum age for work, Article 103 of the Papua New Guinea Employment Act permits children ages 11 through 16 to work under certain conditions, including with parental consent and if the child works only with members of the family. Children as young as age 11 are permitted to perform light work, without enumerating what forms of labor may be classified as “light work” and without establishing a limit on the number of hours a child under age 16 may be made to work. Papua New Guinea's existing law on the minimum age for hazardous work under Article 104 of Papua New Guinea’s Employment Act sets the minimum age for engaging in hazardous labor activities at age 16 rather than age 18. Additionally, the law does not list hazardous occupations that are prohibited for children. The National Education Plan does not include an age up to which education is compulsory, and, although the Government Tuition Fee Subsidy Policy was expanded in 2023, the right to free education is not guaranteed by law.

Papua New Guinea also does not have laws that prohibit using, procuring, or offering a child for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs. The law does not sufficiently protect children from commercial sexual exploitation because the actions of using, procuring, and offering a child for pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited. Lastly, the prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require that threats, the use of force, or coercion be established for the crime of child trafficking.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

Enforcement agencies in Papua New Guinea took no documented actions to address child labor in 2023.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor and Industrial Relations: Directly employs all labor inspectors in the country and identifies hazards that child workers are exposed to in various sectors.

The Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary: Papua New Guinea's national police force; enforces criminal laws against child labor and human trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Unknown
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, it is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Papua New Guinea established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the government lacks a mechanism to address all worst forms of child labor in the country, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, including selling drugs; and forced domestic work.

National Anti-Human Trafficking Committee (NAHTC): Coordinates efforts to address human trafficking. During the reporting period, the NAHTC did not report meeting and continued to lack sufficient resources and commitment from the government.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Papua New Guinea established policies related to child labor. However, the government did not report activities undertaken during the reporting period to implement these policies.

Government Tuition Fee Subsidy Policy: Aims to improve access to education by abolishing school tuition fees and providing subsidies to cover costs for primary and secondary school children who cannot afford an education. The program is slated to subsidize education for students from grades 1 to 12. Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister Marape announced in November 2023 that the program will also cover project fees, which were not previously covered, committing to make public education free for students.

National Child Protection Policy (2017–2027): Seeks to strengthen child protection laws, including increased data gathering and analysis, the full implementation of the *Lukautim Pikinini* Act, and elimination of violence against children at the hands of the police. Research was unable to determine what activities were undertaken to implement the policy during the reporting period.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Papua New Guinea funded and participated in a program that included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation, use in illicit activities, and forced labor.

Child Care Centers:† Provide a safe location for children removed by Child Protection Officers from situations deemed to be harmful to their health and safety.

† Program is funded by the Government of Papua New Guinea.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReportss



PARAGUAY

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Paraguay made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security began the process of updating, simplifying, and digitalizing the entire inspection system, and the National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor and Protect Adolescent Labor created two new departmental committees for the eradication of child labor. The Ministry of Children and Adolescents' Embrace Program also announced that it had served 1,505 children and adolescents who were in vulnerable situations or involved in child labor, providing them with financial assistance, food baskets, family support, and recreational activities.

However, children from rural and indigenous communities face difficulties accessing and completing their education, making them more vulnerable to child labor. Social programs also lack the funding and coverage needed to address child labor in rural areas. In addition, law enforcement agencies lack the funding and resources needed to sufficiently identify, investigate, and prosecute child labor crimes.

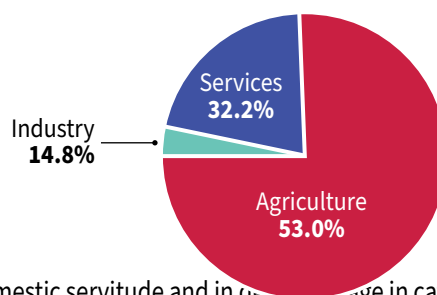


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	5.4% (36,569)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	Unavailable

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Paraguay are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in domestic servitude and in use of force in cattle raising. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including in the production of peppers, manioc cassava, corn, beans, peanuts, sesame, sugarcane, tomatoes, lettuce, melons, sweet potatoes, onions, carrots, cabbages, and yerba mate (stimulant plant). Raising poultry, hogs, cattle,† sheep, and goats. Fishing, including using hooks and harpoons,† preparing bait, and cleaning fish.†



Industry

Construction, including handling heavy loads, machinery or equipment,† and production of bricks. Limestone quarrying.†



Services

Domestic work and street work† as vendors, shoe shiners, and beggars. Scavenging in landfills.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Debt bondage in cattle raising. Forced domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation and use in the production of child pornography. Use in illicit activities, including drug smuggling and drug trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Paraguay's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Increase the compulsory education age from 17 years old to 18 years old to align with the minimum age for work.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of a child for prostitution.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 14 to 249 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 3.7 million workers.

Provide office facilities, transportation, fuel, and increased funding to the labor inspectorate, specifically in the Chaco region, to build enforcement capacity to address child labor in the informal sector, including in agriculture and domestic work.

Implement the 2016 agreement to accelerate authorization of workplace inspection search warrants to improve the cooperation mechanisms between judicial authorities and labor enforcement officials.

Provide researchers in the specialized police unit with additional training so they can collect data on the worst forms of child labor.

Increase efforts to prosecute crimes related to the worst forms of child labor, including by hiring and training specialized criminal investigators and prosecutors.

Provide increased resources, such as funding and fuel for law enforcement vehicles, to enable criminal investigations in remote areas.

Ensure that fines and penalties for those convicted of child labor crimes are consistently applied.

Ensure that labor inspectors are given stability of employment needed to fulfill their duties by granting permanent public servant status.

Coordination

Provide additional financial and human resources to all coordinating mechanisms so that they can fulfill their mandate, which includes collecting and reporting on child labor statistics and addressing child labor issues.

Strengthen interagency coordinating mechanisms, with particular focus on the communication between the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security and the Ministries of Education and Health, to address child labor, including its worst forms.

Government Policies

Take steps to implement the National Plan for Childhood and Adolescence and the National Plan for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and publish information about these efforts on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Increase access to education for children vulnerable to child labor, particularly for children living in rural and indigenous communities, by addressing the lack of identity documents, infrastructure, staff, internet connectivity, and transportation.

Ensure that financial assistance programs for child trafficking and forced labor survivors are properly funded.

Further expand government programs to assist more families and children affected by child labor in agriculture in rural areas, including cattle herding and domestic work.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Create public outreach and education campaigns to provide youth and their families with more information on *criadazgo*.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from poor rural and urban communities, including indigenous children, are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. According to government reporting, exploiters abuse deep-rooted social practices and behaviors, such as historical structural poverty, lack of education, lack of job opportunities, history of rights violations, and family violence, to subjugate children and adolescents. The worst forms of child labor are prevalent along Paraguay’s eastern and southern borders with Brazil and Argentina, where some children are trafficked across borders for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Children from lower economic backgrounds are encouraged to begin working at an early age out of economic necessity. Many families view *criadazgo*, a system in which middle to upper class families informally employ and house young children as domestic workers, as a means of pursuing educational opportunities, given the poor educational opportunities in rural areas. According to civil society reports, approximately 47,000 children, mostly girls, serve as domestic workers under the *criadazgo* system, in which they are at risk of exploitation within private homes.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children from rural and indigenous communities face difficulties accessing and completing their education due to a lack of transportation, inadequate facilities and staff, a lack of identity documents, and little to no internet connectivity. A study released in 2019 by the Coordinator for the Rights of Infancy and Adolescence of Paraguay estimated that half of all children in indigenous communities do not attend school. The government also reports that educational exclusion is linked to high levels of poverty, a lack of development in certain areas, and increased migration. Such challenges may leave these children more vulnerable to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Paraguay has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Paraguay’s laws do not meet international standards, as they lack a prohibition of child recruitment by non-state armed groups and a prohibition of the use of a child in prostitution.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 1 of Law No. 2332; Article 58 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 54 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 3 of Decree No. 4951; Articles 122 and 125 of the Labor Code; Article 15 of the First Employment Law; Article 5 of Law No. 5407 on Domestic Work
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 54 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 2 of Decree No. 4951; Article 15 of the First Employment Law; Articles 122, 125, and 389 of the Labor Code; Article 5 of Law No. 5407 on Domestic Work
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 5–7 of the Comprehensive Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 125, 129, and 320 of the Penal Code; Articles 10 and 54 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 4–7 of the Comprehensive Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 125 and 129 of the Penal Code; Articles 10 and 54 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Article 139 of the Penal Code; Articles 4-7 of the Comprehensive Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Article 2.19 of Decree No. 4951; Article 31 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 1 of Law No. 1657; Article 32 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Articles 3 and 5 of the Obligatory Military Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Articles 3 and 5 of the Obligatory Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years	✓	Article 2 of Law No. 4088; Article 32 of the General Education Law No. 1264; Decree 6162
Free Public Education	✓	Article 76 of the Constitution; Articles 1, 2, and 32 of the General Education Law No. 1264

Children in Paraguay are required to attend school only up to age 17. This standard makes children aged 17 vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work without restriction on hours and times of work. Laws related to commercial sexual exploitation of children do not meet international standards because the use of children in prostitution is not criminalized.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Paraguay took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MTESS): Enforces laws related to child labor, inspects workplaces for child labor, and recommends penalties or fines for companies found in violation of labor laws. Refers cases involving criminal violations to the Public Ministry. If MTESS finds vulnerable children or children in situations of child labor, it refers them to the Ministry of Children and Adolescents for inclusion in social programs.

Public Ministry (Attorney General): Investigates and prosecutes criminal cases related to the worst forms of child labor. The Paraguayan National Police assist with investigations and can arrest suspects at the request of the Public Ministry. The Public Ministry also maintains the Specialized Unit to Combat Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. It comprises 2 specialized prosecutors based in Asunción, 1 specialized prosecutor based in Ciudad del Este, and 44 assistants.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **14** labor inspectors conducted **795** worksite inspections, finding **3** child labor violations. The government also conducted **170** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated an **unknown** number of prosecutions, and convicted **2** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Paraguay established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, coordination efforts are hindered by a lack of sufficient financial and human resources.

National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor and Protect Adolescent Labor (CONAETI): Leads government efforts against child labor and includes representatives from MTESS, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, the Ministry of Children and Adolescents, and other government agencies, as well as representatives from labor unions, industry associations, and NGOs. The commission manages the National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Working Adolescents. During the reporting period, CONAETI created two new departmental committees for the eradication of child labor (CODETIs).

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Paraguay established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor. However, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement its National Plan for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons.</p>	<p>National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Working Adolescents (2019–2024): Focuses on raising awareness and strengthening enforcement of child labor laws. Provides child laborers with access to free quality education and offers livelihood alternatives for their families. In 2023, this policy provided the basis for the creation of two departmental committees for the eradication of child labor (CODETIS).</p> <p>National Plan for Childhood and Adolescence (2022–2024): Focuses the protection of children and adolescents on four main axis points: (1) strengthening of the protective role of the family; (2) comprehensive protection of the rights of children and adolescents, including labor rights; (3) promotion and communication of the rights of children and adolescents; and (4) strengthening of the national system’s ability to protect and promote the rights of children. Each point mentioned in the plan is supplemented by a number of strategic objectives, including the expansion of protection programs linked to child labor and its worst forms, identification of high-risk situations that can lead to instances of child labor, and strengthening of health and education services. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Plan for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (2020–2024): Aims to guide government prevention, response, and protection actions and to establish prosecution and penalty guidelines for trafficking in persons. Also prioritizes institutional capacity building and coordination between government entities. Although the government continued to implement this plan, research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Paraguay funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs have inadequate coverage and funding to fully address child labor in all sectors, especially in cattle herding and domestic work.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Paraguay.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Immediate Response Network:† Program created to provide support to street children. Under the <i>Dispositivo de Respuesta Inmediata (DRI)</i>, employees from the Ministry of Childhood and Adolescents (MINNA) with a range of specializations, including psychologists and social workers, respond to tips from the MINNA hotline for reporting mistreatment, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and negligence of children, as well as information from roving street patrols in high-risk areas. In 2023, DRI reported offering social services to 1,502 children and adolescents, many belonging to vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Embrace Program (Programa Abrazo):† MINNA program to assist children engaged in exploitative work by providing them and their families with health and education services, food deliveries, and cash transfers conditioned on children’s school attendance and withdrawal from work. In this program, children can also join protection units through which they can engage in recreational activities and receive school reinforcement, food, and protection from child labor. The program currently operates 60 attention centers in 12 of Paraguay’s 17 departments, benefiting more than 12,000 vulnerable children from more than 3,400 families. During the reporting period, the program served 1,505 children and adolescents who were in situations of vulnerability and child labor.</p> <p>Well-Being Conditional Cash Transfer Program (Tekoporã):† Government-administered program through the Ministry of Social Development. Provides conditional cash transfers to families in rural communities. Incorporates aspects of the Embrace Program, such as the family monitoring methodology, to ensure that participant children do not engage in child labor. During the reporting period, the program implemented a 25 percent increase in the monetary assistance given to families that are part of the program. This increase is meant to compensate for the rise in inflation. The cash transfer program benefited more than 180,000 families during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



PERU

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Peru made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased its labor inspectorate budget from \$49 million to \$61 million and issued resolution No. 236-2023, which allows for the creation of child labor and forced labor inspection regulations. The government also committed to using a referral protocol at the national, regional, and local levels to help with the detection of child labor and referral of survivors to social services. Further, the Ministry of Labor publicly accredited a seal that companies can use to certify their agricultural products as child labor-free. Lastly, the government carried out a review of its Forced Labor Survey database in preparation of releasing the full survey report. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it did not provide information on whether it imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor. In addition, Peruvian law allows children ages 12 to 14 to do light work without specifying the activities in which children may work. Labor law enforcement agencies in Peru still lack a sufficient number of inspectors to adequately address child labor throughout the country, and existing social programs do not fully address the problem of child labor in Peru.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	18.7% (1,213,785)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	83.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	18.0%

Children in Peru are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in mining, commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs. Children also preform dangerous tasks in agriculture, fishing, brick making, and logging.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Fishing,† logging,† and clearing forestland for mining.



Industry

Mining† gold. Production of bricks† and fireworks,† construction, and metal manufacturing.



Services

Street work,† including vending, begging, shoe shining, carrying loads, selling goods in kiosks and markets, collecting fares on public buses,† and washing cars. Treating leather, repairing shoes, and tailoring. Repairing motor vehicles.† Garbage scavenging,† Working in restaurants, domestic work,† and cleaning offices and hotels.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in mining and logging, street vending, and begging. Forced domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, including in bars, nightclubs, brothels, and logging and mining camps, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Growing and processing coca (stimulant plant) and transporting drugs. Counterfeiting lightbulbs. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Peru's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children younger than age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that light work provisions determine the activities in which light work may be permitted.

Enforcement

Publish information on child labor violations found for which penalties were imposed, whether they were collected, and the number of labor inspections conducted at worksite.

Increase funding and resources for labor and criminal law enforcement agencies.

Conduct inspections in the informal sector.

Increase training for enforcement personnel on child labor and forced labor issues and share information about the training program for labor inspectors and criminal investigators.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 832 to about 1,235 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 18.5 million workers.

Review and streamline the process required for auxiliary/junior inspectors to attain full authority in order to increase efficiency in the labor inspection process and allow inspectors to conduct follow-up inspections at any time.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement officials conduct adequate investigations in mining areas and bars, and initiate prosecutions when violations are found to deter perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure that Regional Commissions for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor develop action plans to address child labor and allocate sufficient funding to implement these plans.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to make education accessible for all children, including migrant and refugee children, by addressing barriers such as limited class sizes, long distances to schools, and lack of necessary documentation.

Publish information on activities taken under all social programs that address child labor.

Expand social programs to reach a greater number of children who perform dangerous tasks in agriculture; and initiate social programs to address child commercial sexual exploitation, child labor in mining, child labor in logging, and child domestic work.

Ensure that there are sufficient shelters, including shelters for boys, and specialized services available for survivors of human trafficking.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Indigenous and migrant children from Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela are especially vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, organized begging, and forced labor, particularly in the mining regions of Peru. Reporting also identified undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, children in poverty, workers in the informal economy, and members of marginalized racial and ethnic communities as groups at increased risk of sex trafficking or forced labor. Additionally, children who work in illicit activities such as drug trafficking are at increased risk of forced labor and may be exposed to hazardous chemicals used to process coca leaf into coca paste or cocaine. Media and civil society reports also suggest that the Militarized Communist Party of Peru, led by remnants of the Shining Path, continued to use local children to engage in narco-terrorist activities in the Valley of the Rivers Apurimac, Ene, and Mantaro regions.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Estimates suggest that the number of school closures in Peru were the highest among Latin American countries. Additionally, over \$20.9 million dollars (\$80 million Peruvian soles) is needed to address infrastructure gaps in 30,000 schools, with over 1,000 schools at risk of collapsing and some schools lacking basic services such as electricity or water. Problems such as limited class sizes, long distances to schools, and lack of necessary documentation such as birth certificates or passports continue to hinder education access for many children. This includes refugee and migrant children, who have increased vulnerability to child labor and human trafficking. While education is free, school retention of Venezuelan migrant and refugee children was often impacted by their families' lack of economic resources, limited access to social protection, xenophobia, and displacement, among other factors.







LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Peru has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Peru lacks legislation to sufficiently prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 17 Years		Articles 1, 51, 56, 69, 70, and 73 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Articles 4 and 5 of Law No. 29981 on SUNAFIL
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 1, 56, 57, 58, 69, 70, and 73 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Articles 4 and 5 of Law No. 29981 on SUNAFIL
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 1 and 2 of the Supreme Decree No. 009-2022-MIMP and its Annex; Article 58 of the Child and Adolescent Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 2 and 23 of the Constitution; Article 4 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Article 129-O of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 4 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Articles 129-A and 129-B of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 4 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Articles 129-A, 129-B, 129-H-129-J, 129-L, 129-M, 179-181-B, and 183 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 46-D, 128, 296, 296-A, and 297 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Articles 2 and 23 of Law No. 29248 Military Service

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 2 and 6 of Law No. 29248 Military Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years ‡		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 12 and 36 of the General Education Law; Article 61 of Supreme Decree No. 011-2012-ED
Free Public Education		Article 17 of the Constitution; Article 4 of the General Education Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In 2023, the government issued resolution No. 236-2023, which allows for the creation of child labor and forced labor inspection regulations. However, the Child and Adolescent Code includes a light work exception for children as young as age 12 without specifying the activities in which light work may be permitted. In addition, Peru also lacks legislation to prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Peru took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resources for the Ministry of Labor and Promotion of Employment (MTPE) and for criminal enforcement agencies hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

MTPE: Responsible for supporting the National Labor Inspection Superintendency (SUNAFIL), which enforces labor laws by inspecting workplaces with more than 10 registered workers and referring cases of child labor to the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) and the Public Ministry (MPFN), as appropriate. SUNAFIL has a unit of 10 inspectors who target forced labor and child labor violations, and who train other inspectors on these topics. SUNAFIL also has regional offices in Apurímac, Ucayali, Huancavelica, and Tacna, covering all 26 subnational entities of Peru. MIMP has 1,890 offices that work collaboratively with MTPE and local officials, including police, to use a referral protocol to ensure that adolescents who are removed from hazardous work receive appropriate social services called the Municipal Model for the Detection and Eradication of Child Labor. In 2023, an agreement was reached among national entities, including MTPE, SUNAFIL, and others, to use this referral protocol at the national, regional, and local levels. MTPE also worked with officials from the regional governments of Ayacucho and Cajamarca to improve the quality and coverage of service provisions, promote decent and productive employment, and ensure compliance with labor and fundamental rights.

Ministry of the Interior (MININTER): Investigates child trafficking cases and maintains a hotline to receive reports of human trafficking. Provides survivors and the public with information on human trafficking, refers cases to relevant government offices, and coordinates services for survivors. Within MININTER, the Peruvian National Police (PNP) enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and maintain the Office to Address Human Trafficking and Illicit Migrant Smuggling (DIRCTPIM), which investigates cases of child trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation. MININTER coordinates with MPFN and MIMP to place survivors with family members or state social services. DIRCTPIM has approximately 150 investigators. In 2023, in Miraflores, a joint operation by DIRCTPIM-PNP led to the arrest of 8 women for alleged human trafficking and the rescue of 15 minors from the streets, who were reportedly being exploited for begging on various avenues in the district. Additionally, PNP conducted a successful operation in the district of Río Tambo (Junín), rescuing three minors who were victims of child labor in clandestine bars and canteens. The operation shed light on the country's pervasive child labor issues, with the highest concentration found in mountainous areas (22.1 percent), followed by the jungle (17.3 percent) and the coastal region (4.3 percent).

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **832** labor inspectors conducted **70,776** worksite inspections, finding **118** violations related to child labor. At least **2** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, but it is **unknown** if prosecutions were initiated or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Peru established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unknown whether all regional commissions created child labor action plans as required.

Multisectoral Permanent Commission for the Follow-up to the Implementation of the Multisectoral Policy for Children Towards 2030: Led by MIMP through its Vice Ministry for Vulnerable Populations (Chair) and Directorate-General for Children (Secretariat), and comprises 22 government officials from 16 different agencies. Its three main duties include a) monitoring the Multisectoral National Policy for Children towards 2030 (PNMNNA), b) publishing reports on urgent measures to be adopted by service providers, and c) issuing an annual technical report. Throughout 2023, the Commission held seven working sessions to coordinate actions and monitor the implementation of PNMNNA, prioritizing issues related to violence against children and adolescents, particularly sexual violence, adolescent pregnancy, and anemia prevalence, and issues concerning migrant children and adolescents. Although some regional commissions under the National Steering Committees for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor created action plans to address child labor as required by their operating rules, research could not confirm whether all had done so during the reporting period. Additionally, most regional commissions lacked the funding to carry out these action plans.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Peru established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking, the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.

PNMNNA: Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by improving the livelihoods of low-income families, providing better working conditions for adolescents, raising awareness of child labor, increasing law enforcement efforts, and collecting child labor data. In 2023, the Ministry of Transportation and Communication, the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations committed to implement PNMNNA, and training was provided at the regional and national levels.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>National Policy Against Trafficking in Persons and its Forms of Exploitation (2022–2030): Led by MININTER and serves as the roadmap to prevent, control, reduce, and prosecute human trafficking crimes at all levels. Under this policy, the government operates 7 specialized shelters exclusively for girls exploited in sex trafficking in the regions of Cusco, Lima, Loreto, Madre de Dios, and Puno, with a capacity for approximately 130 survivors. In a December 2023 meeting in Madre Dios, supported by the American Bar Association’s Rule of Law Initiative, MININTER engaged key representatives from regional governments, law enforcement, and the media to assess the progress and challenges in tackling human trafficking. The General Directorate of Democratic Security highlighted significant achievements, including the handling of over 40 percent of trafficking cases by specialized provincial prosecutors, successful rescue operations, and the reintegration of 59 percent of affected children and adolescents. MININTER also established the Regional Network and Multisectoral Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in order to combat human trafficking in the Amazonas region, and disseminated information about human trafficking in Chachapoyas and Condorcanqui. Furthermore, MININTER provided training sessions to law enforcement personnel to enhance their capacity in investigating and prosecuting trafficking-related crimes, which are crucial in areas vulnerable to illegal economies.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Peru funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, there is a lack of programs to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation and in illicit activities.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Peru.</i></p>	<p>Secondary Tutorial Program:† Rural basic education program supported by the Ministry of Education that includes school meal plans (<i>Qali Warma</i>) for rural students throughout the country, including hard-to-reach indigenous communities. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period.</p> <p>Learn Program (Yachay):† MIMP program to increase access to social services for children subjected to street work, begging, and commercial sexual exploitation. The Street Educators (<i>Educadores de Calle</i>)† program is part of the broader <i>Yachay</i> program and provides counseling and training to children engaged in child labor, begging, and street work. In 2023, the Street Educators program assisted 7,154 children, providing them with education, healthcare, and other protective services to get children off the streets and resorting their rights. The broader <i>Yachay</i> Program operates 68 centers at the national level for educational activities, parent training, and workshops. The program also connects working children and their families to educational and social services to withdraw them from exploitative work and improve family welfare. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period.</p> <p>Together Program (Juntos):† Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion program that provides cash transfers to low-income households in 15 of the country's 25 regions. In 2023, <i>Juntos</i> provided approximately \$6.3 million dollars (\$24 million Peruvian soles) to 40,000 households with children under 5 to help address food insecurity.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



PHILIPPINES

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, the Philippines made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government established the Child Labor Knowledge Sharing System to monitor instances of child labor and approved the Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework for 2023–2028 to gradually reduce child labor through consultations with government institutions, local non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, faith-based groups, parents, and children. It also established a national coordination center against online sexual abuse and exploitation of children under the Department of Social Welfare and Development to develop and implement programs to prevent children from being victimized by online commercial sexual exploitation and to provide survivors of the crime with social services. However, limited financial and human resources and training on enhanced investigation techniques hindered enforcement efforts. In addition, children ages 15 to 18 are limited to eight hours a day and 40 a week, which may not be low enough to prevent prejudice to children’s compulsory education through age 18.

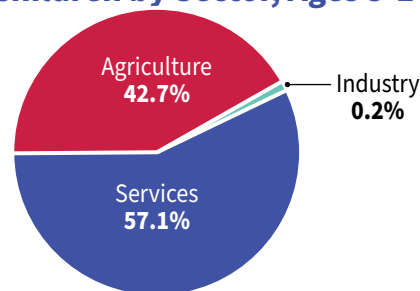


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	1.9% (458,631)
Hazardous Work by Children	Unknown	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	92.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	2.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in the Philippines are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Producing sugarcane,† including growing, weeding,† harvesting,† cutting,† and carrying sugarcane bundles.† Also growing bananas, coconuts, corn, rice, rubber, and tobacco. Hog farming and deep-sea fishing.†



Industry

Mining† and quarrying,† including for gold. Also manufacturing pyrotechnics,† producing fashion accessories, and working in construction.†



Services

Engaging in domestic work and street work, including scavenging and begging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Engaging in commercial sexual exploitation, including use in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Also subjected to forced labor, including domestic work, forced begging, and use in illicit activities like drug trafficking. Recruiting of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Philippines' implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Given that the compulsory education age is 18, ensure that limitations on hours of work for children prevent such work from prejudicing school attendance.

Enforcement

Increase funding to allow for the hiring of more law enforcement personnel, including police and prosecutors, operations, and equipment for forensic analysis of digital online sexual exploitation of children evidence.

Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 1,210 to 3,137 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 47 million workers, and increase resources available to provide sufficient coverage of the workforce in all provinces, including in the informal sector where child labor is prevalent.

Allow Rescue the Child Laborers Quick Action Teams to conduct unannounced compliance visits to private homes to ensure that there are no child domestic workers being illegally employed.

Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the number of child labor violations found and the number of child labor violations for which penalties imposed were collected.

Enhance efforts to prevent the inappropriate incarceration of, and violence against, children suspected to be participating in the production and trafficking of drugs and those caught in the crossfire during anti-drug operations.

Prosecute law enforcement officials and civilians responsible for the killing of children engaged in the drug trade and officials who are complicit in trafficking.

Develop procedures to allow for the efficient collection of restitution from convicted human traffickers and the restitution is transferred to their victims.

Government Policies

Publish activities carried out by the Basic Education Development Plan.

Social Programs

Publish activities undertaken to implement social programs to address child labor, including the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program and the SHIELD Against Child Labor program.

Increase access to free, compulsory education by eliminating unofficial school-related fees and addressing issues related to inadequate school infrastructure, including architectural barriers, especially for children in rural areas and children with disabilities.

Develop programs to increase protections for and provide assistance to child trafficking victims who are exploited for the purposes of domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation, particularly children from rural communities.

Develop programs to increase protections for and provide assistance to children engaged in drug trafficking and children impacted by the death of a familial breadwinner to address their heightened vulnerability to child labor.

Ensure that youth rehabilitation centers, including Houses of Hope (*Bahay ng Pag-asa*), are accredited and in compliance with standards set by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Many children in the Philippines are victims of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC), in which children perform sex acts at the direction of paying foreigners and local Filipinos for live internet broadcasts that take place in small internet cafes, private homes, or windowless buildings sometimes referred to as cybersex dens. The sector is highly profitable and growing due to increasing internet connectivity, widespread English language literacy, gaps in existing legislation and financial systems, and high international demand. Twenty percent of internet-using children between the ages of 12 and 17 in the Philippines have been exploited in OSAEC based on 2021 data. Children, primarily girls, from rural communities and disaster-affected areas, are also subjected to domestic trafficking in urban centers and tourist destinations for the purposes of domestic work and sex trafficking, and traffickers exploit these children in other forms of forced labor. As the Philippines is vulnerable to natural disasters including typhoons, tsunamis, volcanic activity, droughts, and erosion—and models indicate that the frequency and scale of these disasters will escalate in the coming years—an increasing number of children may be exposed to child labor. Additionally, the recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups, primarily the New People’s Army and Dawla Islamiyah, remains a concern in the country. These children are used in both combat and non-combat roles, including as supply officers, medics, and cooks, and for running errands.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the Constitution establishes free, compulsory education through age 18, unofficial school-related fees, such as for school uniforms, are prohibitive for some families. Other barriers to education include substandard infrastructure, which makes traveling and access to schools challenging, especially for children in rural areas, and architectural barriers that pose challenges for children with disabilities.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Philippines has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, the Philippines’ laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the minimum age of 15 is below the compulsory education age of 18 years.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Article 139 of the Labor Code; Sections 12 and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act; Section 16 of the Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 139 of the Labor Code; Section 12-D of the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Department Orders 149 and 149A on Guidelines in Assessing and Determining Hazardous Work in the Employment of Persons Below 18 Years of Age; Sections 12-D and 14 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 3, 4, and 10 of the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 3, 4, and 10 of the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Section 11 of the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act; Sections 3, 4 and 10 of the Cybercrime Prevention Act; Sections 4 and 10 of the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act.
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act; Sections 5 and 8 of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Section 12 of the Providing for the Development, Administration, Organization, Training, Maintenance and Utilization of the Citizen Armed Forces of the Philippines, and for Other Purposes Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓*	Section 14 of the Providing for the Development, Administration, Organization, Training, Maintenance and Utilization of the Citizen Armed Forces of the Philippines, and for Other Purposes Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Sections 12-D, 16, and 22 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years ‡	✓	Section 4 of the Enhanced Basic Education Act
Free Public Education	✓	Section 2 of the Philippine Constitution

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

While children under 18 are subject to a light work framework limiting night work and hours of work, children ages 15 to 18 are limited to eight hours a day and 40 a week, which may not be low enough to prevent prejudice to children’s compulsory education through age 18.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in the Philippines took actions to address child labor. However, the labor inspectorate’s lack of a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations and lack of resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE): Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) manages the labor inspection program that oversees inspections conducted by DOLE regional offices nationwide. BWC also oversees training of labor inspectors, manages the DOLE Labor Inspection Management Information System, and responds to queries and complaints regarding labor standards and working conditions, including tips on potential child labor cases, received through the DOLE 1349 hotline. DOLE inspects establishments and monitors compliance with labor laws in the formal sector. Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns (BWSC) oversees the Profiling Child Laborers Initiative, a program to identify child laborers and remove them from child labor situations. DOLE is mandated to develop policies, programs, and systems that champion the development and protection of disadvantaged workers by contributing to their decent and productive employment. BWSC also provides advisory and technical assistance to the Labor Secretary and regional offices. Additionally, it oversees the Rescue the Child Laborers Quick Action Teams (*Sagip Batang Manggagawa*) that detect, monitor, and rescue child laborers in hazardous conditions. During the reporting year, DOLE identified 160,288 child laborers and held events to raise awareness about child labor.

Criminal Law Enforcement Agencies: The Philippine National Police (PNP) investigate and prosecute cases related to the worst forms of child labor. Its Women and Children’s Protection Center (WCPC) enforces laws on child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children and has 269 personnel nationwide. The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) investigates and prosecutes child labor cases and operates a national Task Force on the Protection of Children from Exploitation and Abuse. It also oversees the Anti-Human Trafficking Division, which investigates trafficking and illegal recruitment of children nationwide. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) enforces the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, maintains a national hotline for reporting cases of children used in illicit activities, and coordinates with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to assist during rescue operations. A lack of resources, including staff, is an area of concern within law enforcement agencies because it impedes their ability to act quickly upon complaints of child labor, including OSAEC, in both investigations and prosecutions.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **1,210** labor inspectors conducted **29,221** worksite inspections, with an **unknown** number of child labor violations found. There were also **4** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, with **22** prosecutions initiated and **9** perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>The Philippines established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Council Against Child Labor (NCACL): Chaired by DOLE and co-chaired by DSWD, comprising 19 government agencies and organizations. Coordinates national efforts to combat child labor and implements the Philippine Program Against Child Labor. Promotes information-sharing at the national, regional, and provincial levels, and is tasked with establishing and disseminating a child labor reporting mechanism for use by local and national authorities. In 2023, met regularly to discuss efforts to address child labor, including launching a Child Labor Knowledge Sharing System website and a new helpline for reporting child labor. Also made efforts to localize NCACL coordination, which includes 14 functional regional councils.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The Philippines established policies related to child labor. However, it is unknown whether activities were undertaken to carry out the Basic Education Development Plan.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework (2023–2028):† Aims to gradually reduce child labor through consultations with government institutions, local and international NGOs, civil society organizations, faith-based groups, professional associations, academia, the private sector, parents, and children. Implementation of the framework is led by the NCACL, with DOLE serving as Chair and DOLE’s BWSC and BWC as Joint Secretariat.</p> <p>Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) (2022–2030): Functions as a strategic roadmap to improve the government’s delivery and quality of basic education. Implemented and assessed by the Department of Education. Each level of governance (school, division, region, and national) will formulate its own basic education policies that will work to meet the goals of the BEDP. Department of Education’s planning offices review the policies and plans of each governance level to ensure congruency with the national plan. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2023–2027):† Mandated to prevent and suppress human trafficking, including online sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and provide services to survivors, including rehabilitation, and reintegration into society through four key result areas: (1) Prevention, (2) Protection and Reintegration, (3) Prosecution and Law Enforcement, and (4) Partnership and Networking. Chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and co-chaired by the Secretary of DSWD, employs a multi-stakeholder approach to fight human trafficking.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Philippines funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs were insufficient to address the needs of children engaged in drug trafficking given their heightened vulnerability.</p> <p>† Program is funded by the Government of the Philippines. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p>Anti-Child Labor Programs: The Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program† is a DOLE anti-child labor program that implements local awareness-raising campaigns, institutes child labor-monitoring mechanisms, and requires neighborhoods to develop child labor elimination plans. Includes a provision of livelihood assistance to parents of child laborers, Sagip Batang Manggagawa, and Project Angel Tree. Project Angel Tree is a social service with local government agency benefactors, known as “angels,” who provide educational supplies to communities. In 2023, 12,567 child laborers were provided with school supplies, hygiene kits, food packs, grocery items, clothes, toys, and free services such as haircuts, medical and dental check-ups, entertainment, and psychosocial services. The Livelihood for Parents of Child Laborers (<i>Kabuhayan para sa Magulang ng Batang Manggagawa</i>)† is a DOLE program that provides livelihood assistance to parents, guardians, or other family members of child laborers. Seeks to prevent and eliminate child labor by providing necessary materials to start a livelihood undertaking. During reporting year, a total of 16,818 parents of child laborers were provided with livelihood assistance. The <i>Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program</i> (Conditional Cash Transfer Program) is a DSWD national poverty reduction program that provides conditional grants, local awareness-raising campaigns, and child labor-monitoring mechanisms to assist poor families with children’s access to health care, adequate nutrition, and education. Research was unable to determine activities undertaken by the <i>Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program</i> during the reporting period.</p>
	<p>Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood and Other Developmental Interventions for Child Laborers (SHIELD Against Child Labor):‡ DSWD-led project implemented in 14 <i>barangays</i> in Catanauan, Labo, Jose Panganiban, Paracale, Kananga, and Ormoc City, with support from the ILO CARING Gold Mining Project. Comprises three components: Child Labor Local Registry; Helpdesk and Convergence of Services; and Advocacy, Organizing, and Capacity Building. Focuses on areas with a high child labor incidence rate, with interventions based on data from the Child Labor Local Registry. Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the small-scale gold mining, deep-sea fishing, and sugarcane industries. During the reporting year, provided technical assistance and orientation to 345 local government units. Also identified 19,629 child laborers in the profiling system and provided assistance to 3,131 of them.</p>
	<p>Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP):‡ RRPTP is a DSWD and Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking program that provides recovery and reintegration services to survivors of human trafficking and raises awareness in vulnerable communities. Includes the National Referral System, which strengthens coordination among agencies providing services to human trafficking victims using standard referral and reporting forms. During the first quarter of the reporting year, research showed that the RRPTP served 138 child victims of trafficking.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

The Philippines permits the widespread use of contract labor for workers in all industries, including agriculture. In rural agricultural areas, employers rely on “manpower cooperatives” to supply a significant amount of labor. Workers in these cooperatives are legally prohibited from forming unions. Workers who are unable to form unions are unable to engage in bargaining for wages and other terms and conditions at work, which keeps wages low and perpetuates the poverty that drives child labor in the Philippines.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



RWANDA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Rwanda made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government published a new national strategy on the elimination of child labor, which aims to strengthen and expand social protection services for survivors, increase awareness of child labor issues, and improve law enforcement capacity and coordination. It also held a nationwide awareness-raising campaign to educate the public on the risks of human trafficking, which reached over 50,000 people. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Rwanda is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because the government provided material support to, and coordinated with, the March 23 Movement, a non-state armed group which forcibly recruited and used child soldiers in the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Furthermore, the Rwandan army deployed troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo to provide direct military support to the March 23 Movement as the non-state armed group expanded their control over Rutshuru and neighboring Masisi territories. Rwanda’s laws do not meet international standards as education is only compulsory up to age 12, leaving children ages 12–15 vulnerable to child labor since they are not legally required to attend school nor legally permitted to work. In addition, education is only free for the first 6 years of school even though international standards call for 9 years of free schooling. Lastly, the labor inspectorate’s lack of financial and human resources may impede its efforts to protect children from the worst forms of child labor.

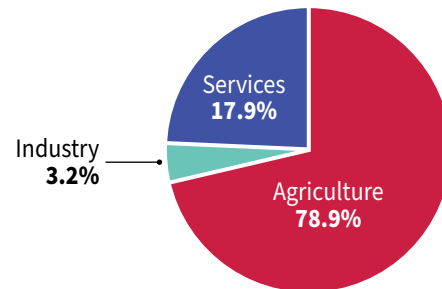


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	6 to 14	5.4% (156,522)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	6 to 14	89.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	4.9%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Rwanda are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced domestic work. Children also perform dangerous tasks in informal mining, including carrying heavy loads.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including carrying heavy loads[†] and wielding machetes, herding and caring for animals, fishing,[†] and in the production of tea, including applying fertilizers,[†] carrying heavy loads,[†] planting, plucking tea leaves, and weeding. Forestry activities.



Industry

Construction,[†] mining,[†] and quarrying.



Services

Street work, including collecting scrap metal,[†] lifting and transporting heavy loads,[†] begging, and vending. Repair of motorcycles and motor vehicles. Domestic work.[†]



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking and forced labor in agricultural work, mining, domestic work, and begging.

[†] 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.

Reports indicate that the Government of Rwanda provided material support to, and coordinated with, the March 23 Movement (M23), an armed group that recruited or used child soldiers in the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Additional reports further indicate that the Rwandan army has deployed troops to DRC to provide direct military support to M23 as they expand their control over Rutshuru and neighboring Masisi territories.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Rwanda’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Increase the compulsory education age from 12 to 16 to align with the minimum age for work.

Establish by law free basic public education.

Enforcement

End support for non-state armed groups that recruit children, ensure children are not detained in dangerous conditions, and ensure perpetrators of child labor crimes, including child soldiering, are held accountable.

Ensure the government employs at least 125 labor inspectors to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 4.99 million workers.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate has sufficient resources, personnel, and training to identify the characteristics of child labor, enforce child labor laws, and perform worksite inspections.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement has adequate resources to investigate, prosecute, and convict child labor crimes, and has sufficient training and capacity to address the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking.

Cease the practice of detaining and physically abusing children who work on the street and ensure that any children in detention centers receive adequate screening and services and are not subjected to abuse or unhealthy detention conditions.

Improve the ability of law enforcement agencies to share data relevant to the worst forms of child labor.

Coordination

Ensure that coordinating bodies receive adequate resources and training to address both domestic and transnational human trafficking.

Government Policies

Ensure that actions are taken to implement policies related to child labor and that data on these activities are published annually.

Social Programs

Remove barriers to education, such as language barriers for non-English speakers, costs for uniforms and school supplies, and unofficial school fees, and ensure access for children with disabilities.

Expand existing social programs to address all relevant sectors in which child labor is known to occur, including agriculture and informal mining.

Expand services for human trafficking survivors, including programs for long-term care in shelters.

Ensure actions are taken to implement key social programs and data on these activities are published annually.

Ensure that service providers are properly trained to identify victims of human trafficking.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Research found that children living in mining communities often drop out of school and work in abandoned artisanal mines with their parents. Additionally, homeless and orphaned children, children with disabilities, and girls are at particular risk of being exploited in human trafficking.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the Ministry of Education established a policy that provides free basic education for 12 years, of which the first 9 are compulsory, in practice, the cost of uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees may preclude some families from sending their children to school. The law also establishes English as the primary language of instruction, which may create a barrier to education for children whose first language is not English. Furthermore, children with disabilities face particular difficulties accessing education and reports indicate that many are likely to not attend school or to drop-out because schools lack the capacity to accommodate special needs.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Rwanda has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Rwanda's laws do not meet international standards on compulsory education age because the law stipulates that education is only compulsory up to age 12. In addition, free public education laws do not meet international standards because education is only free for the first 6 years of schooling.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 5 of the Labor Law; Articles 2, 3, and 7–9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight Against Child Labor
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 6 of the Labor Law
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 6 of the Labor Law; Articles 4–6 of the Ministerial Order Determining the List of Worst Forms of Child Labor; Kigali City Guidelines 2012-02; Articles 7–9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to the Prevention and Fight against Child Labor
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 3.25 and 7 of the Labor Law; Article 178 of the Penal Code; Article 3.4(a), 3.6, 3.21 and 18 of the Law on Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, and 18–20 of the Law on Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons; Articles 225, 251, and 259–262 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Article 31 of the Law Relating to the Protection of the Child; Article 9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight against Child Labor
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 3.2 and 24 of the Law on Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons; Articles 211, 259 and 260 of the Penal Code; Articles 34 and 35 of the Law Relating to the Protection of the Child; Article 9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight against Child Labor
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 220 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Article 9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight against Child Labor; Article 263 of the Law Determining Offenses and Penalties in General
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 5 of Presidential Order 72/01 Establishing Army General Statutes; Article 7 of Presidential Order 32/01 Establishing Rwanda Defense Forces Special Statute; Article 50 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 5 of Presidential Order 72/01 Establishing Army General Statutes; Articles 99(8) and 100(2) of the Law Determining Offenses and Penalties in General

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 221 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 12 Years		Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Articles 55–58 of the Law Determining the Organization of Education
Free Public Education		Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Articles 55–58 of the Law Determining the Organization of Education

* Country has no conscription

While Rwanda has adopted policies to implement 12 years of fee-free basic education and compulsory education through age 15, the 2020 Law Determining the Organization of Education stipulates that primary education is free and compulsory only through the first 6 years of schooling and states that education is compulsory only up to age 12. The law also establishes English as the primary language of instruction, which may create a barrier to education for children whose first language is not English. Furthermore, the age up to which education is compulsory makes children between ages 12 and 15 vulnerable to child labor because they are not legally required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Rwanda took actions to address child labor. However, an insufficient allocation of human resources and inadequate screening and identification of human trafficking victims may have hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA): Enforces labor laws, including laws on child labor, in coordination with other government entities at the national and district level. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, MIFOTRA reintegrates children withdrawn from child labor with their families and enrolls them in school. Furthermore, it mobilizes other ministries and agencies who provide social services, including the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the National Child Development Agency, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Local Government, to take an active role in child labor law enforcement.

Ministry of Interior: Oversees the Rwandan National Police, the Rwandan Investigation Bureau, and the National Public Prosecution Authority. The Rwandan National Police enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor through its Child Protection Unit and Anti-Trafficking Unit. The Rwandan Investigation Bureau, in turn, conducts criminal investigations, including into the worst forms of child labor, and through its Directorate for Anti-Gender-Based Violence, assists victims of the worst forms of child labor through anti-gender-based violence officers at each of the country’s 78 police stations. Both the National Police and Investigation Bureau operate a free hotline to report these incidents. Additionally, the National Public Prosecution Authority is responsible for prosecuting violations of labor laws, including laws on child labor, and through its Anti-Gender-Based Violence unit dedicates 12 prosecutors to work with an additional 60 prosecutors trained in handling relevant cases at the district level.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

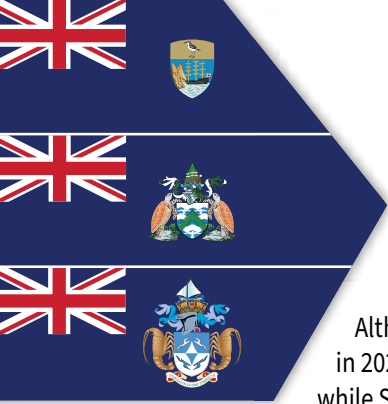
Data on the number of labor inspectors, the number of worksite inspections conducted, and whether child labor violations were found in 2023 is **unknown**. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions initiated, or perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Rwanda has established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, inadequate training and resources to address human trafficking hindered coordination efforts.</p>	<p>Interministerial Steering Committee on Child Labor: Coordinates government efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, reviews child labor laws, advocates for the inclusion of child labor policies in national development plans, oversees the implementation of child labor interventions, and conducts field visits to assess the prevalence of child labor and raise awareness of child labor. Led by MIFOTRA. During the reporting period, MIFOTRA and the Ministry of Local Government held bi-weekly meetings to better coordinate efforts between labor inspectors, local leaders, and local child labor elimination committees.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Rwanda has established policies related to child labor. However, some of these policies were not implemented.</p> <p><i>* Policy published during the reporting period. ‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Strategy on Elimination of Child Labor:* Lays out six strategic principles aimed at strengthening the implementation activities of all stakeholders engaged in the coordinated effort to eliminate child labor, including increasing social protection measures, improving community and stakeholders’ engagement through awareness and capacity building, mainstreaming child labor preventions across sectors and planning processes, and by strengthening case management, law enforcement, and coordination. The implementation of the Strategy is led by MIFOTRA, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), and the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with partner organizations.</p> <p>Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy (2019–2024): Aims to improve coordination and implementation issues in child protection, including strategies to address child labor. Focuses on key areas of identity and nationality; family and alternative care; health, survival, and standard of living; education; protection; justice; and participation.</p> <p>Anti-Human Trafficking Action Plan: The Action Plan focuses efforts on human trafficking prevention, victim protection and assistance, prosecution, and strategic partnerships with various stakeholders.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>In 2023, Rwanda funded and participated in programs that include the goal of preventing or eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including agriculture and mining.</p> <p><i>‡ Program is funded by the Government of Rwanda. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Programs to Combat Child Labor and Raise Awareness:‡ Includes Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion’s (MIGEPROF) campaign to teach parents and community leaders to recognize risk factors for human trafficking and to identify victims; and the Friends of the Family Program (<i>Inshuti Z’Umuryango</i>), which trains volunteers to prevent and respond to child protection issues and establishes monitoring committees at various levels to address child labor. While the Friends of the Family Program remained active during the reporting period, research was unable to identify specific activities undertaken to address child labor.</p> <p>Victim Assistance Programs:‡ Musanze Child Rehabilitation Center in the Northern Province assists children separated from armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Gitagata Center provides education, vocational training, psychosocial support, and aims to reunite former street children with their families. Isange One Stop Centers, located in 44 hospitals and district capitals, assist survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking.</p> <p>It Takes Every Rwandan to End Child Exploitation:‡ Advocacy campaign against child labor and sexual abuse of children supported by MIGEPROF and World Vision Rwanda.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



SAINT HELENA, ASCENSION, AND TRISTA DA CUNHA

NO ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha, in 2023, the government made no advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. In addition, while Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha have established a mechanism for the enforcement of laws related to child labor, Ascension has not. Labor inspections are a key tool for identifying child labor violations, and their absence makes children more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Further, Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha lack legislation to criminally prohibit forced labor, debt bondage, slavery, and child trafficking.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Establish a minimum age for work of at least age 15 in Ascension.

Establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work and identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children in Ascension.

Ensure that forced labor, debt bondage, and slavery are criminally prohibited.

Criminally prohibit the trafficking of children for labor exploitation.

Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities in Ascension.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Establish a functioning labor inspectorate on Ascension for the enforcement of labor laws and regulations, including laws pertaining to child labor.













LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Each United Kingdom (UK) overseas territory has its own constitution, which sets out its system of government and its relationship with the UK, and provides for a governor or commissioner, an elected legislature, and ministers that are responsible for domestic affairs, such as internal security (police), immigration, education, and healthcare. Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha are considered one territory, but they are each self-governing. However, all three territories share a governor and attorney general. These territories incorporate English Law Ordinances to the extent permitted by local circumstances and subject to modification by local laws; several Saint Helena laws

SAINT HELENA, ASCENSION, AND TRISTAN DA CUNHA | NO ADVANCEMENT

also apply to Tristan da Cunha. Under Article 35(4) of the ILO Constitution, when the UK ratifies a Convention, the Territory must consider if it will accept the Convention. If the Convention is accepted, it is considered applicable to that Territory. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and ILO C.182 have been extended to and accepted by Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha. The Governments of Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha have each established laws and regulations related to child labor. However, the laws prohibiting forced labor in Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha are also not sufficient because debt bondage and slavery are not criminally prohibited.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Sections 157B and 158 of the Welfare of Children Ordinance (Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 157A, 157B, and 158 of the Welfare of Children Ordinance (Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Section 157B of the Welfare of Children Ordinance (Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha)
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 8 (Saint Helena), 125 (Ascension), and 190 (Tristan da Cunha) of the Constitution Order.
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 57–60 of the Sexual Offenses Act (Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 47–51 of the Sexual Offenses Act (Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha); Sections 145, 147, 157A, and 157C of the Welfare of Children Ordinance (Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha); Sections 48 and 50 of Ascension's Child Welfare Ordinance (Ascension)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Sections 157A and 157C of the Welfare of Children Ordinance (Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Section 34 of the Education Ordinance (Saint Helena); Ascension Island Education Policy (Ascension); Section 3 of the Education By-Law (Tristan da Cunha)
Free Public Education		Sections 16 (Saint Helena), 132 (Ascension), and 198 (Tristan da Cunha) of the Constitution Order; Section 43 of the Education Ordinance (Saint Helena); Ascension Island Education Policy (Ascension)

* Country has no conscription

† Country has no standing military

While Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha meet the international standard for the minimum age for work, Ascension does not because it has set the minimum age for work at age 14, which is below the international standard of age 15. Ascension allows children to work in part-time jobs that meet the criteria of light work laid out in the ordinance. Ascension also has Youth Trainee Agreements, which act as apprenticeships for children who leave school at age 14 and which serve as a continuation of their education. Full-time employment can only be offered to those over the age of 18. Furthermore, while Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha have set their minimum age for hazardous work at age 18 and have identified hazardous occupations for children, Ascension has not set either a minimum age for hazardous work or developed a list of hazardous occupations for children.

Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha have a law against the use of children in illicit activities, but this law does not apply to Ascension. The laws prohibiting forced labor in Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha are also not sufficient because debt bondage and slavery are not criminally prohibited. In addition, while the UK Sexual Offenses Act, which is applicable to this territory, prohibits trafficking for sexual exploitation, it does not specifically address the trafficking of children, and there are no laws prohibiting the trafficking of children for labor exploitation.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha have established an institutional mechanism for the enforcement of laws related to child labor. However, the absence of a labor inspectorate on Ascension may impede the enforcement of child labor laws there.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

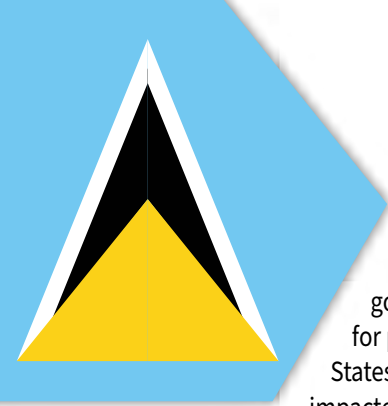
Labor Regulating Authority: Protects and promotes rights of employees in Saint Helena and Tristan da Cunha. Also responsible for investigating claims made by employees.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

As there is no evidence of a child labor problem, there appears to be no need for policies, programs, or a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports*



SAINT LUCIA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Saint Lucia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased funding for social protection programs by approximately \$2.2 million dollars, including for programs to support youth at risk of child labor. The government also participated in CariSECURE 2.0, a United States Agency for International Development-funded initiative that focuses on reducing the number of young people impacted by human trafficking. However, Saint Lucia has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, and its laws do not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It also did not publicly release information on its labor or criminal law enforcement efforts.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	7.5% (2,017)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	99.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	8.2%

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Lucia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Saint Lucia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.

Criminally prohibit using a child for commercial sexual exploitation.

Criminally prohibit the military recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Saint Lucia, including non-citizens.

Enforcement

Ensure that adequate resources, including funding, are allocated to the labor inspectorate to enforce labor laws and conduct training

Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including the number of labor inspectors employed, labor inspectorate funding, the number of inspections performed (including routine, targeted, and unannounced), the number of child labor violations found, whether penalties for child labor violations were imposed and collected, and whether inspectors received training.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Collect and publish criminal law enforcement data, including whether investigations into the worst forms of child labor were conducted, whether penalties were imposed for worst forms of child labor crimes, and the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted.

Employ at least 7 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 106,100 workers.

Government Policies

Adopt policies that not only address trafficking in persons but also address all worst forms of child labor.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education and make it accessible for all children by ensuring that gang violence does not affect school attendance.

Design, implement, fund, and participate in social programs that specifically target and assist children engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

General gang-related violence might hinder some children from attending school in select localities. Children who do not attend school are vulnerable to engaging in child labor.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Lucia has not ratified a key international convention concerning child labor, ILO C.138 Minimum Age for Work. In addition, Saint Lucia’s laws do not criminally prohibit the use of children for commercial sexual exploitation.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Article 122 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 122(2) of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✗	Articles 126(b) and 214 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 4 of the Constitution; Article 6 of the Labor Code; Sections 3, 5, and 10(c) of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Section 3 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Sections 3, 5, and 10(c) of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Section 3 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Article 141 of the Criminal Code; Sections 2, 5, and 7 of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Sections 3 and 5 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 141 and 560 of the Criminal Code; Section 13 of the Drugs (Prevention and Misuse) Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 27 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 16 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

† Country has no standing military

Saint Lucia has not determined by national law the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. The law allows a government minister to establish a hazardous work list by regulation, but research could not determine whether a list has been established. The use of children for commercial sexual exploitation is also not criminally prohibited. In addition, the law providing for free basic education does not meet international standards because it permits schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Saint Lucia but are not citizens, though in practice tuition fees may be covered in certain circumstances.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

It is unknown whether labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Saint Lucia took actions to address child labor in 2023.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Service, Home Affairs, Labor and Gender Affairs: Investigates labor violations and enforces child labor laws through labor inspections conducted by its Department of Labor. Criminal violations are referred to the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force for investigation and then to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for prosecution. In 2023, employees reported that the Department of Labor had insufficient staff.

Royal Saint Lucia Police Force: Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Through its Vulnerable Persons Unit, in collaboration with the Division of Human Services, investigates cases of child labor, abuse, and neglect. The Vulnerable Persons Unit consists of 2 units of 12 officers each and uses a specific manual to investigate crimes related to children. Three officers are also dedicated to trafficking in persons investigations.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Saint Lucia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Human Trafficking Task Force: Coordinates the identification and referral of human trafficking cases among law enforcement, social services, and immigration officials. Includes public servants and representatives from, but not limited to, the Department of Labor, police, and victim services NGOs, and is led by the Department of Home Affairs. Accepts complaints, including those about child labor, from government agencies, as well as civil society. The task force uses established standard operating procedure to organize resources for victim care and to launch criminal and legal proceedings against suspected perpetrators. In 2023, the Human Trafficking Task Force coordinated with regional counterparts on investigations, victim support, and repatriations, and met monthly.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Saint Lucia established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p>Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan (2023–2026): Ensures that the division of tasks and roles of different agencies are clear, to help coordinate all counter-trafficking measures.</p> <p>National Social Protection Policy (2014–2024): Aims to ensure that the government addresses all dimensions of poverty, including vulnerable populations and children. In 2023, the government increased the budget to approximately \$958,000 dollars, nearly a 30 percent increase from the previous year, in order to support efforts to strengthen social interventions and deliver public assistance.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Saint Lucia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not fully cover all sectors where child labor is present.</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP): Funded by the Caribbean Development Bank and overseen by the Ministry of Education to improve education policy and legislation. The project recently graduated 75 teachers from a certificate course in special needs education, provided equipment for 4 special education centers, and made climate-resilient renovations to 3 primary schools. The program is also piloting the formation of parent-teacher-community associations at several schools and drafted legislation that would raise the minimum age for work and the compulsory school age from age 15 to age 17. In November 2023, the draft legislation was presented to the public for comments.</p> <p>Basic Needs Trust Fund: Caribbean Development Bank flagship poverty reduction program. In 2023, funding was allocated for improvements to schools and an early childhood development center.</p> <p>Caribbean Basin Security Initiative:* United States Agency for International Development-funded initiative with three programs. Implemented by the United Nations Development Program, in partnership with various Saint Lucian government agencies, CariSECURE 2.0 focuses on reducing the number of young people affected by human trafficking, by improving identification, investigation, and prosecution of cases. The Youth Resilience, Improvement and Empowerment Activity (YRIE) and Eastern and Southern Caribbean Opportunities to Advance and Support Youth for Success will focus on reducing youth involvement in crime and violence, as well as juvenile justice reform. Under YRIE, the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment identified gaps in Saint Lucia's social services referral systems and trained officers on the systems to improve delivery of social services to at-risk youth. Launched on February 24, 2023.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in 2023, the government made minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. Multiple government agencies participated in "Operation Carisica," a joint training with other Caribbean countries to detect crimes like migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The government increased its operations to identify and investigate potential labor trafficking, including through inspections and by distributing materials to the public to raise awareness. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' laws do not meet international standards because the use of children for prostitution is not prohibited. In addition, the minimum age of 14 for hazardous work falls below international standards and there is no legislation prohibiting the use, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production of drugs. The government also did not publicly release information on its labor law enforcement efforts.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work and identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children.

Criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution.

Criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children for illicit activities, including in the production of drugs.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including non-citizens.

Enforcement

Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations.

Increase resources, including personnel and vehicles, for the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit to expand its capacity to address human trafficking throughout the country.

Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including information on the number of inspectors, inspectorate funding, the number of worksite inspections, the number of unannounced inspections conducted, training, and the number of child labor law violations.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural communities, by providing public transportation and by addressing the bullying of LGBTQIA+ students.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

LGBTQIA+ youth experience stigma and discrimination. NGO reporting indicates that LGBTQIA+ students endure physical and verbal bullying, sexual harassment, and violence, leading some to leave school early.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

All children in the country are able to access education; however, inadequate public transportation for children in rural villages makes it necessary to walk long distances to school, a hardship that may make attending school difficult. Children out of school are vulnerable to engaging in child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' laws do not meet international standards, including inadequate hazardous work protections and a lack of legislation prohibiting the use, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production of drugs.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Article 8 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 14 Years		Schedule, Part I, Articles 1, 2, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Part I, Sections 3 and 4, and Articles 1, 2, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act; Section VI(37) of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2017
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Chapter XII, Part 207 of the Criminal Code; Articles 2 and 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2 and 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 2 and 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Chapter VIII, Parts 130 and 131 of the Criminal Code; Section 15 of the Cybercrime Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A*	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 2 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Articles 14–16 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

† Country has no standing military

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not meet the international standard for hazardous work for children because the law allows children ages 14 to 17 to perform industrial activities, including mining and construction, and does not adequately protect children from hazardous work that may jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. The government also has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for all children under age 18. In addition, laws have not been established that prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including drug production. The law does not fully meet international standards for the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children, as it does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution. Moreover, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Laws providing for free basic education do not meet international standards because they permit schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines but are not citizens.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has established relevant institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor: Enforces child labor laws through its Department of Labor and refers victims to appropriate social services. If the Department finds a criminal violation, it forwards the case to the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force. Conducts inspections at businesses and workplaces, together with the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU), to ensure labor laws are followed. In 2023, the government increased its operations to identify and investigate potential labor trafficking, launching five labor trafficking investigations and increasing patrols, inspections, and monitoring in areas frequented by perpetrators and victims.

Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force: Makes criminal arrests, including those involving the worst forms of child labor. Addresses human trafficking through its ATIPU; refers survivors to appropriate social services and funds financial requests made by ATIPU. In 2023, the ATIPU used live radio programs, television interviews, social media, school visits, distributed brochures to raise awareness about human trafficking, and had their funding increased by the government.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

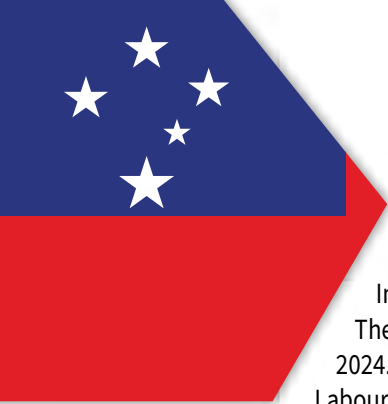
In 2023, an **unknown** number of labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **0** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **0** prosecutions, and convicted **0** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for social programs to address child labor. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines funded and participated in a program that may contribute to preventing child labor.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.</i></p>	<p>Zero Hunger Trust Fund:† \$132,800 government program that provides textbooks, cash for the purchase of school supplies, and daily meals to students in grades 4 and 5 in 12 primary schools. Seeks to alleviate poverty and improve the standard of living of primary school-age children through its "Adopt a Classroom" program. In 2023, the first cohort of students completed the 2023 Caribbean Primary Entrance Assessment, and 12 primary schools were supported by school feeding programs, along with other educational supports.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



SAMOA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Samoa made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

In January 2023, Samoa's Labor and Employment Relations Amendment Act was endorsed by Parliament.

The Amendment empowers labor inspectors to conduct unannounced inspections and took effect in February 2024. The government also approved the National Strategy and Action Plan toward the Elimination of Child

Labour in All Its Forms, which outlines strategies to strengthen the legal and policy framework related to preventing child labor. Additionally, the government released the results of its 2022 Labor Force Survey, which included interviews with over 60,000 children and information about child labor in the country. However, Samoa lacks laws that prohibit using, procuring, or offering children for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	12.6% (6,567)
Boys		15.0%
Girls		10.0%
Urban		5.0%
Rural		14.1%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	38.1% (4,283)
Boys		47.5%
Girls		28.1%
Urban		25.7%
Rural		40.9%
Attending School	5 to 14	93.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	14.0%

Children in Samoa are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including handling and/or transporting heavy loads, working at dangerous heights, and exposure to high temperatures. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and animal husbandry.



Services

Street work, including vending, garbage scavenging, and domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Handling and/or transporting heavy loads; working at dangerous heights; and exposure to high temperatures.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Samoa's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Establish by law free basic public education.

Ensure that the Labor and Employment Relations Regulations specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken and define the activities that are permitted.

Ensure that the types of work that children perform in Samoa, including street work and vending, are prohibited for children under age 18.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits using, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits commercial sexual exploitation of children ages 16 to 18.

Ensure that laws prohibiting forced labor criminalize slavery and practices similar to slavery or debt bondage.

Enforcement

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts undertaken, including the number of child labor investigations initiated, the number of child labor penalties imposed, and the number of criminal law enforcement convictions secured.

Social Programs

Institute programs designed to address child labor in street work, including vending.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Samoa's 2022 Labor Force Survey found that males living in rural areas are at a higher risk of engaging in child labor, compared to females and to children who live in urban areas.













BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in rural areas face barriers accessing education due to a lack of reliable transportation options. Additionally, parents with little to no income may not be able to afford to send their children to school.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Samoa has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Samoa's laws and regulations do not meet international standards on the prohibition on slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor; or the prohibition on commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Provision 32, Subsection 1 and 2 of the Labor and Employment Relations Amendment
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Provision 32, Subsection 3 of the Labor and Employment Relations Amendment
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Provision 32, Subsection 3 of the Labor and Employment Relations Amendment; Article 21 of the Labor and Employment Relations Regulations; Government of Samoa Public Notice on Hazardous Work for Children
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 8 of the Constitution; Provision 10 of the Labor and Employment Relations Amendment; Section 157 of the Crimes Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 155–157 of the Crimes Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 73, 74, 82, and 157 of the Crimes Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 8 of the International Criminal Court Act
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 2 (Section 2) of the Education Amendment Act
Free Public Education		

† Country has no standing military

In January 2023, Samoa's Labor and Employment Relations Amendment was endorsed by Parliament and took effect in February 2024. The Amendment empowers labor inspectors to conduct unannounced inspections and permits children between ages 13 and 14 to engage in light work for a limited number of hours; however, as with previous versions, it did not specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken and furthermore did not define the activities that are permitted. The types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover street work, including vending. In addition, there is no free basic education for children in Samoa as established by law, increasing the risk of children's involvement in child labor.

Laws prohibiting forced labor are not sufficient because, while they do criminalize forced labor, they do not also criminalize slavery and practices similar to slavery or debt bondage. Samoa does not meet the international standard for the prohibition of child commercial sexual exploitation, because the Government of Samoa's Crimes Act does not protect children ages 16 to 18. Research found no evidence of laws that ban using, procuring, or offering of children for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs. Samoa also does not meet the international standard for prohibiting non-state military recruitment because its International Criminal Court Act does not apply to children ages 15 to 18.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

It is unknown whether enforcement agencies in Samoa took actions to address child labor in 2023.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Labor (MCIL): Enforces the Labor and Employment Relations Act, which includes investigating complaints of child labor law violations. Refers cases to the Ministry of Police and the Office of the Attorney General for enforcement.

Ministry of Police, Prisons, and Corrections Services: Enforces criminal laws related to child labor. Refers cases for prosecution.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, 8 labor inspectors conducted 155 worksite inspections, but found 0 child labor violations. The government did not conduct investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor or prosecute and convict perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Samoa established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Child Labor Taskforce: Comprises the MCIL; Ministry of Police, Prisons, and Corrections; Ministry of Women, Community, and Social Development; and Ministry of Education, Sports, and Culture. Aims to reduce the prevalence of child vendors in towns and cities through patrol sweeps and by conducting outreach activities. Formerly the Child Vending Task Force. During the reporting period, the Taskforce, along with other government stakeholders, launched the National Strategy and Action Plan toward the Elimination of Child Labor in All Its Forms.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Samoa established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was developed during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>National Strategy and Action Plan toward the Elimination of Child Labour in All Its Forms (2024–2027):† Outlines strategies to strengthen the legal and policy framework related to child labor, strengthen community engagement with families and children identified as engaged in hazardous street vending, and enhance data collection and regular reporting systems. During the reporting period, The National Acton Plan was formulated during a national consultation with stakeholders and through consultation with the ILO.</p> <p>National Child Care and Protection Policy (2020–2030): Sets a strategic and high-level direction for child protection in Samoa. Led by the Ministry of Women, Community, and Social Development. Includes policies to prevent, eliminate, and address all forms of child labor and child trafficking, as well as to regulate, monitor, and evaluate child labor in the formal and informal business and employment sectors. During the reporting period, the Ministry held a forum with civil society organizations and community representatives to raise awareness on children's rights in Samoa.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Samoa funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not assist children engaged in street work, including vending.

† Program is funded by the Government of Samoa.

The Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme and Government Grant to Mission and Public Schools:†

Provide financial support to families to assist with ancillary school fees, supplies, and equipment that their children may need during the school year. These grants were active during the reporting period, with the Government of Samoa distributing approximately \$6.5 million in funding for education.

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, São Tomé and Príncipe made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government approved a new national policy on social protection, which includes strategies to address extreme poverty and prevent child labor. Additionally, the government continued to fund three centers run by non-governmental organizations that assist vulnerable families, orphans, and children living and working on the street. However, minimum age protections do not meet international standards as the Labor Code does not apply to children working outside of a formal labor relationship, such as children who are self-employed. Moreover, limited financial resources hampered law enforcement efforts, and policies do not address all worst forms of child labor in the country.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	14.2% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	92.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	23.3%

Children in São Tomé and Príncipe are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in construction and street work.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming,† including weeding and fertilizing.† Fishing,† including line and hook fishing.



Industry

Construction, † carpentry, and woodworking.



Services

Working in shops, car repair, car washing, restaurants, and bars.† Street work,† including begging and street vending.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in São Tomé and Príncipe's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Criminalize the use of all children under the age of 18 for prostitution.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits practices similar to slavery or criminally prohibits debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor.

Adopt legislation defining the activities and conditions permissible for light work.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Require that children who are under age 14 and working under Article 269 are permitted to work only in schools for general, vocational, or technical education or in other training institutions.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Establish a minimum age law for voluntary military recruitment that meets international standards.

Apply minimum age for work laws to all children in formal and informal work relationships, including children who are self-employed.

Enforcement

Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating targeted inspections based on analysis of data identifying risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents, and ensure that inspections are conducted in the informal sector in which child labor is known to occur.

Equip labor inspectors with adequate resources to conduct inspections, including office facilities, fuel, and transportation, all disbursed in a timely and efficient manner, and ensure that labor inspectors receive adequate technical training to strengthen their ability to perform their duties.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts undertaken, including data regarding imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.

Equip criminal investigators with the necessary resources, including transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out investigations, and ensure that they receive training to better address violations of the worst forms of child labor.

Publicize the complaint mechanism sufficiently.

Coordination

Ensure that the Anti-Child Labor Committee is active and able to carry out its intended mandate.

Government Policies

Adopt policies to address the worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Increase access to education for children with disabilities, including creating programs that support children with mobility and hearing difficulties.

Implement programs to address the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation.

Implement programs that specifically address child labor in agriculture.

Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, specifically for at-capacity support centers that lack the resources to fully support exploited children.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children in poverty often work to assist their families. The highest prevalence rate of child labor in São Tomé and Príncipe is in the Norte-Oeste region, where 15 percent of all children are engaged in child labor.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Reports indicate that children with disabilities, especially those with mobility or hearing difficulties, may have limited access to education. In addition, an insufficient number of teachers hinders education access in the country.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

São Tomé and Príncipe has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict and UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. In addition, São Tomé and Príncipe lacks minimum age protections for children working outside of a formal employment relationship.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 268(2) and 269 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 273(2), 274, and 536 of the Labor Code; Article 171 of the Civil Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Hazardous Work List in Annex IV of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 159 and 160 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 160 and 181 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 179–182 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 279, 280, and 289 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 1 of Decree-Law 3/83
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Articles 11 and 12 of the Basic Education System Law
Free Public Education		Article 12 of the Basic Education System Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The Labor Code permits children who have completed their compulsory education to perform light work that is not deemed harmful to their health or development; however, legislation specifying the activities and conditions in which light work may be undertaken has yet to be adopted. Article 269 does not require that work done by those under age 14 be done in a school or as part of a training program, which is required to meet the exemption from the minimum age standard in ILO Convention 138, Article 6. Minimum age protections contained in the Labor Code also do not apply to children working outside of a formal labor relationship, such as children who are self-employed. Although it has no law establishing a minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment, the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe indicates that a written procedure allows 17-year-olds to volunteer for military service with a parent's permission. Furthermore, laws prohibiting forced labor are not sufficient as they do not criminalize practices similar to slavery or debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor. Article 179 of the Penal Code criminalizes the use of minors between the ages of 14 and 17 in prostitution but there is no statute that criminalizes the use of a child under age 14 for prostitution.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in São Tomé and Príncipe took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs: Hosts the labor inspectorate which enforces labor laws, including child labor laws. Funding for the inspectorate has not been disbursed in a timely manner, interfering with the inspectorate's ability to provide adequate resources and training.

Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Human Rights (MOJ): Enforces and prosecutes criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor through the Judiciary Police, Public Prosecutor's office, and the courts.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, 4 labor inspectors conducted 63 worksite inspections, finding no child labor violations. No investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, nor were there any convictions or penalties imposed for the worst forms of child labor.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

São Tomé and Príncipe established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

Anti-Child Labor Committee: Leads efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. No activities were undertaken by the committee during the reporting period due to a lack of resources.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

São Tomé and Príncipe established a policy related to child labor. However, this policy does not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

National Policy and Strategy for Social Protection (2014–2023): Established social protection strategies aimed at eliminating extreme poverty over a 10-year time frame, reinforcing the rights of children, and addressing child labor. This policy guided the Directorate of Social Protection and Solidarity as it provided counseling and integration services to children identified through labor inspections and criminal investigations. During the reporting period, partnered with UNICEF and World Bank to provide training to families on managerial and business skills. A new National Policy and Strategy for Social Protection (2024–2028) was approved in November 2023.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>São Tomé and Príncipe funded programs that may contribute to preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not cover all worst forms of child labor, such as the commercial sexual exploitation of children.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe.</i></p>	<p>Support Centers†: Three government-supported centers run by NGOs, operating in areas with high concentrations of poor families, orphans, and street children. Two of the centers receive direct financial support from the government while the third receives in-kind support as food donations. Teach income-generating skills. Support centers were active and operating at capacity during the reporting period.</p> <p>Programa Familia: Funded by the World Bank and disbursed by the Santomean government, this program requires that children are in school to qualify. Provides financial stipends every other month of \$57 to 2,830 families.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

SENEGAL

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Senegal made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The president issued executive orders establishing a national committee to increase regulation, oversight, and inspection of traditional Koranic schools to prevent forced child begging. The government also provided food, furniture, and school supplies to Koranic schools to not engage in child begging. In addition, it continued a program that provided support to children living and working in the streets through placement in care centers, family tracing and mediation, and follow-up services to ensure their reintegration. The Anti-Trafficking Taskforce, in collaboration with international organizations and foreign donors, finalized standard operating procedures for law enforcement on the identification and investigation of trafficking cases. Finally, Senegal initiated an analysis of the informal labor market, targeting four major sectors in which children commonly work in dangerous conditions: fishing, mining, begging, and domestic work. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, its laws do not meet international standards because the use of a child in prostitution is not criminalized and the prohibition of the use of children in illicit activities lacks criminal penalties. Additionally, its forced begging provisions do not prohibit children from seeking alms, leaving some 180,000 children who may be subjected to forced begging without recourse. Lastly, although the government identified 138 children as potential trafficking victims and an additional 344 children as forced begging victims, it did not prosecute or convict any suspected perpetrators for the third consecutive year.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	22.3% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	53.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	13.9%

Children in Senegal 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 gold mining.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Fishing and farming.

various tasks on the street, including vending, garbage collection, and scavenging.



Industry

Mining gold, including washing ore, crushing rocks, and using mercury.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced labor in domestic work and gold mining. Commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.



Services

Welding, repairing automobiles, and performing maintenance on pirogues and construction work.

Domestic work, traditional handiwork, work in bakeries, and

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Senegal's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Criminalize the use of a child for prostitution.

Establish criminal penalties for the use of children in illicit activities.

Clarify forced begging provisions in the Penal Code and the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons to explicitly prohibit all forced begging, including alms-seeking, under any circumstances.

Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include sectors in which child labor is known to occur and in which there are risks of sexual exploitation, including street work and domestic work.

Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to age 16 to align with the age of completion for compulsory education.

Enforcement

Publish information on labor enforcement. Increase the number of labor inspectors to 128 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 5.1 million workers.

Ensure that labor inspections and enforcement are carried out in the informal sector, including in private homes and on farms. Ensure inspections of domestic work conditions and criminally prosecute cases of exploitation, including labor exploitation and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Ensure that training for criminal investigators adequately addresses issues related to the worst forms of child labor in Senegal. Ensure that criminal cases involving child victims are referred to the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security's Children's Unit.

Publish criminal law enforcement information on the worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations, violations, and prosecutions, and whether penalties were imposed.

Criminally prosecute secondary school teachers who sexually exploit girls. Provide training for girls and their families so they can be sure of what constitutes harassment, know where to safely report exploitation, and have the assurance of community solidarity to reinforce their basic human rights. Establish social safety nets enabling girls who become pregnant to finish school and build networks of empowerment.

Investigate, prosecute, and, when appropriate, convict and sentence Koranic school teachers complicit in facilitating the worst forms of child labor, such as forced begging. Ensure that courts have sufficient resources, coordination, and independence to successfully prosecute cases.

Establish a formal complaint mechanism to receive child labor complaints, and track cases of child labor for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.

Coordination

Establish coordinating mechanisms to prevent and eliminate all worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and domestic work.

Ensure the Ministry of Labor's participation in the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons.

Government Policies

Adopt a national policy to address child labor.

Social Programs

Improve access to education by increasing the number of schools and teachers, especially in rural areas, increasing access to transportation, improving school infrastructure and sanitation, ensuring access to schools for students with disabilities, reducing school-related fees for supplies, providing all children with birth certificates and facilitating universal school registration, and protecting children in schools from sexual harassment and abuse.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of children's activities in the labor force. Use these data to establish policies and programs that address all forms of child labor, including domestic work, agriculture, mining, and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Ensure that shelter services are adequate to provide protective care to survivors of child trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. Conduct awareness-raising activities and provide social safety nets to families of rescued street children to ensure that children are not returned to forced begging.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Boys from rural areas and along Senegal’s borders are particularly vulnerable to forced begging, whose proceeds enrich corrupt Islamic teachers. An estimated 180,000 boys are forced to beg for long hours and live in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, receive inadequate food and medical care, and are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. Girls, some as young as 12 years old, are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation near gold mining sites throughout the southeastern region of Kédougou. Adolescent girls are often transported from other countries, including Nigeria, for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation around the gold mines. In addition, many girls as young as 9 years old—known as *petites bonnes* in French or *mbidaan* in Wolof—are sent from rural areas to urban households to work. Under the pretext of a traditional cultural practice called *confiage*, parents send children to live with family or acquaintances to give the child better access to education and economic opportunities; many children are then subjected to forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Senegal has a shortage of schools and teachers, especially in rural areas. Students often have to pay for their own books, uniforms, and other school supplies, which discourages attendance. Lack of birth registration, transportation, and accommodations for children with disabilities impedes access to schools. Poor sanitation infrastructure, including a lack of running water and bathrooms, is also a barrier to education. Sexual harassment and abuse are widespread in secondary schools in Senegal; teachers sexually exploit girls, soliciting sex in exchange for money, goods, or good grades. One NGO reported that in certain cases, when girls rejected male teachers’ advances, they were penalized with lower grades and excluded from class activities. Research found that school directors were aware of sexual harassment or exploitation, they generally tried to resolve the situation on their own without reporting it to higher authorities or police, and girls were often stigmatized and faulted rather than the teacher. Girls were generally unsure of what constituted consent and harassment and did not know where to report exploitation. If girls became pregnant, they dropped out of school and were often shunned by their families.












LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Senegal has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Senegal’s laws do not meet international standards because the use of a child in prostitution is not criminalized, the prohibition of the use of children in illicit activities lacks criminal penalties, and military recruitment of children by non-state armed groups is not prohibited.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article L. 145 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of the Decree Establishing the Scale of Penalties for Violations of the Labor Code and Associated Rules for Application
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 1–3 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Article 1 of the Ministerial Order No. 3750 Determining the Types of Hazardous Work Prohibited for Children and Youth; Articles 1–3 of the Ministerial Order No. 3751 Determining the Categories of Business and Work Prohibited to Children and Youth
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Ministerial Order No. 3750 Determining the Types of Hazardous Work Prohibited to Children and Youth; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3751 Determining the Categories of Business and Work Prohibited to Children and Youth

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles L. 4 and L. 279 of the Labor Code; Articles 2 and 4 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 1 and 2 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 1 and 2 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 323 and 324 of the Penal Code; Articles 1 and 2 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 19 of Law No. 2008-28
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 19 of Law No. 70-23 on the Organization of National Defense; Law No. 2008-23
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 3 of Law No. 2004-37
Free Public Education		Article 3 of Law No. 2004-37; Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution

Senegalese law does not criminalize use of a child for prostitution. Articles 323 and 324 of the Penal Code criminalize procuring and offering for prostitution, but not use. Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor bans the use of children in illicit activities, but neither this law, nor the Penal or the Labor Codes define specific criminal penalties for this offense. Section 245 of the Penal Code provides that “the act of seeking alms on days, in places, and under conditions established by religious traditions does not constitute the act of begging,” which makes it unclear whether forced begging by Koranic schools is criminally prohibited. Furthermore, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not include domestic work or street work, areas in which there is evidence of potential harm, including sexual abuse, to child workers. Because the minimum age for work is lower than the age of completion for compulsory education, children have an incentive to leave school before completing their studies. Finally, Senegal’s law does not prohibit the military recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Senegal took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resources and training for investigators hindered enforcement efforts, including the prosecution of cases.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Social Dialogue, and Institutional Relations (MOL): Identifies and investigates labor code violations, including child labor cases. MOL maintains one inspectorate per administrative region. Inspectors refer criminal cases to the police or gendarmerie. In April 2023, MOL and the German Agency for International Cooperation convened a workshop in partnership with ILO, UNICEF, and local

stakeholders to evaluate the past efforts of the National Framework Plan to Combat Child Labor and develop an action plan to address child labor through 2027. The plan remained under development at the close of the reporting period.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ): Enforces and prosecutes criminal laws, including criminal violations of child labor laws. Through its Criminal Affairs and Pardons Branch, collects information and statistics on criminal cases involving forced child labor, child trafficking, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. In 2023, collaborated with international organizations to provide specialized training to law enforcement and judicial officials on anti-trafficking legal frameworks, investigative techniques, victim protection, and data collection.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	No
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, 57 labor inspectors conducted an unknown number of worksite inspections and it is unknown whether child labor violations were found. It is also unknown whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Senegal has established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, while various bodies coordinated efforts to address forced child begging and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, there is no comprehensive coordinating body dedicated to preventing and eliminating all worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and domestic work.

National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (Cellule Nationale de Lutte contre la Traite des Personnes [CNLTP]): Housed within MOJ and consists of the Ministry of Education; Ministry of Women, Family, Gender, and Child Protection; the National Police; and the Department of Social Services; it does not include the Ministry of Labor. The CNLTP oversees the government’s human trafficking prevention, including its campaign against forced child begging, and coordinates the government’s implementation of its 2021–2023 Anti-Trafficking National Action Plan (NAP). In 2023, the CNLTP met regularly to coordinate implementation of the NAP and drafted a national anti-trafficking communications strategy, including public awareness materials, which remained pending adoption at the end of the reporting period.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Senegal established policies related to child labor. However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including the lack of a national policy to address all worst forms of child labor.

National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2021–2023): Structured around four priority areas: (1) prevention; (2) protection and care of survivors; (3) pursuit; and (4) research, monitoring, evaluation, and partnerships. Goals include raising awareness and advocating for legislation, conducting public awareness campaigns, improving the capacity of shelters and services for survivors, strengthening the capacity of criminal law enforcement and the judicial system, and improving regional cooperation. The plan was active during the current reporting period. In April 2023, the Action Plan was evaluated in a workshop to define strategic axes for the development of a new program to prevent and combat child labor covering the 2023–2027 period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>Priority Action Plan, Phase 2: A long-term economic development strategy that includes the Emergency Removal of Street Children Program, which provides food, furniture, school supplies and other relevant materials to Koranic schools that are not engaged in child begging and to the shelters welcoming street children.</p> <p>National Strategy on Child Protection: Aims to strengthen child protection systems in Senegal. Organized around the pillars of prevention, care, and promotion of children's rights. During the reporting period, the government strengthened the mechanism aiming to reach children exploited in the worst forms of labor throughout Senegal. MOJ operates Educational Action in an Open Environment (AEMO) committees providing judicial, social, and educational assistance to children in vulnerable situations. In 2023, AEMO offices were established in 34 of the 46 departments of Senegal, with plans to deploy addition staff at the municipal and neighborhood levels.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Senegal funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, existing social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem.</p>	<p>Removal and Socioeconomic Reintegration Program for Children in Street Situations (2021–2024):† A 3-year, \$47 million program for the removal and socio-economic reintegration of children in street situations, administered by the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender, and Child Protection. Targets the identification and removal of children from forced begging, returns children to their families of origin, and provides them with shelter in a government-sponsored welcome center or approved Koranic schools or places children with foster families. However, sometimes children who have been returned to their families continued to be subjected to forced begging. Some activities continued in 2023, focused mainly on assisting Koranic schools.</p> <p>Centers and Shelters:‡ Include the Ginddi Center, run by the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender, and Child Protection with a budget of \$439,140 for victim services to abused and vulnerable children, including runaway talibés (students of Koranic schools), street children, and child trafficking survivors. Services provided to children include meals, shelter, basic medical care, psycho-social services, clothing, and vocational training. However, the center continued to lack sufficient space, limiting the number of victims authorities could assist as well as their length of stay. As a result, the government sometimes sent victims to NGOs or partner <i>daaras</i> (Koranic schools), where children received follow-on support services until family reunification. MOJ also managed transit houses in Dakar, Pikine, and Saint-Louis to provide education, rehabilitation, and reintegration services to survivors of child trafficking. In 2023, the government continued to operate these shelters.</p> <p>Programs to Counter Sex Trafficking in Kédougou, Senegal, (2022–2024): Implemented by the African Programming and Research Initiative to End Slavery in partnership with Free the Slaves/ La Lumière and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Funded by the U.S. Department of State. Aims to address sex trafficking of girls and women in the gold-producing region of Kédougou by conducting prevalence research and enhancing capacity for prevention, prosecution, and protection. Research could not confirm whether the plan to provide shelter services to sex trafficking survivors from the mining sector or the training of law enforcement officers and magistrates to counter trafficking in persons in the region was completed.</p>

† Program is funded by the Government of Senegal.

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

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



SERBIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Serbia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the Anti-Trafficking Council met for the first time after several years of inactivity and appointed a new coordinator to direct its activities. In addition, the Institute for Statistics and the International Labor Organization published the final results of the 2021 National Child Labor Survey, and the labor inspectorate received a substantial increase in funding, raising its budget to approximately \$4.7 million. The government also increased the monthly child allowance amount paid to eligible families and expanded the scope of the cash benefit program to include minors who had previously been excluded. However, despite these efforts, policy and social barriers to education remain for disadvantaged populations, and the country's social welfare centers are overwhelmed with cases, which limits efforts to provide services to victims of child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	18.8% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	97.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	20.6%

Children in Serbia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including farming, forestry, and fishing.



Industry

Manufacturing and construction.



Services

Street work, including washing cars, collecting scrap material, vending, and begging. Trading, including wholesale and retail. Working in food service.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging. Domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including in petty crime.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Serbia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement

Ensure that criminal investigators and agencies addressing human trafficking conduct thorough investigations.

Publish data pertaining to labor law enforcement efforts, including the number of child labor penalties imposed and collected.

Ensure that the Labor Inspectorate is fully staffed and equipped to conduct an adequate number of inspections per international labor standards.

Coordination

Establish a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address all worst forms of child labor, including agriculture and street work.

Government Policies

Publish information on activities conducted under the Protocol on Rules and Procedures for the Institutions and Organizations Working with Children Involved in Life and Work on the Streets of Belgrade.

Use research and data from the National Child Labor Survey to develop and implement policies to address the full scope of the child labor problem in all sectors.

Social Programs

Address policy and social barriers to education via targeted programming for disadvantaged populations, including improving access to birth registration documentation; increasing access to education for children with disabilities; and increasing educational access and retention rates for minority populations, particularly migrant children, Roma children, and girls.

Ensure that staff members at Social Welfare Centers have sufficient resources, such as personnel and funding, to address the specific needs of child trafficking victims.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from Roma communities, particularly girls, and children living in rural areas have higher rates of victimization by internal trafficking, including for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Undocumented migrants are also at a significantly higher risk of human trafficking for forced labor and sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Constitutional and legal protections prohibit discrimination in the education system against individuals with disabilities. However, some individuals with disabilities, especially Roma children, face difficulties in accessing education due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure and social prejudices. Some Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian children in Serbia also experience challenges in obtaining birth registration, which may make school enrollment difficult, and increase their vulnerability to child labor. In addition, placement in non-mainstream schools sometimes discourages Roma children from attending school. Roma children are also more likely to begin school at a later age and drop out of school more frequently than their non-Roma peers.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Serbia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Serbia's laws are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 24, 25, and 274 of the Labor Law; Article 66 of the Constitution
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 25 and 274 of the Labor Law; Article 66 of the Constitution
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 25, 84, 87, and 88 of the Labor Law; Regulation on Hazardous Labor of Children
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 112, 388, and 390 of the Criminal Code; Article 26 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 112 and 388 of the Criminal Code; Article 26 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 112 and 183–185, and 388 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 246 and 388 of the Criminal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 4 of the Law on Military, Labor, and Material Obligation; Article 39 of the Law on the Army
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 4 of the Law on Military, Labor, and Material Obligation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 24 of the Law on the Ratification of the Optional Protocol Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict; Article 388 of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 71 of the Constitution; Articles 94 and 98 of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System
Free Public Education		Article 71 of the Constitution; Article 91 of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System

* No conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Serbia took actions to address child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran, and Social Affairs (MOLEVSA): Through the Labor Inspectorate, inspects businesses, including unregistered businesses. Through the Center for the Protection of Trafficking Victims (CPTV), identifies victims of child trafficking and those at risk, conducts needs assessments, contributes to human trafficking research projects, and refers victims to social services.

Ministry of the Interior (MOI): Oversees the General Police Directorate and enforces laws prohibiting commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking through the Criminal Police Department. Informs the Centers for Social Work (CSWs) of any child labor violations found and transfers children found eligible for assistance to CSWs.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **223** labor inspectors conducted **66,896** worksite inspections, finding **27** child labor violations. The government also conducted **36** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor, initiated **19** prosecutions, and convicted **13** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Serbia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the coordinating mechanism does not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country.

National Council for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (Anti-Trafficking Council):

Sets government policies on human trafficking and drafts annual standard operating procedures for the Center for the Protection of Trafficking Victims (CPTV). Chaired by MOI, with the National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Persons acting as the Secretary of the Council. In September 2023, the government appointed a new National Coordinator of Activities in the Fight Against Human Trafficking and in December 2023, the Council met after a multi-year period of inactivity. Additionally, MOI began drafting a new national anti-trafficking program and action plan.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Serbia established policies related to child labor. However, it has not mainstreamed into relevant national policies all child labor issues in high-risk sectors, including begging, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

Protocol on Rules and Procedures for the Institutions and Organizations Working with Children Involved in Life and Work on the Streets of Belgrade:

Aims to enhance institutional cooperation among MOI, the Criminal Police Directorate, the Communal Police, city Social Welfare Centers, the Belgrade City Secretariat for Education, the Belgrade City Secretariat for Health, and civil society organizations. Stipulates lead institutions, rules, and procedures for interacting with children engaged in street labor, including begging. Research was unable to determine whether the policy was active during the reporting period.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Serbia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, gaps exist in addressing social barriers to education.

National Child Labor Survey: Conducted by the Republic of Serbia Institute for Statistics and the ILO. During the reporting period, the government published its final analysis of the 2021 Child Labor Survey, providing insight into the sectors in which children in Serbia perform hazardous labor.

Belgrade Children's Shelter:† Social welfare institution funded by the City of Belgrade; opened in 2019. Provides accommodation services and daytime shelter services to meet the needs of young people and street children who are subsequently referred to judicial authorities, as well as to the CSWs for healthcare and educational support. The government continued to support the shelter during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Serbia.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

SIERRA LEONE

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Sierra Leone made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted the Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act of 2023, which institutionalizes inclusive, rights-based access to education for all children, including pregnant girls and children with disabilities, which is key to preventing children's engagement in child labor. With support from international partners, the government also trained border authorities, judges, prosecutors, and police investigators on how to detect, investigate, and prosecute child trafficking and refer victims for services. In addition, it established a national referral mechanism to ensure victims of human trafficking receive social services and created an anti-human trafficking advisory board and committee to set counter-trafficking policy, carry out programs, and track victim referrals. Finally, Sierra Leone conducted a baseline study on child trafficking and child labor in Kambia district and hosted a regional conference on human trafficking with fellow member states of the Economic Community of West African States, where government ministers examined existing practices and explored new ways to combat human trafficking. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it did not impose any penalties for violations of the worst forms of child labor. In addition, Sierra Leone's light work provisions do not meet international standards because they do not specify the activities and conditions in which light work may be undertaken or limit the number of hours of light work. Sierra Leone also lacks a national policy and social programs to address all worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in domestic work and mining.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	35.1% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	78.2%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	32.2%

Children in Sierra Leone are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced labor in mining. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in quarrying stone and fishing.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including cultivating palm fruit, cocoa, and coffee, and processing harvested produce.

Fishing,[†] including artisanal fishing. Forestry, including working in logging.



Industry

Mining,[†] including for diamonds. Quarrying[†] and crushing stone, including granite, and shoveling gravel.

Construction, including housing construction and serving as laborers for contractors. Working in manufacturing.[†]



Services

Scavenging scrap metals and recyclable materials from dumpsites. Domestic work and street work, including begging, trading, and selling goods. Portering, including carrying

heavy loads.[†] Working as apprentices, including in auto repair shops and on transportation vehicles, including minibuses and motorbike taxis.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced begging. Forced domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

Forced labor in street hawking, quarrying, mining (including for alluvial diamonds), rock breaking, agriculture, scavenging for scrap metal, and motorbike taxi driving. Use in illicit activities, including the cultivation and trafficking of drugs.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Sierra Leone's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the Child Rights Act's light work provisions specify the activities and conditions in which light work may be undertaken and limit the number of hours of light work.

Ensure that hazardous work occupations prohibited for children are comprehensive, including by prohibiting scavenging at dumpsites.

Ensure free basic public education is guaranteed by law for all children in Sierra Leone.

Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 28 to at least 71 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 2.8 million workers.

Provide labor and criminal law enforcement officials with sufficient funding to adequately enforce labor laws throughout the country, including in the informal sector and the mining sector.

Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the number and type of inspections conducted, the number of violations found, and penalties imposed and collected.

Ensure that unannounced inspections are conducted and cease the practice of informing employers ahead of time.

Establish a complaint mechanism to receive child labor complaints from the public.

Institutionalize training for labor inspectors and criminal law enforcement personnel to ensure that violations are adequately investigated and prosecuted.

Improve criminal law enforcement data collection to better track and prosecute worst forms of child labor crimes, including forced domestic labor, forced begging, and commercial sexual exploitation.

Ensure that the Director of Public Prosecution and the Family Support Unit share data to adequately enforce criminal violations, including child trafficking.

Investigate, prosecute, and when appropriate, convict and sentence religious teachers who exploit children in forced labor.

Coordination

Ensure that village-level and chiefdom-level Child Welfare Committees are established and operational in all areas.

Government Policies

Adopt policies to address the worst forms of child labor in relevant sectors, such as mining, quarrying, and commercial sexual exploitation.

Social Programs

Remove barriers to education by reducing school-related costs, providing transportation to schools in rural areas, increasing the number of teachers and secondary schools, improving facilities for students with disabilities, and eliminating abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence by teachers and other students.

Increase the availability of and funding for shelters and safe houses for survivors of forced labor and children removed from street work.

Institute programs to address child labor in agriculture, domestic work, and street work.

Create public outreach and education campaigns to provide youth and their families with more information on their rights, responsibilities, and risks in relation to *men pikin* arrangements.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children in *men pikin* arrangements face heightened risk of labor exploitation in Sierra Leone. *Men pikin* is a Krio term for foster care, where family members send children to relatives in urban areas with promises of better educational opportunities. However, some children are instead subjected to forced labor by their host families. Unhoused children and children living with disabilities also face increased risk of exploitation in street begging. In addition, children sent to Koranic schools face heightened risks of labor trafficking.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Over the past several years, the government has implemented significant initiatives to make education free through secondary school and improve access for girls and children with disabilities. While primary enrollment has increased, barriers to access remain, including indirect costs (food, uniforms, supplies), illegitimate fees charged by schools, a lack of qualified teachers and secondary schools, insufficient transportation for rural students, a lack of adequate facilities and teachers for children with disabilities, and violence (both physical and sexual) by teachers and other students.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Sierra Leone has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Sierra Leone's laws do not meet international standards on light work, the identification of all relevant hazardous activities, or the guarantee of free basic public education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Sections 125, 129, and 131 of the Child Rights Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 126, 128, and 131 of the Child Rights Act; Section 175 of the Mines and Minerals Development Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Sections 128 and 131 of the Child Rights Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 1 and 12–14 of the 2022 Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act; Section 19 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 1, 12–14, and 17–19 of the 2022 Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 1, 12–14, and 17–19 of the 2022 Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act; Sections 26–34 of the 2012 Sexual Offenses Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Sections 7 and 13 of the National Drugs Control Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Section 28 of the Child Rights Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Section 28 of the Child Rights Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Sections 1 and 12 of the 2022 Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Section 125 of the Child Rights Act
Free Public Education		Sections 19(5)(d), 22(2), and 24 of The Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act

* Country has no conscription

In 2023, the government enacted a new Mines and Minerals Development Act, which repealed and replaced the Mines and Minerals Act of 2009. The new law provides for stronger penalties for the use of child labor than the previous law and the Child Rights Act. The government also enacted educational reforms during the reporting period with The Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act of 2023. The new law aims to institutionalize inclusive, rights-based access to education for all children, including pregnant girls and children with disabilities, and prohibits discrimination, harassment, corporal punishment, and verbal and sexual abuse in schools. However, it does not explicitly guarantee free public education as it permits schools to charge fees to students. On the labor front, though the Child Rights Act sets the minimum age for light work at age 13, it does not limit the number of hours per week for light work, determine the activities in which light work may be permitted, or specify the conditions in which light work may be undertaken, which is not in compliance with international standards. In addition, although the Child Rights Act identifies hazardous work prohibited for children, it does not cover scavenging for recyclable materials at dumpsites, an activity for which there is evidence that children in Sierra Leone are exposed to hazardous medical waste. The government enacted a new Employment Act in May 2023, but it simply reaffirmed preexisting articles on child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Sierra Leone took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security (MELSS): Through its Child Labor Unit, formulates, implements, and monitors compliance with child labor regulations. Enforces labor laws in the formal sector via its District Labor Officers. Local-level District Councils handle enforcement of child labor laws in the informal sector. Insufficient human resources, lack of funding for fuel and other supplies, and in some provinces lack of office space hindered its efforts to enforce child labor laws.

Sierra Leone Police: Investigate child labor crimes through their Family Support Unit. Through the Transnational Organized Crime Unit, enforce human trafficking laws and provide statistical data and general information on cases of human trafficking. Refer cases for legal advice and prosecution to the Ministry of Justice's Director of Public Prosecution. Work with the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs to identify cases and coordinate services for victims. However, suspected child labor violations are mostly reported as either transnational child trafficking or domestic child abuse, and Sierra Leone Police statistics do not distinguish child labor crimes from child abuse violations, which limits the government's ability to track and prosecute child labor crimes.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	No
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, 28 labor inspectors conducted 600 worksite inspections, finding 0 child labor violations. The government also conducted 32 investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, but initiated 0 prosecutions and convicted 0 perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Sierra Leone established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor at the national level. However, gaps remain in coordination at the village and chiefdom levels.</p>	<p>National Technical Steering Committee on Child Labor: Coordinates efforts to address child labor. Led by MELSS, with representatives from the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs, the National Commission for Children, the Sierra Leone Police Family Support Unit, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, international organizations, and civil society organizations. Meets quarterly to advise on policies related to child labor. In 2023, the steering committee advised the government to empower the National Commission for Children to receive complaints about child labor exploitation, to investigate allegations, and to refer cases to courts for prosecution.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Sierra Leone established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including in mining, quarrying, and commercial sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2021–2023): Promoted cooperation between civil society organizations, international organizations, and government agencies to address human trafficking. Established strategic objectives to ensure the thorough investigation of trafficking cases. In April 2023, Sierra Leone hosted a regional conference on human trafficking with fellow member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), where government ministers examined existing practices, explored new ways to combat human trafficking, and sought to improve harmonization and coordination of efforts across the region.</p> <p>National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools: Ensures that schools throughout Sierra Leone are accessible to all children, especially those typically marginalized or excluded, including children with disabilities, children from low-income families, children in rural and underserved areas, and girls who are currently pregnant or already parents and in school. The government’s implementation plan for the policy runs through 2026.</p>
<p>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>National Migration Policy: Aims to protect the rights of migrants, with specific reference to trafficking survivors, asylum seekers, and children. Also seeks to increase public awareness of human trafficking and build the capacity of law enforcement personnel to detect and prevent trafficking, especially child trafficking. Established by the government with support from the EU, the Africa Regional Migration Program implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United States Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. During the reporting period, the government worked with IOM to train border authorities on human trafficking detection and victim referral, and to provide psychosocial counselling and vulnerability screening to over 300 returnees.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Sierra Leone funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address child labor in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including agriculture, domestic work, and street vending.

*† Program is funded by the Government of Sierra Leone.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.*

Child Trafficking Shelters:[†] Provide accommodation and care to survivors of forced labor and human trafficking, including mental health services, trauma-informed care, family tracing, and reintegration assistance. During the reporting period, World Hope International provided shelter services to trafficking survivors referred under the National Referral Mechanism, which went into effect in February 2023.

Free Quality School Education:[‡] A Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education program intended to cover the costs of school tuition and fees and provide meals, textbooks, and some teaching materials in remote communities. Allocates over 20 percent of the country's budget to education. During the reporting period, primary enrollment and completion rates increased. With the support of UNICEF, the government also trained pre-primary and early-grade teachers. However, the subsidies paid to government and government-assisted schools through this program reportedly do not cover all costs, and some families are still required to pay fees.

U.S. Government-Funded Projects: Department of State Program to End Modern Slavery funded a study to research the prevalence, methods, and impacts of child trafficking and child labor in Kono, Kenema, Kailahun, and Kambia districts of Sierra Leone. The Kambia research, published during the reporting period by the Center on Human Trafficking Research and Outreach at the University of Georgia in conjunction with the African Programming and Research Initiative to End Slavery, established a baseline prevalence of child trafficking and child labor in the districts and identified gaps in policies and services aimed at preventing and addressing child trafficking in the country.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



SOLOMON ISLANDS

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, the Solomon Islands made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and enacted the Education Act 2023, which increased the regulation of education, including formalizing training for teachers. However, despite these efforts, the Solomon Islands minimum age for work of 12 years does not meet the international standard of 14 years, and the Solomon Islands has not established a minimum age for hazardous work or delineated the types of work considered hazardous for children. Furthermore, there is no law that makes education compulsory, which increases children’s vulnerability to child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Solomon Islands are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also preform dangerous tasks in alluvial mining.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming on plantations, including harvesting fruits, and the harvesting of seafood.



Industry

Alluvial mining.†



Services

Working as couriers; vending; domestic work, including working as cooks; working in nightclubs, casinos, and motels; pickpocketing; and garbage scavenging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, including in the cultivation and trafficking of drugs; forced domestic work, including working as cooks; forced pickpocketing; forced begging; forced harvesting of seafood; handling of heavy cargo; and work in construction.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of International Labor Organization Convention (ILO C.) 182.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Solomon Islands' implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Raise the minimum age for employment to age 14 to comply with international standards.

Establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work.

Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, including the types of work for which there is evidence of hazards, such as in scavenging and agriculture.

Establish by law a compulsory age of education that aligns with the international standard for the minimum age for employment.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the transfer of children for the purpose of child trafficking.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits using, procuring, and offering a child for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Establish by law free basic public education.

Enforcement

Publish information on child labor law enforcement efforts undertaken, including labor inspectorate funding, the number and type of labor inspections conducted, violations found, information about the training system for labor inspectors, and penalties imposed and collected.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts undertaken, including the number of child labor investigations initiated, the number of prosecutions initiated, the number of convictions secured, and the sentences imposed.

Publish data about reciprocal referral mechanisms between labor and criminal authorities and social services.

Employ at least 9 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 369,000 workers.

Publish information about child labor-related training for labor inspectors and criminal investigators.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate has sufficient financial and staffing resources to enforce child labor laws.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that incorporates eliminating child labor and the worst forms of child labor as an objective.

Social Programs

Establish and participate in programs to prevent, address, and eliminate all forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, use in illicit activities, and forced labor in fishing and agriculture.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor nationwide to inform policies and programs.

Eliminate barriers to basic education, including by eliminating school-related fees and teacher absenteeism, improving access to school transportation, and ensuring that all schools are accessible for students with disabilities.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In rural communities some boys, girls, and young women are recruited for domestic work and subsequently exploited in commercial sex at logging camps. Additionally, widespread social stigma against LGBTQI+ individuals in the Solomon Islands increases their vulnerability to human trafficking.













BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Teacher absenteeism, school fees, and transportation limitations present barriers to education access for students. Additionally, children with disabilities face distinct challenges accessing education due to a lack of accessible buildings and specialized teachers.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Solomon Islands has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, the Solomon Islands' laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for hazardous work, identification of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children, and the prohibition on child trafficking.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 12 Years		Article 46 of the Labor Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work		Articles 47–49 of the Labor Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 47–49 of the Labor Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 251 and 256 of the Penal Code; Articles 70–79 of the Immigration Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 70–79 of the Immigration Act; Article 145 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 136, 136B, 141, 143, and 144 of the Penal Code; Articles 70 and 77 of the Immigration Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age		
Free Public Education		

† Country has no standing military

In 2023, the Government of the Solomon Islands ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. It also enacted the Education Act of 2023, which increased regulation of early childhood, primary, and secondary education, including registration of teachers, education providers, schools, and early childhood education centers. However, while the Education Act states that the compulsory school age begins at age 6, it does not specify an age when compulsory education ends. There are no laws that provide free basic education.

The Solomon Islands' minimum age for work, age 12, is not in compliance with the international standard of age 14 for developing countries. Additionally, although the Labor Act prohibits all children under age 18 from working at night and regulates work in mines and on ships, it does not clearly establish a minimum age for hazardous work or delineate the types of work considered hazardous for all children. The legal framework also does not prohibit dangerous work in scavenging or in agricultural activities, for which there is evidence of children being exposed to injuries, extreme temperatures, and chemicals. The Penal Code includes heightened penalties if an offense is committed against a child but has insufficient prohibitions against child trafficking because the transfer of children is not criminalized. Finally, the law also does not criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

It is unknown whether enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands took actions to address child labor in 2023. Insufficient resources likely hamper the labor inspectorate’s capacity to enforce child labor laws. In addition, research indicates that the Solomon Islands does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration: The Ministry's Labor Division enforces the country's laws against child labor and forced labor and works to uphold the country's commitments to global labor standards through the International Labor Standards and Prosecution Unit. The Ministry's Immigration Division leads efforts to address human trafficking, including the trafficking of children.

Royal Solomon Islands Police: Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor. Jointly investigate human trafficking cases along with the Solomon Islands Immigration Division.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>The Solomon Islands established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism does not address all worst forms of child labor in the country, including commercial sexual exploitation, use in illicit activities, and forced labor in fishing and agriculture.</p>	<p>Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Committee (AHTAC): AHTAC members consist of law enforcement, service providers, and international organizations, and it was established to advocate for government and development support for gender-related violence and the trafficking of women, girls and vulnerable members of society for the purpose of sexual and labor exploitation. During the reporting period, the Committee endorsed a joint Cabinet paper for government accession to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and AHTAC's Communications Strategy.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The Solomon Islands has established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, use in illicit activities, and forced labor in fishing and agriculture.</p>	<p>National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling (2020–2025): Establishes a coordinated effort to eliminate human trafficking and people smuggling on the Solomon Islands. Implementation is led by AHTAC. Research was unable to determine what activities took place to implement the National Action Plan during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p><i>† Policy was launched during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>National Children's Policy (2023–2028):[†] Developed in partnership between the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and UNICEF, the policy sets the government agenda and priorities for children to ensure that the rights of the child are at the center of development.</p> <p>National Education Action Plan (2022–2026): Launched by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, the plan outlines key priorities and strategies to achieve the nation's educational goals. During the reporting period, the Government of the Solomon Islands enacted the Education Act 2023.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Solomon Islands funded and participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating the worst forms of child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including commercial sexual exploitation, use in illicit activities, and forced labor in fishing and agriculture.</p> <p><i>* The program was established during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Anti-Human Trafficking Programs:[*] The government supported multiple anti-human trafficking programs during the reporting period, including by partnering with media organizations for a 3-day workshop to raise awareness on human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



SOMALIA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Somalia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government and the International Labor Organization finalized Somalia's first Decent Work Country Program to support the implementation of policy objectives and initiatives related to fundamental labor rights, including the elimination of child labor and forced labor. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Somalia made only minimal advancement because federal and state security forces continued to recruit and use children in armed conflict, in violation of national law. Government security forces also detained children for suspected association with armed groups, subjecting some of them to lengthy interrogations and coerced confessions. It is also unknown whether labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Somalia took actions to enforce child labor laws in 2023. In addition, Somalia lacks legislation prohibiting child trafficking and the use of children in illicit activities.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	9.5% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	38.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	4.7%

Children in Somalia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in armed conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming including planting, weeding, harvesting, and cleaning and packing crops; herding livestock; fishing, including cleaning fish.



Industry

Manufacturing and construction activities; crushing stones, mining, and excavating.



Services

Domestic work in hotels and private residences; street work, including shining shoes, washing cars, conducting minibuses, vending, and selling khat; voluntarily recruited children used in hostilities by state armed groups.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Use in armed conflict and supporting roles (including as cooks, porters, and informants, or to operate checkpoints) by both state and non-state armed groups; use in illicit activities, including selling of drugs; forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, breaking rocks, selling or transporting khat, begging, and construction work.

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

In 2023, there were continued allegations of grave violations against children linked to federal and state government security forces, including recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and sexual violence. Despite a government order barring the recruitment of children into state armed groups, members of the federal armed forces, security services, regional forces, and police in Galmudug, Jubaland, and Puntland continued to recruit children into their ranks. Al-Shabaab, which forcibly recruited children as young as age 8 into its ranks, committed a majority of grave violations, using deception or coercion tactics to forcibly recruit victims, including children, into sexual slavery, combat, and support roles. Al-Shabaab also continued the practice of forcing communities to turn over male children to serve as child soldiers, imposing a financial penalty on families who refused to cooperate.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Somalia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

Raise the minimum age for light work to 13 and increase the compulsory education age from 14 to 15 years to align with the minimum age for work.

Criminally prohibit using, procuring, and offering a child for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances, and ensure that penalties for the commercial sexual exploitation of children are sufficiently stringent to deter violations.

Criminally prohibit child trafficking in the Federal and Member States, the use of children in illicit activities, and the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups, and ensure that the law protects children involved in commercial sexual exploitation from criminal charges.

Enforcement

Ensure that the labor inspectorate has dedicated funding and increase the number of labor inspectors from 35 to 79 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of 3,158,000 workers.

Ensure that labor inspections are conducted at worksites, including unannounced inspections and in targeted sectors in which child labor most frequently occurs.

Institutionalize training for labor inspectors and criminal law enforcement investigators on laws related to child labor, while ensuring adequate financial support exists for training and capacity development.

Establish a formal complaint and referral mechanism between the labor inspectorate and social welfare services for children subjected to child labor.

Publish information on labor and criminal law enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor.

Enforce laws prohibiting the recruitment and use of child soldiers by the Somali Police Force, the National Intelligence and Security Agency, and the Somali National Army, as well as Galmudug, Jubaland, and Puntland forces and all allied militia. Investigate, prosecute, and punish, as appropriate, all commanders who recruit and use children.

Ensure that children associated with armed groups are referred to social services providers while ceasing the practices of detaining them with adults, subjecting them to lengthy interrogations without legal representation, eliciting coerced confessions, and imposing long prison terms.

Coordination

Establish a robust coordination mechanism that addresses all forms of child labor, including in forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, and herding livestock.

Government Policies

Adopt policies to address child labor in agriculture, industry, street work, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

Ensure activities are undertaken to implement the Somalia Social Protection Policy and the UN Child Soldier Action Plans, and publish results from activities on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Adopt a countrywide birth registration system to facilitate the identification of child labor victims.

Conduct a national child labor prevalence survey, including data on the number of children working and attending school, to inform targeted policies and programs related to elimination of child labor.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education and make education accessible and safe for all children by removing all armed groups from educational facilities, constructing schools outside Mogadishu, removing enrollment fees, and ensuring that girls, internally displaced children, and nomadic and rural children have access.

Develop programs to address all forms of child labor, including in street work and agriculture, and expand the scope of existing programs to address the use of children in armed conflict, including awareness raising on worst forms of child labor and international standards related to the definition of a child in the context of work and participation in armed conflict.

Carry out activities under the ACT to Protect Children Affected by Armed Conflict program and make information about implementation measures publicly available on an annual basis.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Conflict, severe drought, and devastating floods forced more than 1 million people in Somalia to flee their homes, raising the country's population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to over 3.8 million during the reporting period. IDPs, including children, are significantly less likely to benefit from educational opportunities, and remain acutely vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor. Non-state armed groups have been reported to recruit children in IDP communities. In addition, pastoralist communities face additional impediments to education, as their nomadic existence makes static schools impractical. Children and youth among these groups are considered at high risk of exploitation or recruitment into armed groups such as al-Shabaab. Children from minority clan households are also particularly vulnerable to forced recruitment by military groups. (3,6-10)



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Recurrent climate shocks, including widespread famine and protracted violence, remain significant barriers to education. Schools are also targeted for violence by al-Shabaab and have been occupied by both state and non-state forces. In addition, there is limited availability of public schools outside of the capital city of Mogadishu and families are often unable to pay the fees charged by private schools. Girls face additional obstacles including lower prioritization of girls' education, an insufficient number of female teachers, and lack of sanitation facilities within schools, which negatively affect girls' attendance and learning.







LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Somalia has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the International Labor Organization's Convention Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment C. 138; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the UNCRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Somalia's laws regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children are not sufficient because the use, procuring, and offering of a child for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Article 93 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 90 of the Labor Code; Article 29 of the Provisional Constitution
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✗	Articles 90 and 94 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 455 and 464 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Articles 407 and 408 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✗	
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	General Order No. 1

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		General Order No. 1
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 29 of the Provisional Constitution
Compulsory Education Age, 14[‡] Years		Articles 13 and 15 of the General Education Law
Free Public Education		Article 14 of the General Education Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Although the Labor Code establishes age 12 as the minimum age for light work and describes the conditions under which it may be undertaken, it neither determines the activities in which light work may be permitted nor prescribes the number of hours per week for light work. In addition, the gap between the end of compulsory education and the minimum age for work leaves children aged 14 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school but may not legally work. Furthermore, while the constitution states that children may not perform work that would endanger their health or development, and while the 1972 Labor Code enables the publication of a hazardous works list, the government has not determined by regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children.

The Federal Government of Somalia lacks legislation prohibiting human trafficking, including of children, or the use of children in illicit activities. Though laws prohibit procuring people for prostitution, they do not specifically increase punishment for procurement of children, and no laws prohibiting the use or offering of a child for prostitution or the use, procuring, and offering of a child for pornography or pornographic performances. Under Article 405 of the Penal Code, children involved in prostitution are not protected from criminal charges. Many fines for offenses under the Penal Code are equal to or less than one dollar, making them an ineffective deterrent against exploitation of children. Finally, although Somalia's Provisional Constitution asserts the right of children to be protected from armed conflict, there is not an explicit legal prohibition against recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, it is unknown whether labor and criminal law enforcement agencies took actions to address child labor. In addition, enforcement agencies do not have sufficient human and financial resources to carry out their mandated duties.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA): Investigates and enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor. MOLSA's regional office in Banadir (Mogadishu) employs 35 labor inspectors. MOLSA also coordinates informally with other government ministries on child labor-related issues, including the Somali Police Force, the National Intelligence and Security Agency, and the Immigration and Naturalization Directorate. However, to date, there is no evidence that MOLSA's labor inspectorate has funding or is undertaking labor inspections. Although the government did not provide information on labor inspections that occurred in 2023, zero labor inspections occurred in 2022.

Somali Police Force: Investigates and enforces laws related to forced child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and use of children in illicit activities. Operates units dedicated to investigating cases of human trafficking for prosecution through the Somali Police Force Criminal Investigation Division.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	No
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, it is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

The Federal Government of Somalia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism does not coordinate efforts to address all worst forms of child labor in the country.

Interministerial Committee on Children and Armed Conflict (ICCAC): Implements the 2012 Action Plan to Eliminate Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, the Action Plan to End the Killing and Maiming of Children in Contravention of International Law, and the 2019 roadmap to end and prevent grave violations against children. Co-chaired by the Child Protection Unit of the Ministry of Defense and UNICEF, includes other Ministry of Defense officials, representatives of the Ministry of Women and other relevant ministries, and UN officials. The Child Protection Unit and the ICCAC also identify and respond to the needs of victims of kidnapping and recruitment into armed conflict by al-Shabaab, screen the Somali National Army units for child soldiers, and engage in awareness raising activities. During the reporting period, the Committee organized a meeting which included members of the Ministry of Defense and UNICEF.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

The Federal Government of Somalia established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor including child trafficking and the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.

The National Employment Policy: Provides a roadmap for improving labor conditions, including stipulations related to child labor. Designed with ILO support under a Joint UN Project on Youth Employment in Somalia that was adopted in February 2019. The plan is steered by Somali National Tripartite Consultative Committee (SNTCC), a tripartite committee responsible for implementing the Labor Code and relevant labor policies in Somalia. Elimination of child labor is one of the priority focus areas of the SNTCC. In 2023, the government and ILO approved a Decent Work Country Program to support the implementation of the objectives under the National Labor Policy, including awareness-raising activities to support elimination of child labor and forced labor and data collection through integration of child labor and forced labor modules into future labor force surveys.

UN Child Soldier Action Plans: Establishes a strategy for identifying and removing children from the Somali National Army through education and monitoring of military camps. In 2012, the Federal Government of Somalia committed to two UN action plans to end grave violations against children, including the Action Plan to Eliminate Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers and the Action Plan to End the Killing and Maiming of Children in Contravention of International Law. A 2019 UN Roadmap supports the implementation of both plans. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the UN Child Soldier Action Plans during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>The Somalia Social Protection Policy: Develops and strengthens components of a national social protection system, including safety net programs. Provisions include a guaranteed income floor for vulnerable households and families with children under age 5. The policy focuses, in part, on mitigating the vulnerability of IDPs and other populations to gender-based violence and human trafficking. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Somalia Social Protection Policy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Federal Government of Somalia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including in agriculture and street work.</p> <p><small>† Program is partially funded by the Federal Government of Somalia.</small></p>	<p>ACT to Protect Children Affected by Armed Conflict:† Federal Government of Somalia awareness-raising initiative highlighting children in armed conflict. Ministry of Defense Child Protection Units disseminate radio and print media content regarding the prevention of child recruitment and conscription in armed conflict. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the ACT to Protect Children Affected by Armed Conflict during the reporting period.</p> <p>Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project:† \$330-million program, supported by a World Bank loan through 2025. Provides cash transfers to vulnerable households and builds a national shock-responsive safety net system responding to the needs of vulnerable populations affected by climate shocks and malnutrition. As of April 2023, over 265,000 households were receiving cash transfers under the program.</p> <p>Donor-Funded Programs: UNICEF partnerships with the Ministry of Defense to address issues related to the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Somalia. Includes the Defectors Reintegration Program that rehabilitates and reintegrates former combatants, emphasizing the specific needs of former child soldiers, including demobilized female combatants and their dependents. Six different centers provide accommodations, medical care, psychological counseling, education, and vocational training to former combatants. During the reporting period, UNICEF provided reintegration support and care services to 1,244 children released from armed groups and armed forces, and at-risk children around the country.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

In addition, Somalia does not provide clear protections against anti-union discrimination and penalties for violations of freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike for workers were not commensurate with similar crimes. These factors can hinder workers’ ability to report child labor, particularly in agriculture and the informal economy.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

SOUTH AFRICA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, South Africa made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In cooperation with the International Labor Organization, the South African Department of Employment and Labor launched a new project to strengthen the identification of child labor in the agriculture sector through labor inspections in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The government also spent approximately \$329,000 on training labor inspectors in Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town, and Pietermaritzburg. In addition, the government increased the amount of cash transfers for the Child Support Grant and the Foster Care Grant by 4 percent to reduce child vulnerability. However, despite these efforts, social programs are not sufficient to address the scope of child labor, especially regarding the use of children in illicit activities and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. In addition, while a significant portion of South African schools do not charge fees, the right to a free basic education is not guaranteed by law.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	15.0% (1,559,791)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	97.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	17.7%

Children in South Africa are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging, use in illicit activities, and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming.



Services

Food service, domestic work, and street work, including vending.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, including gang-related activities; use in the production of pornography; and forced labor in domestic work, street vending, and begging.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in South Africa's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Establish by law free basic public education.

Enforcement

Publish criminal law enforcement data on investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed concerning the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement officials are trained to properly identify cases of the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking.

Ensure that the South African Police Service has sufficient resources and investigates all suspected cases of child trafficking and forced child labor.

Ensure that victim identification and referral mechanisms function effectively to provide services to survivors of child trafficking.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Intersectoral Committee on Trafficking in Persons includes meaningful participation from relevant agencies, including the Department of Employment and Labor.

Government Policies

Include a timeframe and benchmarks in child labor policies to properly monitor and assess the progress of efforts to eliminate child labor.

Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the South African Education Action Plan and the National Development Plan.

Social Programs

Remove barriers to education by eliminating indirect costs, improving school infrastructure and sanitation, and ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities.

Ensure shelter services receive sufficient funding to carry out their mission.

Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and the use of children in illicit activities.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In South Africa, children from rural areas, undocumented children, and children with disabilities are more vulnerable to child labor. Research suggests that undocumented children are more vulnerable to being used in illicit activities by gangs, commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and work in illegal mining. In addition, children from impoverished families in rural areas are often more susceptible to child labor in agriculture, or to child trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation in cities.














BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Free basic education is not guaranteed by law. While there are designated "no fee" schools, fee exemptions, and subsidies for low-income students, research indicates that at some schools, parents must pay for school uniforms and other supplies. Other barriers to education include poor school infrastructure, inadequate sanitation and toilets, lack of transportation, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of accommodations for students with disabilities.

 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

South Africa has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, South Africa's laws do not meet international standards on free basic education because schools may charge fees if the parents collectively vote to do so.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 43 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Regulations on Hazardous Work by Children in South Africa; Articles 4–10 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Regulations on Hazardous Work by Children in South Africa; Articles 4–10 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 48 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act; Article 13 of the Constitution; Article 141 of the Children’s Amendment Act; Sections 4 and 5 of the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2013
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 141 of the Children’s Amendment Act; Section 4 of the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2013
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 141 of the Children’s Amendment Act; Chapter 3 of Criminal Law Amendment Act 32
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 141 of the Children’s Amendment Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 52 of the Defense Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	Article 52 of the Defense Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Chapters 1–2 and Articles 1–5 of the South African Schools Act
Free Public Education		Chapter 2, Article 5 and Chapter 4, Article 39 of the South African Schools Act

*Country has no conscription

The South African Constitution guarantees a right to education, but free basic education is not guaranteed by law. Article 39 of the South African Schools Act allows certain schools to be designated as "no fee" schools, but all other public schools may charge fees to ensure a sufficient operating budget if a majority of parents at that school vote to do so at the beginning of the year.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in South Africa took actions to address child labor. However, criminal law enforcement officials failed to properly identify and refer trafficking cases.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

South African Department of Employment and Labor (DOEL): Enforces child labor laws by conducting inspections of worksites, operates labor centers throughout the country where complaints may be lodged, refers survivors of labor exploitation to social workers, and reports violations to the South African Police Service (SAPS) for further investigation and to the South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJ) for prosecution. During the reporting year, the ministry spent \$329,000 (R6.151 million) on training labor inspectors. In October 2023, DOEL trained labor inspectors on how to identify child labor violations using the revised National Policy Framework on Trafficking in Persons (TIP).

South African Police Service (SAPS): Enforces the legislative mandate under the Children’s Act to investigate cases involving the worst forms of child labor. Through its Human Trafficking Desk, monitors and evaluates police efforts to investigate human trafficking crimes, trains investigators, and refers human trafficking cases to provincial SAPS units. In 2023, the South African Police Service conducted training on the Standard Operating Procedures for cases of trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	N/A	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **2,030** labor inspectors conducted more than **300,000** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. While the government conducted investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, the number of investigations is **unknown**, and it is **unknown** whether prosecutions were initiated or if perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

South Africa established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the activities of the National Intersectoral Committee on Trafficking in Persons and the provincial TIP Task Teams are constrained by inconsistent participation and lack of permanent member officials from all relevant agencies, including the DOEL.

Implementation Committee on the Child Labor Program of Action: Led by DOEL, includes representatives from government agencies, organized labor, commercial agriculture, and the ILO, and supports the implementation of the Child Labor Program of Action. During the reporting year, the government’s Child Labor Day campaign and annual activities on April 4th raised public awareness to distinguish unacceptable child labor from acceptable child work such as helping in the home.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>South Africa established policies related to child labor. However, these policies lack timeframes and benchmarks to properly monitor and assess the progress of efforts to eliminate child labor.</p>	<p>National Child Labor Program of Action for South Africa, Phase IV (2017–2024): Serves as the primary policy instrument to prevent and eliminate child labor in South Africa. Provides a reciprocal referral mechanism through which SAPS informs DOEL of suspected child labor cases. Identifies lead agencies in the program, including the Departments of Labor, Basic Education, Justice and Constitutional Development, Social Development, and Water and Sanitation; SAPS; National Prosecuting Authority; and Statistics South Africa. The National Child Labor Program did not include a timeframe to meet identifiable benchmarks or to assess the progress and adequacy of implementation efforts.</p> <p>Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons National Policy Framework (NPF): Guides interdepartmental coordination on trafficking issues; outlines the development of procedures and training programs for police and labor inspectors on human trafficking for labor exploitation, including child labor; and calls for social assistance programs to address the needs of child survivors of human trafficking, including psychological and social support, food and shelter, school and community reintegration, and placement and protection in child and youth care centers. During the reporting year, the NPF was updated to articulate an integrated strategy and action plan for 2023–2026, which includes the goal of increasing the number of labor trafficking cases prosecuted.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>South Africa funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not fully cover all sectors where child labor is present.</p> <p><small>* Program was launched during the reporting period. † Program is funded by the Government of South Africa.</small></p>	<p>Program on Child Labor in Agriculture:* New 2-year project funded through the European Union and implemented by the ILO in partnership with the South African Department of Employment and Labor. Aims to address child labor in agriculture in the KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape through enhanced enforcement and awareness raising.</p> <p>Direct Cash Transfer Programs:† Includes the Child Support Grant, which provides monthly unconditional direct cash transfers to help low-income parents and guardians meet the basic needs of their children, and the Foster Care Grant, which provides monthly payments of approximately \$65 (R1050) to caretakers of foster children. In 2023, South Africa increased the benefit of both direct cash transfer programs by approximately 4 percent.</p> <p>National School Nutrition Program:† Provides one or two meals—consisting of a protein, starch, and fruit or vegetable—every school day to about 9.5 million school children. As of 2020, 77 percent of public-school students received meals from this school feeding scheme.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



SOUTH SUDAN

NO ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Complicit in Forced Child Labor

In 2023, South Sudan is receiving an assessment of no advancement. Despite initiatives to address child labor, South Sudan is assessed as having made no advancement because it demonstrated complicity in the use of forced child labor. The country’s military continued to recruit children, sometimes forcibly, to fight opposition groups, and for use in supporting roles. Otherwise, the government signed the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, put in place a new strategic plan for education, and participated in an International Labor Organization-hosted workshop in Addis Ababa on building national capacity on child labor data collection and analysis. However, the government did not hold perpetrators of child labor accountable and has yet to ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, police continued to arrest and imprison children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation, rather than treating them as victims.

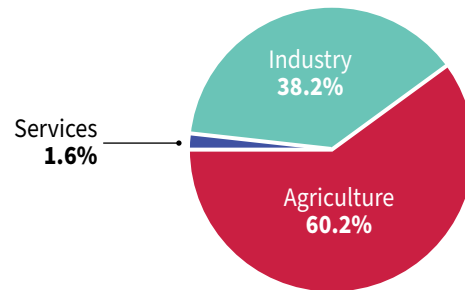


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	45.6% (463,624)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	6 to 14	31.5%
Combining Work and School	10 to 14	10.9%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in South Sudan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor in cattle herding. Children also perform dangerous tasks in construction.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, cattle herding,† gathering firewood, and fetching water.



Industry

Rock breaking† and construction,† including building and transporting materials.



Services

Domestic work, collecting scrap metal and empty bottles, and working in restaurants, auto repair shops, and convenience stores. Street work including vending sandals, sunglasses, and fruits, polishing shoes, delivery cart pulling, car washing, preparing tea, selling black market gasoline, and ticket taking for group transport companies.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in cattle herding, domestic work, and market vending. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forcible recruitment by state and non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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.

Despite the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), ethnic tensions and land disputes continue to drive violent conflict between state and non-state armed groups in the country, exposing children to the worst forms of child labor. State armed groups including the South Sudan People’s Defense Force (SSPDF), the Necessary Unified Forces, South Sudan Wildlife Services, the National Civil Defense Service, and the National Police Service, and non-state armed groups including the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) continue to recruit and use children as combatants, bodyguards, and in other support roles during armed conflict. Children recruited by armed groups lack access to basic services and are particularly vulnerable to abuse and further exploitation. Armed groups have previously subjected children to sexual abuse as in-kind payment to fighters.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in South Sudan's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Ensure that the Ministry of Labor drafts and issues regulations to implement key elements related to child labor, including the number of hours and conditions for light work, and the exceptions under which children ages 16 and 17 may engage in hazardous work.

Increase the compulsory education age of 13 to the minimum age for work of 14 to comply with international standards.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment and receipt of a child for forced labor, and exclude from laws requirements that threats, force, or coercion must be present to establish a child trafficking crime.

Extend laws providing free basic public education to cover the first 9 years of education and to include all children in South Sudan, including non-citizens.

Enforcement

Report activities undertaken by agencies responsible for child labor law enforcement on an annual basis.

Provide the Ministry of Labor with regular and sufficient funding for labor inspections that covers operational costs needed to conduct labor inspections, including inspections targeting all sectors in which child labor is known to occur, such as in the informal sector and workplaces outside of the capital city.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 14 to 109 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 4.3 million workers, increase the number of worksite inspections conducted, and provide labor inspectors with adequate training on child labor laws.

Establish mechanisms to receive child labor complaints and to assess penalties for child labor violations, and ensure that labor regulations provide monetary penalties for child labor infractions that are high enough to serve as a deterrent.

Adequately fund the criminal justice system so it is able to conduct investigations into crimes related to the worst forms of child labor, provide training to criminal investigators, and recruit sufficient personnel.

Establish a formal referral mechanism between criminal authorities and social services for victims of the worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor and commercial sexual exploitation, and cease the practice of arresting or imprisoning victims of worst forms of child labor crimes.

Investigate, prosecute, and impose penalties on perpetrators, including government officials, who recruit or use children in armed conflict or in other child labor crimes, and eliminate government officials' and armed groups' interference in the criminal justice system.

End the forced and voluntary recruitment or use of children by state and non-state armed groups, including the South Sudan People's Defense Force and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement Army – In Opposition, in compliance with the Child's Act.

Coordination

Ensure that the Technical Task Force on Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons is active, sufficiently funded, and able to carry out its intended mandates, including ratifying the Palermo Protocol and developing policies to address trafficking of migrant workers.

Ensure that the National Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Commission is funded and able to assist rescued child soldiers by locating their families and assisting with their reintegration into civilian life.

Establish a coordinating mechanism to address all worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and ensure that its mandates are clearly defined.

Government Policies

Ensure that the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the Comprehensive Action Plan to Prevent Grave Violations Against Children in South Sudan are active and that signatories do not continue to recruit or re-recruit children, and that actions are taken to demilitarize civilian areas.

Adopt policies to address child labor in all sectors in which it is known to occur, particularly in the agriculture and livestock sectors, as well as all relevant worst forms of child labor such as commercial sexual exploitation.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Promote primary school completion by adequately funding the education system, enforcing school attendance, reliably paying teachers' salaries, addressing the lack of school infrastructure, ensuring that children with disabilities have equal access to education, and by withdrawing government forces from occupied schools.

Report on activities undertaken to implement the Alternative Education System—including its Accelerated Learning Program, Community Girls' Schools, and the Pastoralist Education Program—all of which aim to improve literacy and provide out-of-school populations an alternative approach to formal education.

Expand the scope of social programs to reach more children at risk of child labor, including those involved in commercial sexual exploitation, agricultural work and work with livestock, those from low-income families, those living in rural areas, and girls.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Conflict in Sudan has caused over 600,000 people to return to or flee to South Sudan, rapidly growing the country’s population of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Lack of social support systems, services, cultural knowledge, language fluency, and legal protections makes IDP children especially vulnerable to child labor. Furthermore, for certain South Sudanese tribes, cattle raiding marks a rite of passage for boys; of the estimated 10,000 children engaged in tending cattle, many are used in armed raids of other tribes’ cattle. An even greater number of children fight as part of local community defense forces. Children abducted by armed pastoralists may be forced to join heavily militarized cattle rustling networks, in which younger children tend to smaller livestock, teenagers serve as auxiliaries for armed pastoralists or self-defense groups, and some older boys are forced to work as soldiers, herders, or cattle rustlers. Non-state groups often use children released from armed groups for cattle raiding or intercommunal violence once the children arrive back in their villages.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

South Sudan’s education system is underfunded and the percentage of out-of-school children in South Sudan is among the highest in the world, rendering children vulnerable to child labor and exploitation. Public school teachers are paid sporadically, leading to low morale, absenteeism, and high teacher attrition. Armed groups, including government forces, occupy schools in contested areas, and military operations in conflict-affected areas have forced teachers to flee. Although the Constitution and the Child Act provide for free primary education, some schools illegally require families to pay prohibitive school fees. This practice disproportionately impacts girls, because families with multiple children who cannot afford to pay additional fees to cover all their children typically prioritize educating sons. Underage marriage also prevents girls from attending school. Children with disabilities, especially girls, face barriers in accessing education. Schools are reportedly not sensitized to the importance of creating inclusive environments for children with disabilities, nor do they have the financial resources to make schools more accessible for such students.





LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

South Sudan has not ratified a key international convention concerning child labor, the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, South Sudan’s laws do not meet international standards on the compulsory education age because there is a gap between the compulsory education age 13, and the minimum age for work 14, which renders children between the ages of 13 and 14 vulnerable to child labor.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Section 12 of the Labor Act; Article 25(3) of the Child Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 12 and 13 of the Labor Act; Articles 22(3), 24(1), and 25(1) of the Child Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 25(2) of the Child Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 10(1) and 13(2)(a) of the Labor Act; Articles 277–279 of the Penal Code; Article 13 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 13(2) of the Labor Act; Articles 22(3)(b), 119, and 120 of the Child Act; Articles 276 and 278–282 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 13 and 126 of the Labor Act; Articles 22(3)(c), 22(3)(d), 22(4), and 25(2)(m) of the Child Act; Article 276 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 13(2)(c) of the Labor Act; Article 24(1) of the Child Act; Article 383(3)(d) of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 31(1) of the Child Act; Section 22 of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 31(1) of the Child Act; Sections 20 and 22(2) of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 31(1), 31(2), and 32 of the Child Act
Compulsory Education Age, 13 Years		Article 9.1(b) of the General Education Act; Article 14(1) of the Child Act
Free Public Education		Article 6(a) of the General Education Act; Article 13(4)(b) of the Labor Act; Article 29.2 of the Constitution

The Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Human Resource Development (MOL) is responsible for implementing regulations for child labor related laws, including the number of hours and conditions for light work in which children are able to engage, as well as the exceptions under which children ages 16 and 17 may engage in hazardous work. However, MOL has not issued these regulations, which leaves children vulnerable to exploitative work. Child trafficking laws in South Sudan do not meet international standards because the recruitment and receipt of children for forced labor is not prohibited, and the laws require that threats, force, or coercion is present to establish a child trafficking crime. Laws providing free basic public education do not meet international standards because they only cover the first 8 years of education, and because they only apply to citizens of South Sudan. In addition, children in South Sudan are only required to attend school until age 13, leaving children between the ages of 13 and 14 particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor because they are not required to be in school, but are also not legally permitted to work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in South Sudan took actions to address child labor. However, the absence of coordination between agencies, limited funding, lack of defined mandates, and an overall lack of prioritization of child labor issues hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Human Resource Development (MOL): Enforces child labor laws, identifies child labor violations, and conducts workplace inspections. Refers violations of child labor laws to the South Sudan National Police Service, which then investigates the violation and determines whether to charge the violator in criminal court. The Ministry of Labor conducted labor inspections during the reporting period. The Ministry, however, remains severely underfunded, with labor inspectors being paid sporadically and little to no budget for operational costs.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ): Oversees courts and prosecutes violations, including those related to child labor. Partners with the UNICEF-funded Justice for Children, which refers victims of child labor to special courts in which judges are trained on how to adjudicate cases involving minors. Research was unable to determine whether these courts were active during the reporting period. MOJ serves as co-chair to the Technical Task Force on Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons which oversees the process of ratifying the Palermo Protocol. Research was unable to determine whether the Task Force was active during the reporting period. South Sudan’s justice system faces enormous challenges, such as low capacity, insufficient funding, interference by the government and the South Sudan People’s Defense Force (SSPDF), insufficient training for law enforcement personnel, and a scarcity of judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. Reports indicate that the Ministry of Justice lacks the capacity and will to combat child labor. Prosecutors and law enforcement officials, for example, are not familiar with the legal statutes regarding the worst forms of child labor, which has resulted in the imprisonment of children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	No
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, **14** labor inspectors performed **104** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **0** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated **0** prosecutions, and achieved **0** convictions during the reporting period.

Although the August 2013 Punitive Order commits the SSPDF to hold its military officers accountable for the recruitment or use of children, and the government continued to release child soldiers in 2023, the government neither investigated nor prosecuted officers who allegedly committed such crimes, despite ongoing evidence of officer involvement in and knowledge of child recruitment.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p>	<p>South Sudan National Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Commission (NDDRC): Oversees and coordinates the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former child soldiers, and is supported by the UN Mission in South Sudan, UNICEF, and the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting. Maintains a network of local NGOs and community members that works to locate the families of rescued child soldiers and assist with their reintegration into civilian life. The NDDRC is governed by the Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan Regarding Children Associated with Armed Conflict in South Sudan. During the reporting period, the NDDRC assisted in the release of eight child soldiers. The government did not provide information regarding NDDRC funding for the reporting period, but previous reporting indicates that the Commission has occasionally gone unfunded.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p>	<p>Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (2018) (R-ARCSS): Establishes the structure of a Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and outlines actions to be taken by signatories, including prohibiting the recruitment and use of child soldiers by armed forces or militias, and stipulates that all civilian areas, including schools, shall be immediately demilitarized. Research was unable to identify activities undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p> <p>General Education Strategic Plan (2023–2027): Aims to enhance the quality of education and access to education in the country by expanding the Alternative Education Program, increasing awareness of the importance of education, increasing access to schools for children with disabilities, and increasing the number of primary schools. Provides grants and cash transfers to girls, children with disabilities, and orphaned children. The government renewed this plan during the reporting period.</p>

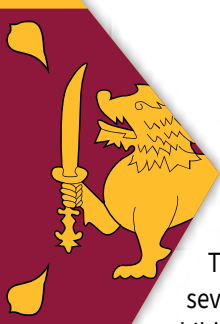
Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>South Sudan established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children.</p>	<p>Comprehensive Action Plan to Prevent Grave Violations Against Children in South Sudan: Prevent and mitigates grave violations against children, including the recruitment of child soldiers and attacks on schools. Applies to all state and non-state groups. Contains a list of concrete steps meant to “halt and prevent the violations against children in situations of armed conflict.” Research was unable to identify activities undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>South Sudan participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs fail to address child labor in all sectors in which it occurs, including in agriculture and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.</p>	<p>UNICEF and Donor-Funded Programming: NGOs provide the majority of the social safety net for children in South Sudan, protecting them from root causes of child labor and exploitation. During the reporting period, UNICEF’s programming registered 4,472 children in schools.</p> <p>Alternative Education System: Aims to improve literacy and provide out-of-school populations an alternative to formal education. Includes the Accelerated Learning Program, which implements the Ministry of General Education and Instruction program for children ages 13 to 17 who have reenrolled in lower primary classes. Also includes Community Girls’ Schools, located in closer proximity to rural communities, and the Pastoralist Education Program for children and adults in pastoral areas. Although research indicates this program was active during the reporting period, the government did not report specific activities conducted to implement the program.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

SRI LANKA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT



In 2023, Sri Lanka made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Sri Lanka Department of Labor trained 357 labor officers on laws related to child labor and organized several specialized training programs, including cybercrime investigation and forensic interviewer skills for child survivors. It also expanded its school meal programs to cover 1.6 million students in primary schools across the country and launched a social welfare program to provide financial benefits to 1.7 million families at high risk for labor exploitation, including child labor. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it is unknown whether the government initiated prosecutions or convicted perpetrators for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor. Research also indicates that some children in rural areas face barriers to accessing education, including long distances to school, an inadequate number of teachers, and challenges in securing necessary documents for enrollment. Furthermore, the labor inspectorate lacked sufficient staffing and funding to carry out an adequate number of inspections, including in factories in the northern and eastern provinces.

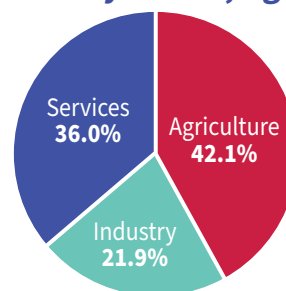


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	0.8% (28,515)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	98.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	0.9%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Sri Lanka are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced domestic work. Children also engage in child labor in mining and construction.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including raising livestock. Fishing, including deep-sea fishing[†] and processing and selling fish.



Industry

Manufacturing and food processing. Mining[†] and construction.[†]



Services

Domestic work. Vending, in stores and on the streets, and begging. Working in hotels, restaurants, and offices.

Providing security for people and property. Transportation. Painting and washing buildings.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. Forced domestic work.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Sri Lanka’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement

Provide criminal law enforcement investigators with additional funding and adequate resources—including personnel, transportation, fuel, computers, and facilities to record evidence—to adequately investigate the worst forms of child labor.

Hire and place additional labor inspectors in the northern and eastern provinces to increase inspections of factories.

Authorize labor inspectors to inspect private residences for violations against child workers if they have reasonable suspicion of child labor violations occurring, regardless of whether an official complaint is received.

Address the delays and gaps in referrals among the Department of Labor, National Child Protection Authority, and Sri Lankan Police.

Collect and make available information on the number of prosecutions initiated and the convictions obtained related to the worst forms of child labor.

Social Programs

Ensure that the definition of child labor used in national child labor surveys to calculate child labor statistics aligns with international standards so that the estimated population of children in child labor in the Child Activity Survey is correct.

Improve access to education by increasing programs to offset educational costs, improve transportation to schools, address teacher shortages, increase secondary schools in rural areas, and facilitate access to enrollment documents.

Institute programs to address vulnerabilities to child labor, particularly for ethnic minorities, in tea estates and in coastal, agricultural, mining, and firewood-producing areas.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children living in coastal and agricultural areas, mining areas, and firewood-producing areas are at higher risk of child labor. Increasing debt for housing and accommodations among workers at private and smallholding tea estates, many of whom also faced ethnic discrimination, increase the risk of child labor in the tea sector. The plantation community in the central province is also susceptible to lower income and nutrition levels, making children vulnerable to labor in domestic work. In addition, smallholder farmers face increased labor and production costs, as well as labor shortages during harvest times, and often rely on children under the age of 12 to help during the harvest period.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the government provides free, compulsory education, some children face barriers to accessing education due to a lack of transportation and an inadequate number of teachers. There is a lack of high schools in some rural areas and plantations, and children are particularly susceptible to leaving school early. Additionally, there have been reports that children who are unable to provide birth certificates, such as children born abroad to Sri Lankan mothers and non-Sri Lankan fathers, are denied access to education. The 2016 Child Activity Survey’s definition of child labor does not align with international standards because children ages 5 to 11 working less than 15 hours per week and children ages 12 to 14 working less than 25 hours per week in agriculture are not counted as child laborers. These issues may have led to an underestimation of the population of children in child labor in the Child Activity Survey.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Sri Lanka has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor and the government’s laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years	✓	Sections 7, 9, 13, and 34 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act; Section 6 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Amendment Act; Section 2 of the Shop and Office Employees (Regulation of Employment and Remuneration) (Amendment) Act; Sections 2–7 of the Factories (Amendment) Act; Sections 2–4 of the Minimum Wages (Indian Labor) (Amendment) Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Section 20A of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Hazardous Occupations Regulations No. 01; Section 20A of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Sections 358A and 360C of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Sections 360C, 360A(2), and 360A(4) of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Sections 286A, 360B, 360A(2), 360A(4), and 360E of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Sections 288, 288A, 288B, and 360C of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Sections 20A and 31 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	358(1)(d) of the Penal Code; Sections 20A and 31 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years	✓	Section 43 of the Education Ordinance; Compulsory Attendance of Children at Schools Regulation No. 1 of 2015
Free Public Education	✓	Section 47 of the Education Ordinance

*Country has no conscription



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Sri Lanka took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient resource allocation for the labor inspectorate hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor (DOL), in the Ministry of Labor and Foreign Employment (MOLFE): Enforces labor laws related to the employment of children and young persons, including overseeing the labor inspectorate and the Women and Children’s Affairs Division. Receives public complaints of child labor lodged in national and district-level offices. Receives complaints from other state organizations, including from the National Child Protection Authority. Conducts special investigations of child labor and hazardous labor and takes legal action as necessary. During the reporting period, the DOL received 87 complaints on child and hazardous child labor and documented 10 child labor and 3 hazardous child labor incidents involving 15 victims. Vulnerable children were identified and directed for relevant care, including to the Department of Probations and Child Care Services. Additionally, 17 new Assistant Commissioners of Labor received a 10-day training related to child labor laws, and 42 labor inspectors received a 3-day training workshop on labor laws, inspections, and court procedures. In March and May 2023, 357 labor officers received training on child labor laws. The trainings were in both the Tamil and Sinhala languages. The Deputy Commissioner of Women and Children’s Affairs Division delivered a presentation to 45 district-level child protection officers and counselors on eliminating child and hazardous labor by 2025.

Sri Lankan Police: Supervise the National Child Protection Authority’s Special Police Investigation Unit, which has approximately 40 police officers who investigate complaints and enforce criminal laws involving children, including complaints of child labor. The National Child Protection Authority also works with the National Anti-Human Trafficking Taskforce to address human trafficking issues, including commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. The Sri Lankan Police have approximately 300 child protection officers based in the districts who are tasked with preventing child exploitation and protecting survivors. The Criminal Investigations Department investigates cases, prepares indictments, and forwards cases to the relevant High Court, while the Attorney General’s Office is responsible for prosecutions in the High Court. In addition, the Children and Women’s Bureau enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor. In 2023, the police department organized a cybercrime investigations training for 30 participants that focused on child exploitation. The police department also conducted a training for 90 participants on forensic interview skills, with a focus on child victims.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **557** labor inspectors conducted **76,916** worksite inspections, finding **12** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether the government initiated prosecutions or convicted perpetrators for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor, although it conducted **10** investigations.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Sri Lanka has established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee on Child Labor Elimination: Coordinates efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor and oversees the National Policy on the Elimination of Child Labor in Sri Lanka. Chaired by the Secretary of MOLFE and includes representatives from 18 key government agencies, employers and workers’ organizations, the ILO, UNICEF, and NGOs. In 2023, convened one time and discussed the drop in school attendance, children’s vulnerability to child labor, and increasing implementation of the Child Labor-Free Zone model to 10 more districts in 2024.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Sri Lanka has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Policy on the Elimination of Child Labor in Sri Lanka: Aims to mainstream child labor issues into national development policies, improve enforcement, and support collaboration with key stakeholders. Under the policy framework, the Department of Labor will track school dropout rates, establish a reporting mechanism, and identify vulnerable children and potential child labor cases in the Sabargamuva District in 2024.</p> <p>National Child Protection Policy: Established by the National Child Protection Authority as a measure to address issues faced by children, including the sexual exploitation of children in the tourism sector. In 2023, the government started drafting a Child Rights Act.</p> <p>ILO Decent Work Country Program: Detailed the priorities and outcomes required to make progress toward the goal of decent work for all. Identified key areas of work for the eradication of child labor, including operationalizing the Child Labor-Free Zone model in additional districts, expanding the inspection system to cover child labor in the informal sector, raising the minimum age for employment to age 16, revising regulations on hazardous child labor, improving the complaint and referral mechanisms, and regularly collecting data on child labor. Although the program expired in 2022, it continued to be implemented during the reporting period. For example, the program held a 1-day event in 10 districts to raise awareness of child labor laws in 2023.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Sri Lanka funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address child labor in all sectors, including mining and agriculture.</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i> <i>† Program is funded by the Government of Sri Lanka.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Child Labor-Free Zone Model:† Local government initiatives that seek to eliminate child labor through the identification of children engaged in child labor, a rehabilitation program, assistance to families of children at risk of engaging in child labor, and an awareness-raising campaign. Operated by district secretariats with assistance from the DOL and with technical and financial support from the ILO. During the reporting period, existing programming was continued in 10 districts with a plan to extend the program to 10 more districts in 2024.</p> <p>Humanitarian Action for Children:* \$34 million UNICEF-led campaign to support children’s school attendance, nutrition, and safety in response to the economic crisis. The World Food Program restarted the school meal program through 2023 and in October 2023 announced the expansion of school meal programs to cover 1.6 million students in primary schools across the country.</p> <p>Aswesuma:*† Government social welfare program that aims to alleviate poverty in Sri Lanka by providing financial assistance to families based on their economic status. During the reporting period, the program provided benefits to 1.7 million families.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

SURINAME

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Suriname made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government signed the Third Decent Country Work Program with the International Labor Organization, which includes proactive strategies for the prevention and eradication of child labor. The Ministry of Labor also created a commission that evaluated the 2010 Decree on Hazardous Work for Youth and presented recommendations to update it. Additionally, a representative of the National Commission on Combating Child Labor took part in a regional conference in Peru at which countries shared best practices and agreed to collaborate on a series of activities to combat child labor. However, despite these efforts, the compulsory education age falls below the minimum age for employment, leaving some children vulnerable to labor exploitation. In addition, while Suriname's laws criminalize sexual acts with a minor under 16, they do not criminally prohibit the use of a child under the age of 16 for commercial sex. The government also did not report the number of child labor inspections it conducted in 2023.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	7.2% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.3%

Children in Suriname are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Harvesting crops, including the use of dangerous equipment, carrying heavy loads,[†] and applying pesticides.[†] Forestry,[†] fishing, and hunting.



Industry

Gold mining,[†] including carrying heavy loads[†] and exposure to chemicals.[†] Construction[†] and wood processing.[†]



Services

Street work, including vending, domestic work, and airport luggage transportation.[†]



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities, including selling drugs.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Suriname’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Increase the compulsory education age from age 12 to at least age 16, the minimum age for work.

Criminally prohibit the military recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Criminally prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children, including the use of a child under age 16 for prostitution.

Criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Enforcement

Publish information on the Labor Inspectorate's budget and the number of worksite inspections conducted.

Ensure that the Labor Inspectorate and the Trafficking in Persons Unit of the Suriname Police Force are sufficiently funded and adequately staffed to cover labor inspections in both the formal and informal sectors of the labor force, including in risk-prone sectors, such as in fisheries, mining, and agricultural areas in which child labor is likely to occur, particularly in the interior of the country.

Ensure that there are sufficient resources, including for travel to the interior of the country, and inspectors to proactively investigate human trafficking cases.

Ensure that the child labor referral system can adequately provide long-term solutions, including housing, to child labor cases that are reported to it.

Government Policies

Ensure that the government policy to address child labor is approved by the government so it is able to carry out its intended mandates.

Social Programs

Develop social programs to prevent and eradicate child labor in agriculture and mining.

Strengthen specialized social services to assist child victims of human trafficking, including commercial sexual exploitation.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education, particularly for children in the interior, by eliminating school-related fees, reducing transportation costs, increasing access to schools in remote locations, improving teacher availability, removing requirements for documentation, and covering material missed during school closures.

Ensure that all children, including children of foreign-born parents, have access to free public education regardless of citizenship and residency status, and that school registration is not used to report families without proper residential status.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK












Children in migrant populations, especially those with irregular status residing in the country, are particularly vulnerable to both sex and labor trafficking due to challenges associated with their precarious legal status. Children in Suriname's remote interior are also subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, including in informal mining camps.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although Suriname’s attendance percentage for primary school is high, it drops significantly for secondary school. Research indicates that there are disparities in education completion rates based on geographic and socioeconomic status, and that secondary school completion rates in the interior are as low as 15 percent. In 2023, schools in the interior did not open until months after schools in the coastal area had already reopened, with delays attributed to lack of facilities, teachers, and supplies, including water, as well as unpaid bills from flight companies that transport teachers to isolated villages. The delay in reopening schools has led to children seeking other activities, including employment in artisanal gold mining. Although children who are not citizens of Suriname can access free public education if they provide a birth certificate and vaccination records, children have been prohibited from accessing school due to a lack of proper paperwork. Migrant parents experience more problems in registering their children for school. Research suggests that families residing illegally in the country have also kept their children out of school to avoid being reported to authorities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Suriname has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Suriname's laws do not meet international standards, including insufficient prohibitions related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and a compulsory education age that is less than the minimum age for work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 1 (j–l), 3, and 11 of the Children and Young Persons Labor Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 1 (k and l) and 11 of the Children and Young Persons Labor Act; Article 1 of the Decree on Hazardous Labor for Youth
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2 and 3 of the Decree on Hazardous Labor for Youth; Article 11 of the Children and Young Persons Labor Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 334, 338, and 339 of the Penal Code; Article 15 of the Constitution; Article 1 the Children and Young Persons Labor Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 334 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 291, 293, 297, 298, 303a, and 306 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 9 of the Conscription Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 12 Years		Article 39 of the Constitution; Article 20 of the Law on Basic Education
Free Public Education		Articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution

*Country has no conscription

Suriname's laws do not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation of children because while it is criminal to have a sexual relationship with a child under the age of 16, the use of a child under age 16 for commercial sex is not criminally prohibited. In addition, while the Penal Code establishes penalties for the production and trafficking of drugs, it does not specifically prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child in the production and trafficking of drugs. Moreover, Article 20 of the Law on Basic Education requires children to attend school only until they are 12 years old. This makes children ages 12 to 16 particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor because they are not legally required to attend school nor are they legally permitted to work.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Suriname took actions to address child labor. However, gaps exist within the operations of the agencies that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient financial resources.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Employment Opportunity and Youth Affairs (MOL): Enforces laws related to child labor through its Labor Inspectorate. Reports suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor to the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Unit of the Suriname Police Force within 45 minutes of identification. Leading up to the International Day Against Child Labor on June 12, 2023, MOL signed a commitment to accelerate the elimination of Child Labor by 2025 as outlined in the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 8.7.

Suriname Police Force: Enforces criminal laws related to child labor. Includes the Youth Affairs Police, which cover law enforcement involving children under age 18 and are responsible for child labor-related crimes. Also includes the TIP Unit, which investigates reports and allegations of human trafficking and forced sexual exploitation nationwide, including cases involving children, and closely collaborates with the Prosecutors' Office. In 2023, the TIP Unit held multiple awareness sessions on human trafficking for different audiences, including high schools, police officers, NGOs, and authorities working on Suriname's migration policy. Funding and resources are continuous challenges for the TIP Unit.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. The government also conducted **2** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **1** prosecution, and convicted **0** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Suriname established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Commission on Combating Child Labor (NCUK): Inter-departmental commission tasked with drafting and implementing legislation and policies to prevent and combat child labor. In 2023, NCUK met multiple times to discuss updating policies and legislation on child labor as well as proposed projects to prevent child labor. In addition, a member of NCUK took part in a regional conference in Peru at which countries shared best practices and agreed to collaborate on a series of activities to combat child labor. Members also met with visiting representatives of ILO to discuss potential funding opportunities for projects. NCUK's term expired in December 2023, and a proposal for extension has been forwarded to the government for approval.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Suriname established policies related to child labor. However, the government has yet to approve needed updates.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor (2019–2024): Aims to remove children from child labor and address the root causes of child labor, including poverty and lack of educational opportunities. Recently updated to include regional activities and extend through 2025. However, the updated version still has to be approved by the government.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Suriname funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation and mining.</p> <p><i>*Program was launched during the reporting period. † Program is funded by the Government of Suriname. ‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Decent Work Country Program:* ILO program that supports capacity building of the Labor Inspectorate and constituents, as well as the National Commission on Combating Child Labor for implementing the National Action Plan. In February 2023, Suriname and ILO signed the Third Decent Country Work Program, which includes proactive strategies for the prevention of child labor, sustainable eradication of child labor, and promotion of decent work. Includes a multi-step plan to address child labor through legislative reform, effective enforcement, and improved referral systems.</p> <p>My Line (Mi Lijn):† Government-run, 24-hour hotline that provides confidential advice to children in need, including victims of the worst forms of child labor, victims of domestic violence, and persons in need of mental support. The initiative continued to operate during the reporting period, with limited government support.</p> <p>Consolidating Access to Inclusive Quality Education in Suriname:‡ Government program, supported by the Inter-American Development Bank, that began an initiative with the goal of providing inclusive access to all levels of education in Suriname, with a specific focus on children in the interior and improving the quality of lower secondary education. In October 2023, held a 2-day seminar with the Ministry of Education for stakeholders on the state of the education system in Suriname to discuss ways in which the education sector can be adjusted to accommodate the needs of employers, while also developing the individual talents of students.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

TANZANIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, the United Republic of Tanzania made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government approved and began implementing an updated National Strategy on Elimination of Child Labor and conducted a baseline assessment of child labor policies and practices of companies involved in major agricultural supply chains. In addition, the government funded community dialogues and a television public awareness campaign on countering trafficking in persons. However, gaps remain in the legal framework and enforcement of laws related to child labor, including the lack of penalties for use of children in illicit activities, the lack of minimum age protections for children engaged in domestic work, and an insufficient number of labor inspectors to monitor Tanzania's labor force.

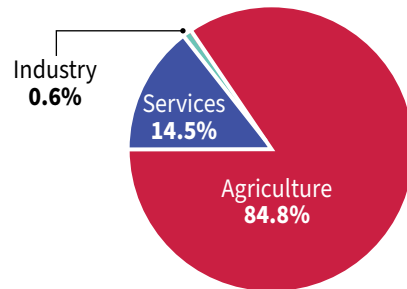


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	20.4% (3,345,516)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	83.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	18.4%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Tanzania are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in mining, quarrying, and domestic work. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including plowing, weeding,† harvesting,† and processing of crops, including cloves, coffee, rice, sisal, tea, and tobacco; fishing† of Nile perch; and herding of livestock, including cattle.



Industry

Mining,† including gold and tanzanite, and using mercury, and quarrying† for production of stone.



Services

Domestic work, working in bars,† and street work, including vending,† shining shoes, and scavenging.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, tobacco farming, fishing, mining, quarrying, street begging, street activities such as shining shoes and pushing carts, and working in factories and bars, as well as commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Tanzania's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Expand the list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children to include weeding and processing in the production of tobacco, cloves, coffee, sisal, and tea.

Criminalize the use of children in illicit activities, particularly in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Criminalize the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Extend the minimum age protections so that they apply to all children, including those engaged in domestic work.

Increase the compulsory education age from age 13 to age 14 to align with the minimum age for work.

Establish by law free basic public education and remove legal authority of local education authorities to assess discretionary education fees.

Enforcement

Increase budgetary resources for the child labor complaint mechanism so that it can fully carry out its operations.

Increase financial and material resources, including office facilities, transportation, and fuel, for the labor inspectorate, and increase the number of labor inspectors from 87 to 643 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 25.7 million workers.

Develop a mechanism for the centralized collection and publication of data related to the worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations and imposed penalties for violations.

Ensure that the number of labor inspections conducted is commensurate to the size of the labor inspectorate to maintain adequate quality and scope of inspections.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Education Task Force on Child Labor is able to carry out its intended mandates.

Government Policies

Eliminate provisions in the Primary School Leaving Examination that prohibit children who initially fail the exam from retaking it for consideration in secondary school admission.

Social Programs

Facilitate reenrollment of girls who leave school during pregnancy.

Make education accessible to all children in Tanzania, including those living in rural areas, by ensuring adequate resources for children with disabilities and learning disorders; increasing resources for teachers, classrooms and desks, food, and sanitation facilities; and defraying informal costs imposed on families, including school uniforms, books, and other learning materials.

Harmonize child labor prevention and elimination measures into the Social Action Fund Conditional Cash Transfer Program to increase its effectiveness.

Undertake activities to implement the Tanzania Social Action Fund Conditional Cash Transfer Program and make information about implementation measures publicly available.

Develop programs that include children engaged in child labor in the domestic work, fishing, and informal sectors.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Human traffickers exploit migrant children, particularly from Burundi, in domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation. Refugee children living in Tanzania are also increasingly subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in farming in western Tanzania. In addition, children from underserved communities, particularly impoverished orphans and children with disabilities from rural areas, are frequently subjected to forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Schools, particularly in rural areas, lack adequate teachers, classrooms and desks, and sanitation facilities, and families are often required to financially contribute to offset these deficits and pay for the costs of uniforms and learning materials. Schools are also not sufficiently equipped to serve children with disabilities and learning difficulties. In 2021, the government reversed its longstanding practice of expelling girls who became pregnant from school. However, girls can still be removed from school during the duration of their pregnancy, which reduces the likelihood that they will return to education.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Tanzania has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Tanzania’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work, compulsory education, and free basic education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Articles 5 and 102 of the Employment and Labor Relations Act; Article 77 of the Law of the Child Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 5 and 102 of the Employment and Labor Relations Act; Article 82 of the Law of the Child Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 5 and First Schedule of Regulations of the Employment and Labor Relations Act; Article 82 of the Law of the Child Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 6 of the Employment and Labor Relations Act; Articles 80 and 81 of the Law of the Child Act; Article 25 of the Constitution; Articles 3, 4 and 5 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 3, 4 and 5 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Articles 80-81 of the Law of the Child Act.
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 138.2.f of the Sexual Offenses Special Provisions Act; Articles 3, 4, and 5 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Section 83 of the Law of the Child Act.
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 29 of the National Defense Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 13 Years		Article 35 of the National Education Act
Free Public Education		

*Country has no conscription

Although the Mainland government has a list of hazardous work activities for children, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover work in weeding and processing in the production of tobacco, cloves, coffee, sisal, and tea; an area of work where there is evidence of work in unhealthy environments and use of dangerous equipment and tools. The Mainland government also does not stipulate penalties for using children for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. In addition, minimum age for work laws in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar do not meet international standards because they do not extend to all working children, including children engaged in domestic work. Furthermore, as the compulsory education age in both the Mainland and Zanzibar is below the minimum age for work, children are vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work. The Mainland also lacks a legal standard mandating free basic education for children, though it supports free basic education through a policy. However, the National Education Act authorizes local education authorities to assess school fees at their discretion, which may contravene any future legal standards to provide free basic education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Tanzania took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resource allocation and budgetary resources for the child labor complaint mechanism hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

The Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office for Policy, Labor, Employment, Youth, and the Disabled (PLEYD): Assigns area labor officers in each region to respond to reports of child labor violations, issues non-compliance orders, and reports incidents to police and the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children. Through its Labor Administration and Inspection Section, provides legal guidance upon request, disseminates information to employers and employees on their rights and obligations, and helps area offices conduct labor inspections. Coordinates with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups, which employs officers to monitor child labor at the district and village levels and reports back to PLEYD. In Zanzibar, the Zanzibar Labor Commission ensures compliance with child protection and child labor laws, including inspections, through its Child Protection Unit and employs 10 labor inspectors who investigate child labor cases reported by the police and refers cases to social welfare officers.

Ministry of Home Affairs and Tanzanian Police Force: Chairs the Anti-Trafficking Secretariat, which coordinates the government’s anti-trafficking efforts. The Tanzanian Police Force, through its Gender and Children’s desks, investigates cases of child labor and other forms of child endangerment reported to police stations.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

In 2023, **94** labor inspectors conducted **14,000** worksite inspections, identifying **38** violations of child labor. It is **unknown** whether investigations into the worst forms of child labor were conducted or whether prosecutions were initiated, although **0** perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Tanzania established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including a lack of reported activities.</p>	<p>National Education Task Force on Child Labor: Reviews existing laws, regulations, and strategies related to children’s issues, including the National Strategy on the Elimination of Child Labor. Evaluates educational curriculum and programs, identifies gaps, and suggests strategies to resolve barriers to accessing education. The government did not provide information about activities undertaken by the Task Force in 2023.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Tanzania established policies related to child labor. However, an education policy may prohibit children from continuing their education, making them vulnerable to child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>National Strategy on Elimination of Child Labor (2023–2027):<i>†</i> Coordinates prevention and responses to the worst forms of child labor at the national level. In 2023, the government adopted and began implementing the National Strategy, and will formally launch the policy in June 2024.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Tanzania funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including domestic work, fishing, and the informal sector.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Tanzania.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Tanzania Social Action Fund Conditional Cash Transfer Program:<i>†</i> Government-funded conditional cash transfer program to provide financial assistance to vulnerable populations, including children. Also manages Zanzibar’s Productive Social Safety Net fund, which provides conditional cash transfers to 33,523 households experiencing extreme poverty and other vulnerabilities to child labor. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Tanzania Social Action Fund Conditional Cash Transfer Program during the reporting period.</p> <p>Rural Enterprise Support to Eliminate Child Labor: Project implemented by the Eliminating Child Labor in Tobacco Growing Foundation that aims to support farmers and reduce child labor in Chunya, Kaliua, Sikonge, and Urambo districts. In 2023, 1,835 people were reached during the project to raise awareness of child labor in local communities, and sensitization interventions were conducted for 1,900 children and youth.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

THAILAND

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Thailand made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Royal Thai Government initiated prosecutions against 197 individuals for engaging or attempting to engage in the commercial sexual exploitation of children, a sharp increase compared to 67 individuals prosecuted in 2022. The government also passed a resolution that allows unregistered migrant workers and their children, who are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation and trafficking, to be registered and remain in the country through February 2025. In addition, it created an *ad hoc* labor protection network on the popular Thai online messaging platform called Line, which connects 2,106 members across 33 provinces, to exchange and publish information about child labor. Thailand's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force also implemented a new project to raise awareness of child trafficking and develop support and surveillance networks, targeting 600 students at public and private educational institutions. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, Thailand's minimum age protections do not meet international standards as the law does not grant protections to children working outside of formal employment relationships. Moreover, there remains a lack of available research and data on the prevalence of child labor in high-risk sectors, such as agriculture, garment manufacturing, domestic work, and construction.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	13.0% (1,302,267)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	96.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	14.4%

Children in Thailand are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in the agriculture sector.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working on farms, including animal farms, and planting and harvesting sugarcane; and working in fisheries and on sea vessels.†



Industry

Working in manufacturing, including garment production. Working in poultry factories. Also engaged in construction, including transporting building materials.



Services

Domestic work, restaurants, motor vehicle repair shops, gas stations, street work, including begging and vending, and *Muay Thai* fighting.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, including in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in vending, begging, domestic work, and producing garments. Used in the production and trafficking of drugs, including narcotics.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Thailand’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Extend the minimum age of work to apply to children who are working without monetary wages.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Update hazardous occupations and activities that are prohibited for children to include sectors in which child labor is known to occur, including paid participation in *Muay Thai*, in which there is evidence that children are exposed to physical dangers.

Enforcement

Publish information on criminal investigations and imposed penalties for worst forms of child labor crimes, as well as whether unannounced inspections were conducted.

Conduct unannounced inspections at remote workplaces, including in agriculture and domestic work, and ensure inspections occur without interference from business owners, local politicians, or authorities.

Provide interpretation services that enable labor inspectors to meaningfully interview foreign workers and ensure independence of the labor inspectorate from outside interests.

Ensure that fishing vessels employing children under age 18 to work as apprentices are fully complying with the protections required in the Ministerial Regulation on Protection of Fishery Work to prevent the increased risk of child labor for apprentices.

Fully implement the National Referral Mechanism and provide training for officials and multidisciplinary teams, including at the local levels.

Government Policies

Publish activities undertaken to implement key policies related to child labor, including the National Strategic Plan (2018–2037).

Social Programs

Publish activities undertaken to implement key social programs related to child labor, including Centers to Promote Child Advocacy and for Victims of Trafficking and Migrants.

Improve access to education, especially for ethnic minority and migrant children, including by clarifying to school officials the necessary documents non-Thai students need to submit for enrollment, raising awareness of migrant children’s right to education, increasing language and instructional support for non-Thai speakers, including on public school applications, and ensuring that Migrant Learning Centers are accredited.

Conduct child labor prevalence surveys to ensure that there are sufficient social programs to address exploitation of children in the agriculture, garment manufacturing, domestic work, and construction sectors.

Provide sufficient funding for social programs to assist children from vulnerable groups, such as migrant children and LGBTQIA+ children, who face barriers to education and are at high risk of child labor.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

A widespread labor shortage, coupled with increased migration between Burma and Thailand due to the ongoing Burma military situation, resulted in increased numbers of underage migrant children engaging in child labor. These migrants are at higher risk of being exploited by recruitment agencies that falsify ages on official documents, resulting in children working while underage. In addition, an increased

number of children are reported to be exploited in forced labor and forced criminality in online scamming operations in Chinese-owned Special Economic Zones in neighboring countries. Thai children, as well as children from Burma, Laos, and Cambodia, are also subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in Thai massage parlors, bars, karaoke lounges, hotels, and private residences. In addition, children are increasingly being coerced into producing pornography and performing sexual acts through online social media platforms and private chat rooms.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While Thai law provides for 12 years of free education for all children, language barriers prevent some non-Thai speaking children from accessing basic education as public school instruction and school applications are only available in Thai. Furthermore, although Thailand law does not require that children provide identity documents or a registered address for school enrollment, research found that some schools request documentation of non-Thai students, which may prevent their access to education. Some migrant and refugee communities have formed unofficial educational learning centers, including Migrant Learning Centers (MLCs), to provide children with native-language education or assist children who have had difficulty enrolling in or accessing Thai schools. However, most MLCs lack accreditation, and some have been subject to visits by immigration police to verify the legal status of migrant teachers and workers. This practice intimidated some migrant children and their families, resulting in reduced attendance of children at the MLCs. Children identifying as LGBTQIA+ and those experiencing poverty, drug addiction, family problems, and teen pregnancy may also face additional barriers to education access due to harassment and bullying.







LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Thailand has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Thailand's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the labor code does not protect children working outside of employment relationships.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Sections 5, 44, and 148/1 of the Labor Protection Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Sections 22, 47, 49, 50, 144, and 148/2 of the Labor Protection Act; Sections 26 and 78 of the Child Protection Act; Sections 20 and 45 of the Home Workers Protection Act; Section 56/1 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Chapter 4, Sections 49 and 50 of the Labor Protection Act; Clause 4 of the Ministerial Regulation concerning Labor Protection in Sea Fishery Work; Clause 2 of the Ministerial Regulation Identifying Tasks that may be Hazardous to the Health and Safety of Pregnant Women or Children Under the Age of Fifteen Years
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 312 and 312 <i>bis</i> of the Penal Code; Section 6, 8, 52, and 53 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 282, 283, and 285 of the Penal Code; Sections 4 and 6 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (No. 3)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 8 and 9 of the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act; Section 4, 6, 6/1, 52 and 53 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 4 and 8 of the Royal Decree Amendments of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 282, 283, 285, and 286 of the Penal Code; Section 26 of the Child Protection Act; Amendment to Section 84 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Sections 4 and 26(5) of the Child Protection Act; Sections 93 and 93/2 of the Narcotics Act; Section 84 of the Penal Code; Section 22 of the Beggar Control Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Section 25 of the Military Service Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Section 16 of the Military Service Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Section 17 of the National Education Act
Free Public Education		Section 10 of the National Education Act; Section 54 of the Thai Constitution

The minimum age for work in Thailand does not comply with international standards because the law does not grant protections to children working outside of wage employment but may otherwise receive non-monetary benefits (e.g. food, shelter) in exchange for their work. In addition, the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age and, as a result, some children may leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Moreover, although Thailand has identified fishing on sea vessels as a form of hazardous labor—and research indicates that there is inadequate oversight of fishing vessels—the government implemented an amendment in 2022 to the Ministerial Regulation on Protection of Fishery Work 2014 allows owners of fishing boats to employ a relative as young as age 16 as an intern. The law does not prohibit the paid participation of children in *Muay Thai*, in which there is evidence that children who are participating for financial benefits are exposed to physical injury.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Thailand took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of inspections in informal sectors and sectors primarily employing migrant populations hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor Protection and Welfare (DLPW): Enforces child labor laws through workplace inspections. Operates Hotline 1506, a phone number that the public can use to make labor abuse complaints. Staffs DLPW offices in each province in Thailand to answer questions about working conditions and receive child labor complaints from the public. Reports indicate some labor inspectors intentionally overlook instances of child labor among migrant children due to fear of reprisal from business owners and local politicians and authorities. In 2023, labor inspections resulted in the identification of 477 children between the ages of 15 and 17 who were working in agriculture, which is often seasonal. The government also provided training to 104 labor inspectors in central and provincial areas during the year. Nonetheless, there are reports of child labor inspections in informal sectors being insufficient due to labor inspectors' inability to access remote workplaces and safety concerns for inspectors.

Royal Thai Police (RTP): Operate the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division (ATPD); the Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (TICAC); and the Child Women Protection, Anti-Human Trafficking, and Fishery Industry Center (CWP). ATPD enforces laws related to forced labor, human trafficking, child pornography, and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and operates Hotline 1191 to receive complaints on human trafficking and violence against children. TICAC investigates and enforces laws against child trafficking and online commercial sexual exploitation of children, including the distribution and production of child pornography. During the reporting period, TICAC initiated 540 investigations. CWP is responsible for protecting children, young people, women, and other workers from human rights violations at both the national and international levels. However, there were reports that human trafficking may be underreported due to inconsistencies in the identification process and training gaps, including the lack of awareness of human trafficking crimes amongst police, prosecutors, and judges. In 2023, CWP collaborated with non-governmental organizations to hold training workshops focused on preventing child trafficking, which were presented in 33 schools.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **2,501** labor inspectors conducted **17,847** worksite inspections. Although the government prosecuted **114** cases related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children, it is **unknown** the number of investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p>	<p>National Committee to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Coordinates the implementation of child labor policies, facilitates cooperation among relevant ministries, and reports annually to the Thai Cabinet on child labor issues. Responsible for monitoring the National Policy and Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor. During the reporting year, met and monitored the progress of a draft amendment to the Boxing Act B.E. 2542 (1999), which would introduce measures to strengthen protections and improve safety for children participating in <i>Muay Thai</i> boxing. Also reviewed guidelines to prevent and address child labor and forced labor issues in the shrimp, fish, sugarcane, and garment industries.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Thailand has established policies related to child labor. However, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Strategic Plan during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Fourth Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2023–2027):[†] Seeks to operationalize an integrated, cooperative approach to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Thailand, with five supporting sub-action plans focused on: (1) preventing all forms of child labor and providing public communication; (2) strong legal frameworks and effective enforcement; (3) providing assistance, protection, and rehabilitation to the victims of the worst forms of child labor; (4) promoting cooperation among government agencies in preventing and eliminating the worst forms of child labor; and (5) developing an administration, monitoring, and evaluation system for the action plan.</p> <p>Cyber Tipline Remote Access Policy: Seeks to eliminate online sexual exploitation of children in Thailand by partnering with the U.S. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Supports TICAC by permitting the RTP to request warrants to search residences and electronic equipment for child pornography and initiate criminal prosecutions. In 2023, TICAC investigated 8,626 tips received through Cyber Tipline and a total of 358 victims were rescued.</p>
<p>[†] Policy was approved during the reporting period. [‡] The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>National Strategic Plan (2018–2037): Seeks to improve education access, particularly for vulnerable and poor children in remote areas, by increasing transportation to school, reforming the school subsidy program for poor families, and providing scholarships for children who stay in school. Research could not determine what activities were undertaken during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Thailand funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, a lack of research and data on child labor prevalence in high-risk sectors (including agriculture, garment manufacturing, domestic work, and construction) makes it difficult for the Government of Thailand to design programs to address these issues.

*† Program is funded by the Government of Thailand.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.*

Centers to Promote Child Advocacy and for Victims of Trafficking and Migrants:[†] Migrant Learning Centers (MLCs) are non-governmental- and government-operated centers that provide basic education, life skills training, and vocational training to children in migrant communities along Thailand's borders. The government reported that 65 registered MLCs supporting 10,808 students were in operation in 2022. In addition, the Migrant Educational Coordination Center was created to improve access to education for migrant children, support increased coordination of MLCs, and develop the capacity of teachers in MLCs. Research could not determine what activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

Programs to Address the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children:[†] The Ministry of Tourism and Sports initiated the Child Friendly Tourism project by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with 21 government agencies, private sector organizations, and NGOs to develop measures to prevent and reduce commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry. Moreover, the Thailand Safe Internet Coalition, a partnership led by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), UNICEF, and Thai telecommunications companies and internet service providers, was formed to strengthen reporting of online abuse, enhance coordination, improve service provision for survivors, and increase awareness of children, young people, and parents regarding online risks. During the reporting period, Child Friendly Tourism subcommittees met to discuss child-safe tourism, and the RTP also developed a Handbook for Child Safe and Friendly Tourism to support the subcommittee. Also organized a project to develop online and offline curricula to train tourism personnel to better protect child victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation; the training was given to 690 people.

Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) Programs:[†] Implements anti-trafficking projects through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division (ATPD). Oversees Hotline 1300, which receives human trafficking and child labor complaints. Operates 77 temporary shelters, with one located in every province, and 9 long-term shelters for human trafficking survivors, including a shelter dedicated solely to boys. Monitors 76 Provincial Operation Centers for the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking. Provides assistance and welfare protection to survivors of human trafficking. In 2023, launched a campaign to raise awareness about online sexual exploitation of children and implemented a project to help local communities support at-risk youths, which reached 834 people and 23 local communities. However, research found that temporary shelters for trafficking survivors managed by MSDHS employed inconsistent policies and provision of care to victims, including a lack of psychologists and staff trained on trauma-informed care.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

 **WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT**

Thailand imposes limitations on freedom of association, such as minimum worker requirements for union formation, lack of protections against anti-union discrimination, and restrictions on the right to strike in certain sectors. In addition, as migrant workers are legally barred from forming their own unions, labor abuse and exploitation are endemic to the country's migrant-dominated labor sectors, such as agriculture, seafood processing and fishing.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



TIMOR-LESTE

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Timor-Leste made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased funding for the labor inspectorate from \$490,869 in 2022 to \$535,000 in 2023. The National Commission Against Child Labor also resubmitted a proposal to ratify International Labor Organization Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Work. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Timor-Leste is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because research indicates that pregnant girls are prohibited from attending school while pregnant or returning to school after pregnancy, making them more vulnerable to involvement in child labor, including its worst forms. In addition, Timor-Leste’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for hazardous work as the Labor Code sets the minimum age for hazardous work at age 17. They also do not meet the standard on the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children as the Penal Code fails to criminalize the use of a child for prostitution, as well as the use of children in illicit activities as the Penal Code is limited to children under the age of 17. In addition, it is unknown whether criminal law enforcement agencies took actions to address the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period.

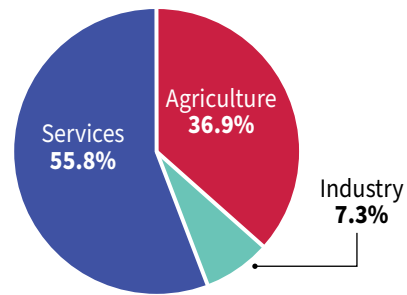


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	12.3% (40,337)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	83.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	12.4%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Timor-Leste are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, as well as forced domestic and agricultural work and forced labor in street vending.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and fishing.†



Industry

Construction† and mining.†



Services

Domestic work† and street work, including vending, begging, and scavenging. Also working in shopkeeping, selling goods in markets, and restaurant services.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic and agricultural work. Forced labor in street vending.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Timor-Leste’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Criminalize the use of children for prostitution.

Raise the minimum age for hazardous work from 17 to 18 years old.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Ensure that the law’s light work provisions specify the light work activities that are legally permissible.

Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 years old to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Ensure that the Administration of the Labor Inspectorate General is staffed with the appropriate number of labor inspectors to conduct the targeted number of labor inspections.

Ensure that the Administration of the Labor Inspectorate General conducts inspections in the informal sector, including on farms and in private homes where domestic work takes place.

Ensure that labor law enforcement agencies receive sufficient funding to carry out inspections, especially in rural areas of Timor-Leste, including funding for fuel for government vehicles.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement officials receive sufficient training on laws related to the worst forms of child labor and human trafficking.

Ensure that the Vulnerable Persons Unit receives sufficient funding to carry out investigations.

Finalize, implement, and train all relevant officials on formal procedures for victim identification and employ proper screening procedures when encountering vulnerable populations, such as during raids, upon detention, or prior to initiating deportation.

Publish criminal law enforcement data related to the worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations, prosecutions initiated, and perpetrators convicted.

Government Policies

Adopt the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Timor-Leste.

Publish activities undertaken on an annual basis to implement the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan (2011–2030).

Establish a policy to enable girls to receive an education while pregnant and to encourage them to return to school after giving birth.

Social Programs

Cease the practice of prohibiting pregnant students from attending or re-enrolling in school after giving birth, ensure that they can obtain transfer documentation to continue their education during pregnancy if needed, and provide these students with assistance so they can return to school after giving birth.

Improve access to education by providing safe and healthy sanitation facilities, especially for girls, making schools accessible for children with disabilities, eliminating school-related expenses, allowing students to enroll without birth registrations, providing adequate training for teachers, and providing a sufficient number of teachers.

Institute programs to address child labor and the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture.

Publish activities undertaken to implement social programs.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In Timor-Leste, traffickers exploit some children from rural areas and the capital, Dili, in domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, or other forms of forced labor. Of these children, those identifying as LGBTQIA+ are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, some rural families send children to live with relatives in Dili for school, work, or both; however, there are reports that some of those children are forced to work, including as street vendors, to earn their keep. Although data is limited, it is reported that children are sometimes directed to work on family farms against their wishes to pay off family debt.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Research indicates that pregnant girls are sometimes not permitted to continue their education at school and therefore drop out. Those wishing to re-enroll in school face hurdles doing so, including difficulty receiving necessary school documents or transferring schools. While there are indications that a policy mandating pregnant girls be allowed to attend and re-enroll in school is in development, research was unable to determine the draft policy's status in 2023. In addition, other barriers to education access in Timor-Leste include inadequate school facilities, a limited number of teachers, inadequate teacher training, and long distances to school, especially in rural areas. Children with disabilities are also often unable to attend school due to accessibility challenges. Further, students need birth records to enroll in school, and birth registrations are sometimes unavailable in rural areas. Although public education is free, families of students must pay for school uniforms and supplies, costs that can restrict access to school, particularly for children from poor and rural areas.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Timor-Leste has not ratified a key international convention concerning child labor, ILO C. 138. In addition, Timor-Leste's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for hazardous work as the Labor Code sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 17, the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children as the Penal Code fails to criminalize the use of a child for prostitution, and the prohibition of using children in illicit activities as the Penal Code is limited to children under the age of 17.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 68 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 17 Years		Article 67 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		List of Hazardous and Prohibited Activities to Children Under the Age of 18
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 81 of the Immigration and Asylum Act; Articles 155, 162, 163, and 166 of the Penal Code; Fourth Amendment to Articles 163 and 164 of the Penal Code; Articles 8, 67 and 99 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 81 of the Immigration and Asylum Act; Fourth Amendment to Articles 163 and 164 of the Penal Code; Articles 162 and 166 of the Penal Code; Articles 5(h), 67, and 99 of the Labor Code; Article 18 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 81 of the Immigration and Asylum Act; Fourth Amendment to Articles 163 and 164 of the Penal Code; Articles 155 and 174–176 of the Penal Code; Articles 5(h), 67, and 99 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 155 of the Penal Code; Articles 5, 67, and 99 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 17 of the Law on Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 14 of the Law on Military Service

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 125 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 11 of the Education System Framework Law
Free Public Education		Section 59 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste; Article 11 of the Education System Framework Law

Although Timor-Leste has adopted the List of Hazardous and Prohibited Activities to Children Under the Age of 18, it is uncertain how this law will interact with the Labor Code, which sets the minimum age for hazardous work at age 17 and does not meet international standards. The Labor Code also does not specify which activities qualify as light work. In addition, the Penal Code fails to criminalize the use of a child for prostitution and is limited to children under the age of 17, thus not meeting the international standard on the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in illicit activities. Finally, the minimum age for work of 15 is lower than the compulsory education age of 16, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor law enforcement agencies in Timor-Leste took actions to address child labor. However, there were no documented actions by criminal law enforcement agencies. In addition, insufficient financial and human resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Administration of the Labor Inspectorate General: Falls under the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs and conducts labor inspections. Provides oversight of civil laws related to child labor, investigates incidents of forced labor, and refers potential criminal violations of labor laws to the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL).

Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL): Enforce criminal laws against forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation, child abuse, and human trafficking. Include the Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU).

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **26** labor inspectors conducted **1,932** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Timor-Leste established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Commission Against Child Labor (CNTI): Chaired by the Secretary of State for Training and Employment to develop child labor policies, raise awareness, and contribute to efforts to ratify and implement international conventions related to child protection. Develops the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Timor-Leste. Disseminates formal information on the normative and technical framework applicable to child labor. Elaborates, approves, and periodically reviews the hazardous work list of jobs prohibited for children under age 18. During the reporting period, CNTI conducted several activities, including providing training on preventing and combating child labor for community police, local authorities, VPU investigators, and school inspectors at the municipal level; resubmitting ILO C. 138 for approval; and reviewing and resubmitting the Minister of Coordination Economic Affairs, Ministry Coordinator’s approval of the National Action Plan for Child Labor and the List of Hazardous Work Prohibited to Child Labor Under 18 Years.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Timor-Leste established a policy related to child labor. However, it is unknown whether this policy was active during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan (2011–2030): Provides short-term and long-term plans for the nation’s development, including the eradication of child labor and other forms of child exploitation, poverty alleviation, and implementation of social assistance programs. Also specifies commitments to improve the education system from 2011 to 2030. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan (2011–2030) during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Timor-Leste funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these programs are insufficient to address child labor in all sectors, including in domestic work and agriculture.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Timor-Leste.</i></p>	<p>Bolsa da Mãe:† Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) poverty reduction program that provided cash benefits to poor households with children, woman-headed on the condition that children attend and successfully complete each level of schooling. Other participants of the program were single mothers, widows, and orphans. Funded by the Government of Timor-Leste and the Government of Australia, through the Australia-Timor-Leste Partnership for Human Development. No new activities were implemented nor was research able to determine whether any activities were undertaken to implement <i>Bolsa da Mãe</i> during the reporting period. Research indicates that this program was discontinued at the end of 2023.</p> <p>Casa Vida:† Joint program between MSSI and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s “Nabilan Program and Shelter” initiative. Provides shelter, health assistance, and psychological counseling to minor survivors, including survivors of child labor. Provides specialized assistance for girls up to age 18 who have escaped situations of sexual violence. Receives referrals from civil society organizations as well as the PNTL VPU. Since its founding in 2008, <i>Casa Vida</i> has provided shelter and assistance for more than 300 children who were survivors of abuse. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement <i>Casa Vida</i> during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



TOGO

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Togo made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted a law against sexual violence in schools and allocated 25 percent of its total budget to build hundreds of schools and recruit 4,500 teachers. Togo continued to provide free lunches and healthcare to all students. The Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women, and Literacy and the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor also conducted human trafficking awareness campaigns across the country that reached over 53,000 individuals. Further, the government established the National Commission Against Trafficking in Persons to coordinate multiple stakeholders to address human trafficking, and in March 2023, the National Commission adopted its first action plan to address trafficking in persons. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it did not publish or provide complete labor law enforcement information. In addition, the government has not devoted sufficient resources, such as fuel and transportation, to allow the labor inspectorate to conduct inspections in all sectors and fully enforce the law. Lastly, hazardous work regulations are insufficient because they allow children as young as age 15 to perform some types of hazardous tasks, including carrying heavy loads.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	44.4 (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	89.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	50.4%

Children in Togo are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and smuggling. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture and domestic work.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Herding animals and working in agriculture, including spraying pesticides† and handling fertilizers.†



Industry

Working in construction; working in gravel quarries and sand mines, including excavating and carrying heavy loads.†



Services

Engaging in domestic work.† Begging, working as street vendors and porters in the markets, scavenging for garbage, sometimes carrying heavy loads.† Working as motorcycle repairmen and in blacksmith shops. Working at restaurants, sometimes at night.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, in mining and in quarries, in mechanic shops and blacksmith shops, in household and domestic servitude, roadside vending, and in markets. Use in illicit activities such as smuggling, including the transportation and sale of drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Togo's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for all types of hazardous work from age 15 to age 16. Provide adequate training in the type of work being done for children under age 18.

Establish by law 9 years of free basic education.

Enforcement

Ensure that labor inspectors have adequate resources, including fuel and transportation, to carry out inspections in all sectors, including the informal sector, private homes, and farms.

Publish labor law enforcement information, including the number of labor inspectors, worksite inspections, child labor violations found, whether penalties were imposed for child labor violations, the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, whether routine inspections were targeted, and whether unannounced inspections were conducted.

Provide criminal investigators adequate resources, including training, to enforce worst forms of child labor laws, and investigate, prosecute, and impose penalties for convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that court system processes for addressing child trafficking are timely so as not to deter victims from reporting.

Refer all cases of child labor found in labor inspections to social services. Foster coordination between the criminal justice system and social services to support survivors during judicial proceedings. Report on survivor intake.

Coordination

Increase funding and budgetary oversight of the National Committee for the Reception and Social Reintegration of Child Victims of Trafficking.

Clarify mandates to empower coordinating bodies to carry out intended functions and regularly publish activities.

Government Policies

Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Plan.

Publish activities undertaken to implement the Togolese National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor during the reporting period.

Social Programs

Establish social safety net programs for low-income families to provide supplemental income and ensure children are able to attend school rather than work.

Alleviate costs of school-related expenses, increase the number of teachers and schools, and provide transportation to facilitate access to schools; especially in rural areas. Improve schools' infrastructure, including access to water, toilets, and adequate sanitation. Assure schools are free from sexual and physical violence.

Enhance access to birth registration, including for displaced children.

Target social programs to address child labor in agriculture and domestic work, and particularly in commercial sexual exploitation; alleviating poverty and promoting education.

Expand survivor support programs for child survivors to include providing protection, rehabilitation, and remedy. Enhance and publicize social safety net programs.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Research indicates that sexual exploitation of children is widespread in the Greater Lomé area and other parts of the country; inflation and the security crisis in the Sahel/northern Togo has worsened the situation. Adult women from other West African countries, especially Nigeria, force girls from their families into sexual exploitation. Children living in the rural areas in central and northern Togo—Savanes, Centrale, and Kara—are also at a higher risk for trafficking to neighboring West African countries, as this region serves as primary source region for transnational child trafficking networks, and Togo is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking. Further, the Sahel security crisis in northern Togo has increased the number of children exposed to forced labor, especially forced child begging and hazardous work. Lastly, in a practice known as *confiage*, parents sometimes send their children to live with a friend or relative in a larger town or city. These children are often not sent to school and are subjected to labor exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the government is pursuing a policy of free universal public school, it is not guaranteed by law, and the associated costs—including uniforms, books, and school supplies—make education prohibitively expensive for many families. Research found that insufficient numbers of both teachers and schools have been a major barrier to education. Poor school infrastructure, including inadequate sanitation and lack of access to toilets as well as to water, and physical and sexual violence in schools are also impediments. A lack of transportation and long travel distances to schools pose additional barriers for some children, especially in rural areas. Moreover, both refugees and internally displaced people face difficulty registering children for school due to lack of identity documents. Nationwide, a lack of identity documents often hinders children in rural and semi-urban areas from taking part in national exams. In northern Togo, the ongoing attacks by violent extremist organizations impose another barrier to education, forcing the closure of several schools, and creating the need to use some educational facilities to house refugees and internally displaced persons.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Togo has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Togo's laws do not meet international standards on free public education as education is only free through primary school.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 192, 193, and 354 of the Labor Code; Article 262 of the Children's Code; Article 881.1a of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 2, 192, 193, and 354 of the Labor Code; Arrêté 1556 Determining Dangerous Work Forbidden for Children
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2, 263, and 264 of the Children's Code; Article 319.9 of the Penal Code; Articles 192 and 193 of the Labor Code; Articles 1–11 and annex of Arrêté 1556 Determining Dangerous Work Forbidden for Children
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 7, 19, and 192 of the Labor Code; Articles 2, 264, and 411 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3 and 151 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 192 and 356 of the Labor Code; Articles 2–6 and 10–11 of Law No. 2005-009 Suppressing Child Trafficking in Togo; Articles 2, 264, and 411–414 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3, 151, 317–323, and 882 of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 192 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.f, and 387–390 of the Children’s Code; Article 224 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 192 and 356 of the Labor Code; Articles 2, 264, 276.i, and 405 of the Children’s Code; Articles 317.7, 318, 319, and 329 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 426 of the Children’s Code; Article 6, 7, and 42 of Law No. 2007-010 Regarding the General Statute of the Togolese Armed Forces
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 2 and 426 of the Children’s Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 2 and 426 of the Children’s Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 35 of the Constitution; Article 255 of the Children’s Code
Free Public Education		Article 35 of the Constitution; Law No. 97-16 For the Creation of a Support Fund for Education; Décret 2008-129/PR for the Abolition of School Fees in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools

* Country has no conscription

Togo's Arrêté 1556 permits children as young as age 15 to perform some hazardous tasks, such as transporting heavy loads. This permission violates Article 3(3) of Convention 138, which sets the age at 18 for hazardous tasks. Only when the child has received adequate training, and as long as their health, safety, and morals are fully protected, may they engage in hazardous work at an earlier age; and that standard is 16 years old. In addition, Togo provides for free schooling only through primary school, while basic education has a 9-year standard and includes 3 years of lower secondary school. The failure to provide for complete free basic education may increase risk of children's involvement in the worst forms of child labor because it creates a gap between the conclusion of studies and the onset of legal employment. To stem sexual violence in schools, in 2023 the National Assembly adopted a law for the protection of learners against sexual violence in Togo, which includes criminalizing sexual harassment in schools and other significant measures.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor law enforcement agencies in Togo took actions to address child labor. However, civil unrest in northern Togo and insufficient allocation of government resources, including fuel and transportation, prevented the labor inspectorate from conducting inspections and from fully enforcing the law in all sectors.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Social Dialogue: Conducts labor inspections and enforces labor laws, including child labor laws. Runs a Committee for Social Reintegration of Children, which coordinates efforts on child trafficking. Through its National Working Group for the Elimination of Child Labor, coordinates the day-to-day operations of the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor, rescues children from child labor situations, raises awareness, and collects data. The government did not cease labor inspections during the reporting period; however, inspections overall decreased these last 3 years because of material and financial limitations. Inspections have become difficult to impossible to conduct in areas of northern Togo affected by the fight against violent extremist organizations.

Ministry of Justice and Legislation (previously known as the Ministry of Justice and Government Relations): Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and prosecutes violators in collaboration with the Ministry of Security, which includes the Police and Gendarmerie. Coordinates on children's cases with the General Directorate for the Protection of Children (*Direction Générale de la Protection de l'Enfance, DGPE*), which serves as the central point for social services, reintegration efforts, and law enforcement under the Ministry of Social Action. The government did not publish efforts by criminal law enforcement agencies during the reporting period.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. However, the government conducted **36** criminal investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **36** prosecutions, and convicted **56** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Togo established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, lack of clarity of institutional mandates and poor coordination among relevant agencies hindered efforts to effectively address all forms of child labor.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor (Comité Directeur National de la lutte contre le travail des enfants, CDNLTE): The government's coordinating body for child labor issues. The CDNLTE includes 17 ministries and representatives from NGOs. During the reporting year, the CDNLTE oversaw community-level committees consisting of government officials and community members that support vulnerable children.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Togo established policies related to child labor. However, it is unknown whether activities were undertaken to implement the Togolese National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor during the reporting period.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Action Plan of the National Commission Against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP) (2023–2026):† Adopted by the government in March 2023, the Action Plan aims to strengthen systems to combat human trafficking in Togo, including child trafficking. This plan coordinates prevention and support efforts to enforce trafficking laws of stakeholders from multiple ministries, civil society, international organizations, and development partners. During the reporting period, the CNLTP created a working budget for 2024, and was active in national and West African regional efforts to establish standards of personal security, enhance survivor assistance, build a regional data ecosystem, share operational learnings from the administrative implementation of action plans and programs to counter human trafficking throughout the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region, and participated in the annual evaluation of the ECOWAS regional networks.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Togo established policies related to child labor. However, it is unknown whether activities were undertaken to implement the Togolese National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor during the reporting period.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Togolese National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor for 2020–2024 (Plan d'Action National de lutte contre les pires formes de travail des enfants au Togo 2020–2024, PANLTE): A multisectoral approach to address formal and informal economies to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. No new information was reported in 2023.</p> <p>Savanes Emergency Plan (Programme d'Urgence dans la Region des Savanes (PURS)) (2022–2025): Strengthens resilience in communities affected by violent extremism and terrorist attacks in the northern region. Objectives include access to education and social welfare, and developing income-generating activities, particularly for women and youth. In November 2023, the government secured nearly \$48 million for PURS in a loan from the West African Development Bank; destined to improve rural infrastructure including roads, access to water and electricity, and essential services such as health, education, and security.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Togo funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors, including in agriculture and domestic work, and particularly in commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Survivor Support Programs: The <i>Allo 1011</i> hotline offers reporting, referral, legal information, and emergency intervention services for cases of child labor, abuse, and trafficking via short messaging service (SMS), mobile application, or through a real-time interactive website. The hotline is administered by the DGPE within the Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women, and Literacy, which runs a shelter in Lomé called the <i>Reference Center for Guidance and Care of Children in Difficult Situations</i> that supports survivors of child trafficking and child labor and provides housing as well as legal, medical, psychological, and social services. Research indicated that the hotline and shelter provided services to child survivors of forced labor during the reporting year, but detailed data were not available.</p> <p>School Assur: Provides free healthcare services to public primary and secondary school students, and has benefited 2.6 million people, to date. The program continued to offer free health care to all public-school students and has provided over 4.4 million services in total, including consultations, analysis, prescriptions, and healthcare training. In 2023, it provided approximately 800,000 services throughout Togo.</p> <p>World Bank-Funded Programs: Address child labor by improving infrastructure and social safety nets for vulnerable families and increasing access to education. During the reporting period, the World Bank approved \$100 million to increase the coverage of its social safety net program and strengthen delivery systems. The Improving Quality and Equity of Basic Education Project (2020–2026), implemented by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education and Crafts, aims to enhance teaching and learning quality, improve equitable access to basic education in select regions, particularly among girls, and strengthen sector management. The Urban Water Security Project for Togo,* a 6-year, \$100 million project implemented by the Ministry of Water and Village Hydraulics, aims to increase access to and improve quality of water supply and sanitation services, including water, sanitation, and hygiene services in schools and health care centers. Togo's First Sustainable and Inclusive Development Policy Financing was signed, consecrating \$150 million of World Bank funding to reinforcing the foundations for green, inclusive, and resilient development in Togo with a particular focus on maximizing opportunities for vulnerable populations in underserved rural areas.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



TOKELAU

NO ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Tokelau, in 2023, the government made no advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The government has not established adequate legal protections to prevent the worst forms of child labor. For instance, the law does not criminally prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, or pornographic performances; or the use of children for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs. In addition, Tokelau has not established a minimum age for work and lacks a law that prohibits hazardous occupations and activities for children.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists on Tokelau.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Tokelau's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify ILO Convention 182, the convention concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Establish a minimum age for work of at least age 16 that equals the compulsory age of education, establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work, and identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit forced labor, including debt bondage and slavery.

Ensure that laws prohibit the trafficking of children domestically and internationally for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, and do not require the use of force to be established for the crime of trafficking.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, and pornographic performances.

Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use of children for illicit activities, including for the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the forced or compulsory recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Ensure that free public education is afforded to all children, regardless of legal or resident status.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although education in Tokelau is free for citizens, the territory is isolated, and unreliable access to transportation and telecommunication services limit students' access to education. Additionally, undocumented children and those without permanent resident status are not afforded free public education by law.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Tokelau is a territory of New Zealand; however, New Zealand statutory law does not apply to Tokelau unless it is expressly extended to Tokelau. International treaties are applied only with the consent of the Government of Tokelau. As a result, New Zealand’s ratification of conventions does not apply automatically to Tokelau. None of the key international conventions concerning child labor have been extended to Tokelau, including ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC); the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Tokelau's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work; the prohibition of slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor; and the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work		
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 17 Years		Article 33 of the Government of New Zealand’s Defense Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 63(1) of the Tokelau Crimes, Procedures, and Evidence Rules Act
Free Public Education		Part 1, Section 3 of the Government of New Zealand's Education Act

* Country has no conscription
 † Country has no standing military

Tokelau has not established legislation on the minimum age for work, nor has the government determined the minimum age for hazardous work or the types of work that are hazardous for children. The government also does not prohibit slavery or slavery-like practices such as forced labor. Tokelau's trafficking provision does not clearly criminalize domestic trafficking or the trafficking of children in the absence of force, fraud, or coercion. In addition, the government does not criminalize the use, procuring, or offering of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances. Tokelau has also not criminalized the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. Although there are no armed forces in Tokelau, the law does not criminally prohibit non-state armed groups from recruiting children under age 18. Finally, although public education is free for citizens, undocumented children and those without permanent resident status are not afforded free public education by law.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, the Government of Tokelau has established an institutional mechanism for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Tokelau Police: Enforce the islands' laws.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor	As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor	As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor	As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



TONGA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Tonga made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government launched its first National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the National Multi-Dimensional Overlapping Deprivation Analysis, a new initiative with the International Organization for Migration to identify and address the needs of children. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Tonga is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because research indicates that Tonga lacks a functioning labor inspectorate for the enforcement of labor laws and regulations, including worksite and unannounced inspections.

Labor inspections are a key tool for identifying child labor violations, and their absence makes children more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. There are also no laws specifying a minimum age for work, defining hazardous forms of work for children under age 18, or prohibiting the use of children for the production and trafficking of drugs, leaving children unprotected from labor exploitation. In addition, the government has not established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	46.8% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	94.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	47.8%

Children in Tonga are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in farming and fishing.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and fishing.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced domestic work. Use in illicit activities, including in the trafficking of drugs.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Tonga's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Establish a minimum age for work of at least 15 years, and preferably up to the compulsory education age of 18.

Establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work and determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

Criminally prohibit forced labor, including debt bondage and slavery; child trafficking, including within the borders of Tonga; all forms of commercial sexual exploitation for both girls and boys under age 18; the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs; and recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Establish by law free basic public education.

Enforcement

Establish a functioning labor inspectorate with funding and resources to conduct routine, targeted, and unannounced inspections, and assess and collect civil penalties for child labor violations.

Train labor inspectors and criminal law enforcement personnel on child labor issues.

Establish a formal referral mechanism between enforcement personnel and social services providers to protect and rehabilitate children involved in child labor, including its worst forms.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations conducted into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, prosecutions initiated, and perpetrators convicted.

Coordination

Establish a coordinating mechanism to address the worst forms of child labor and ensure the coordinating body is active and able to carry out its intended mandate.

Government Policies

Implement the Migration and Sustainable Development Policy and the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Establish a policy that addresses all child labor issues in the country, including child labor in agriculture, fishing, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor, including its worst forms, to inform policies and programs.

Make education accessible for all children, including by updating school buildings for students with disabilities.

Implement programs to address all worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, agriculture, and fishing.

Publish information on activities taken to implement the Future-Ready Children and National Multi-Dimensional Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (N-MODA) programs.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Tonga has the third highest risk for natural disasters in the world due to a high frequency of cyclones, earthquakes, flooding, and sea-level rise, which is exacerbated by the effects of climate change. These natural disasters can be devastating to children, disrupting access to schools and eliminating livelihoods—both of which increase a child's vulnerability to child labor.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children with physical disabilities face barriers in attending schools due to limited accessibility to school facilities. This results in lower attendance rates for children with disabilities compared to children without disabilities at all educational levels, thereby increasing their vulnerability to child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Tonga has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including ILO C. 138 Minimum Age for Work; UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Tonga's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work or for hazardous work, as there is no established minimum age and the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are not determined. Also, the country's legal framework does not explicitly criminalize forced labor or slavery.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work		
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 2, 69, and 70 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2 and 69 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 115A and 126 of the Criminal Offenses Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years		Section 25 of the Defense Services Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Section 25 of the Defense Services Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years		Section 98 of the Education Act 2013
Free Public Education		Sections 95 and 98 of the Education Act 2013

*Country has no conscription

The Parliament has not established a minimum age for work or hazardous work, nor has it determined the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. In addition, although Article 70 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act prohibits some aspects of forced labor, it does not comprehensively or explicitly criminalize forced labor or slavery. Additionally, The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act is not sufficient to prohibit child trafficking because trafficking children within the borders of the Kingdom is not a criminal offense. The Criminal Offenses Act prohibits the procurement of women and girls under age 21 for commercial sexual exploitation, but it does not criminalize the procurement of boys for the same. In addition, the Act does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation, because the use of children under age 14 in the production of pornography is not criminally prohibited. There are no criminal prohibitions that specifically prohibit using children in illicit activities, particularly in the production and trafficking of drugs, nor the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. Lastly, Tonga has not established free public education because current legislation allows for fees to be charged to attend school, and those students who do not pay the fees may be refused admission to school, which greatly increases the risk of child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

Enforcement agencies in Tonga took no documented actions to address child labor in 2023. Tonga lacks a functioning labor inspectorate for the enforcement of labor laws and regulations.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Trade and Economic Development (MTED): Employs inspectors who ensure that businesses have correct licenses. Child labor inspections are complaint-driven, with police called in for suspected cases of child labor rather than proactive or routine inspections. Given the ministry did not receive or record any formal complaints related to child labor during the reporting period, no labor inspections were carried out during 2023. A lack of resources has also resulted in an insufficient number of inspectors. In addition, the government has yet to establish an adequate referral mechanism among enforcement personnel and social services providers.

Tonga Police, Domestic Violence Unit, and Transnational Crime Unit: Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Respond to forced child labor and human trafficking violations and allegations of commercial sexual exploitation. The agency did not document any actions to address child labor in 2023.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	No	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	No	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

Tonga's MTED did not receive or record any formal complaints related to child labor during the reporting period, so no labor inspections were carried out. There were no investigations and no convictions related to crimes pertaining to the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Research found no evidence that Tonga has an established mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Tonga established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all child labor issues in the country and research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement these policies during the reporting period.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Migration and Sustainable Development Policy: Protects vulnerable children at risk of human trafficking, provides support to survivors, and prosecutes perpetrators of human trafficking. Supports the advancement and protection of youth, especially unaccompanied minors and youth with disabilities who are victims of forced migration. Promotes youth employment, supports youth vocational training, and expands youth programming. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons:† Aims to prevent and combat all forms of human trafficking. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Tonga funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors, including in commercial sexual exploitation, agriculture, and fishing.</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i> <i>† Program is funded by the Government of Tonga.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Future-Ready Children (Fakafuo ‘o e tangata ma’ae kaha’u) (2022–2025):† Partnership between the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Training, and Save the Children intended to expand remote learning opportunities for students and support the drafting of a child protection policy. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out to implement this program during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Multi-Dimensional Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (N-MODA):†* Flexible methodology data collection tool intended to identify and address the needs of children in Tonga. Designed and launched through a partnership between UNICEF Pacific and Tonga's Ministry of Internal Affairs.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



TUNISIA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Tunisia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government doubled a payment to approximately \$32 for over 500,000 participants in its back-to-school allowance program to keep children in school. It also convicted and sentenced 18 individuals for child labor crimes. However, the labor inspectorate's budget for staffing, fuel, and transportation is inadequate to carry out inspections, especially in remote areas of the country. In addition, the government lacks a centralized system for digitization of court records, resulting in limited data on investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of child labor crimes. Moreover, more needs to be done to remove barriers to education access and mitigate child labor risks for rural and migrant children.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	3.0% (50,364)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	94.2%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	2.8%

Children in Tunisia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, street begging, and drug trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work and domestic work.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, fishing, animal husbandry, forestry.



Industry

Manufacturing and industrial work. Construction.



Services

Domestic work[†] and street work. [†] Working in small businesses, including mechanics' shops.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced labor in domestic work and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including organized crime and drug trafficking.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Tunisia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Increase the amount imposed for penalties for those who employ children in violation of child labor law protections to deter potential violations and reduce recidivism.

Criminalize and prescribe punishments for the use of all children in prostitution.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Enforcement

- Provide adequate staff and other resources, including fuel and transportation, to enable the labor inspectorate to conduct a greater number of inspections, particularly in remote areas and in the informal economy.
- Provide labor inspectors with sufficient training to identify child labor.
- Increase the number of labor inspectors from 215 to 284 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 4.2 million workers.
- Collect and publish information related to the civil money penalties collected for child labor violations.
- Collect and publish information on efforts to enforce criminal prohibitions on the worst forms of child labor, including on the number of criminal child labor investigations that were conducted, prosecutions initiated, and convictions secured.
- Ensure that law enforcement and the judiciary are fully informed as to the existence and application of anti-human trafficking penalties and impose these penalties when appropriate.
- Ensure that exploited children are not prosecuted for their involvement in trafficking activities and are instead referred to social and psychological services.

Coordination

- Ensure the active participation and continued engagement of all relevant stakeholders involved in the prevention and elimination of child labor by establishing a new coordinating mechanism to replace the Leadership Committee to Combat Child Labor.

Government Policies

- Implement the Child Labor National Action Plan and publish results from activities on an annual basis.

Social Programs

- Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor, as well as the risk of being involved in child labor, to inform policies and programs.
- Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including rural and migrant children, by improving access to transportation, water, and non-Arabic learning resources.
- Expand existing programs to fully address the scope of the child labor problem, including in agriculture, fishing, commerce, manufacturing, domestic work, and construction.
- Ensure that services for survivors of human trafficking are accessible to those with disabilities and that interpretation services for all relevant languages, including sign language, are available to assist survivors in receiving services.
- Establish long-term support and relocation options for survivors of child labor, including child trafficking.

 **CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK**

Children living on the street are likely to be exploited through forced begging. Young girls from Tunisia's northwest and other interior regions are particularly vulnerable to domestic servitude. Refugees and migrants who lack legal documentation, including child migrants from sub-Saharan African countries and those fleeing unrest in neighboring countries, are vulnerable to labor exploitation because refugees and migrants do not have the status to legally work in Tunisia. A series of xenophobic violent attacks against black migrants occurred during the reporting period, placing children from these communities at further risk of child labor as their parents struggle to provide for their families.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Tunisian schools lack a sufficient number of teachers, and some schools have failing infrastructure or lack access to water. In rural areas, some families cannot afford transportation costs associated with schooling. Migrant students may also face language barriers, as Arabic is the language of instruction and resources are insufficient to provide instruction in other languages. In addition, some migrant students may be informally excluded from schools because of racism.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Tunisia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Tunisia's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards. However, financial penalties are too low to serve as an adequate deterrent.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 53 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 58 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Ministry of Social Affairs Order of April 1, 2020
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 2, 3, 5 and 8 of the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2, 3, 5, 8, and 23 of the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 226 <i>bis</i> , 232-234 of the Penal Code; Articles 20 and 25 of the Child Protection Code; Article 2, 3, 5, 8 and 23 of the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 5 and 11 of Law No. 92.52 on Narcotics
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 2 of the National Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 2 of the National Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 2(5) of the Law on the Prevention and the Fight Against the Trafficking of Persons; Articles 3 and 18 of the Child Protection Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Section 1 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Articles 38 of the Constitution; Article 4 of the Law on Education

Civil fines range from approximately \$7 to \$21 per infraction (20 to 60 Tunisian *dinars*) and are doubled for repeat offenders, though the total amount levied cannot exceed \$1,667 (5,000 Tunisian *dinars*). As a result, civil fines remain insufficient to deter potential violators. Additionally, International standards against Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children are not met because there are no criminal penalties for the use of a child in prostitution.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Tunisia took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of digital law enforcement records makes it challenging to monitor trends, and labor inspectors only monitor the informal sector in certain parts of the country.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA): Conducts labor inspections and assesses fines and penalties for infractions. Employs social workers and medical inspectors to assist in addressing child labor. Monitors the implementation of labor legislation and initiates prosecutions through the General Directorate of Labor Inspection. Implements social programs to assist minors and those affected by child labor through the General Administration for Social Development. Fines assessed for infractions are reported to be insufficient to deter violations.

Ministry of the Interior (MOI): Investigates reports of the worst forms of child labor, including complaints that fall outside of the labor inspectorate's mandate and those pertaining to the informal sector. Through its Child Protection Service in the National Police, addresses the commercial sexual exploitation of children and coordinates with MSA and the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly regarding violations. Through its Judicial Police, coordinates with MSA to refer cases of at-risk youth to social services. The lack of digitized court records makes it difficult to compile data and evaluate trends in convictions and penalties for worst forms of child labor violations.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

Between January and November 2023, **215** labor inspectors conducted **884** worksite inspections, finding **17** child labor violations. The government also conducted **168** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes and convicted **18** individuals of worst forms of child labor crimes, although the number of prosecutions initiated is **unknown**. In addition, the Tunisian government has prohibited anyone from negotiating with unions without the formal and prior authorization of the head of government and arrested trade unionists. These actions may have hindered workers' ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Tunisia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the government's disbanding of the Leadership Committee to Combat Child Labor in August 2023 may hinder future efforts.</p>	<p>Leadership Committee to Combat Child Labor: Also known as the Together Against Child Labor in Tunisia (PROTECTE) steering committee. Required by the Child Labor National Action Plan, it was led by MSA and included 11 other ministries and 3 unions, with support from ILO. The Leadership Committee to Combat Child Labor disbanded after the conclusion of the Bureau of International Labor Affairs funded and ILO-supported PROTECTE project in August 2023. Since then, MSA has maintained a role in coordinating government agencies on matters related to child labor, but no new coordinating body has been established. There have been no reported activities since August 2023.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Tunisia established policies related to child labor. However, the government undertook no efforts to implement the Child Labor National Action Plan in 2023.</p>	<p>Child Labor National Action Plan: Plan was formally in effect between 2015 and 2020 while activities extended into 2022. Raised awareness, built the capacity of stakeholders, encouraged action from NGOs and the public, and promoted the implementation of existing laws and policies. The government did not undertake activities to implement this plan in 2023.</p> <p>National Strategy for the Combat of Trafficking in Persons (2018–2023): Aimed to establish a global evidence-based approach to address trafficking in persons by coordinating national and international actors. In 2023, raised awareness among job seekers to prevent human trafficking and began drafting a new national strategy.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Tunisia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not cover all worst forms of child labor in the country, including in agriculture, fishing, commerce, manufacturing, domestic work, and construction.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Tunisia.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms.</i></p>	<p>Support Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking (2014–2024): U.S. Department of State-funded project implemented by the International Organization for Migration to carry out anti-human trafficking activities in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, MOI, MSA, and the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly. Includes three objectives: (1) building the capacity of relevant institutions and agencies to identify and assist survivors of human trafficking based on their individual needs, (2) strengthening cross-sector cooperation and the sharing of information through the implementation of a national referral mechanism, and (3) conducting an awareness-raising campaign to keep children in school and discourage irregular migration that could lead to human trafficking. Activities undertaken by this program in 2023 are unknown.</p> <p>Centers to Provide Aid to Victims of Child Labor:† Serve up to 6,000 children engaged in child labor or vulnerable to child labor through the maintenance of 79 youth centers. Many of these centers are located in Tunis and provide education and health care to children who would otherwise be on the street. The centers were active during the reporting period.</p> <p>Shelters and Services for Victims of Human Trafficking:† Serve survivors of human trafficking, predominantly children, through shelters operated by the Government of Tunisia. Provide lodging, food, clothing, and legal aid through a network of pro bono lawyers, and free medical care in collaboration with Ministry of Health. Two shelters, specifically for minor victims of human trafficking, operate in Tunis and Sidi Bouzid. These shelters and services were active in 2023. While authorities report that shelters are accessible to those with disabilities, there is a lack of staff who can communicate in sign language. One shelter would not accept sub-Saharan migrant trafficking victims because xenophobic and anti-immigrant attitudes within the country led to a fear of retaliation.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



TUVALU

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Tuvalu made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government established the Tuvalu Australia Partnership for Quality Education to provide training for schoolteachers. It also drafted the Child Safe Policy Act, Inclusive Education Policy, and Protection for All Children in Educational Institutions Policy to support children's access to education. However, the government has not specified the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, leaving them vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. In addition, Tuvalu does not publish information about its labor law and criminal law enforcement efforts.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	8.5% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	79.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	8.9%

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Tuvalu engage in child labor in domestic work.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Services

Domestic work.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Tuvalu's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for all children, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

Establish by law free public education.

Enforcement

Publish labor law enforcement information, including labor inspectorate funding, number of labor inspections conducted at worksites, number of child labor violations found, number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed, number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, whether routine inspections were conducted, and whether unannounced inspections were conducted.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties.

Institutionalize training for labor inspectors, including training for new labor inspectors at the beginning of their employment.

Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating targeted inspections based on analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including whether training was provided for criminal investigators, the number of investigations, the number of prosecutions initiated, number of penalties imposed, and number of convictions for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Provide technical assistance and support to ensure that the Child Protection Work Plan (2017) is fully implemented.

Social Programs

Conduct a comprehensive study of children’s activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor.

Institute programs to address child labor in domestic work.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Tuvalu has not ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Tuvalu’s laws do not meet international standards on identification of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children and on free public education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years	✓	Article 42 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Article 44 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✗	
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 3 and 68 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act; Articles 46–48 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act; Article 249 of the Penal Code; Article 18 of the Constitution of Tuvalu
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 3 and 68 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act; Article 136 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Article 46 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act; Articles 136 and 140–143 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 46 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act; Articles 141 and 142 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Section 46 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 3(1)(b) of the Compulsory Education Order
Free Public Education		Article 33 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

In 2023, the Government of Tuvalu reviewed the Childcare and Welfare Bill, which includes provisions for issues related to rights, protection, and welfare of children in accordance with the UN CRC. However, the Government of Tuvalu has not specified, by national law or regulation, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children; previous provisions applied only to males under age 18 in the industrial, mining, and fishing sectors. Additionally, while education is free in practice for children ages 6 to 18, the Education Act allows the government to charge fees for education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

Enforcement agencies in Tuvalu took no documented actions to address child labor in 2023.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure, Environment, Labor, Meteorology and Disaster: Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor.

Tuvalu Police Force: Investigates and enforces criminal violations regarding child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

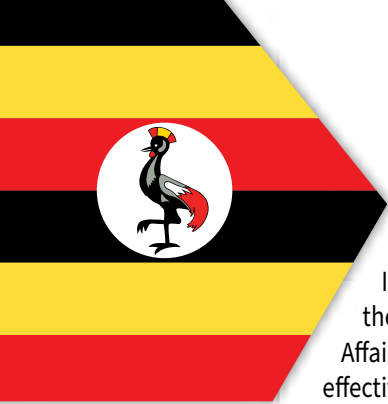
In 2023, **4** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Tuvalu established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MEYS): The lead coordinating agency for children's issues. During the reporting period, MEYS reviewed and completed draft legislation including the Child Safe Schools Policy, the Inclusive Education Policy, and the Protection for All Children in Educational Institutions in Tuvalu Policy.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Tuvalu established a policy related to child labor. However, full implementation of the Child Protection Work Plan is hindered by lack of technical support.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Child Protection Work Plan (2017): The work plan includes baseline research into child protection and public relations activities, such as awareness raising and advocacy. During the reporting period, the government continued to support the plan's implementation, although progress was restricted by a lack of technical assistance.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Tuvalu participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they fail to address the problem in all sectors, including in domestic work.</p> <p><i>* Established during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Tuvalu Australia Partnership for Quality Education (TAPQE) (2022–2027):* A 5-year initiative implemented during the reporting period that provides training to primary and secondary school teachers to strengthen their skills, with a focus on improving education quality for students, including those with disabilities.</p> <p>Tuvalu Learning Project (2020–2025): Prepares children entering first grade and increases the literacy of children in elementary school. Subcomponents include a study on student absenteeism, a gender analysis to understand why boys are dropping out of school more than girls, and trainings on child protection, gender-based violence, and disability inclusion. Implemented by MEYS and funded by the World Bank. During the reporting period, Tuvalu completed and published a mid-term review of the project and is using its findings to inform future efforts.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



UGANDA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Regression in Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Uganda made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions secured 18 convictions for child trafficking. Moreover, the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Coordination Office for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons developed a new strategy to strengthen the effectiveness and coordination of public awareness campaigns on human trafficking. In addition, the Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains project was renewed for a second phase to reach more districts and partners, while also strengthening the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development’s Child Labor Unit. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Uganda is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because the government failed to provide any funding toward the operational activities of the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, preventing the ministry from conducting labor inspections. In addition, a United Nations Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo reported that the Government of Uganda provided active support to the March 23 Movement, a non-state armed group which forcibly recruited and used child soldiers in the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Uganda’s laws addressing the minimum age for hazardous work also do not meet the international standard because the Employment of Children Regulations permits a commissioner to allow children ages 12 and older, who are enrolled in an educational training or apprenticeship program, to engage in hazardous work. Moreover, Uganda’s law only guarantees free education through the primary level, even though international standards require free basic education through lower secondary school. Lastly, the lack of a centralized supervisory authority, along with inadequate funding, training, and resources, hampered the capacity of law enforcement agencies to conduct child labor inspections and investigations.

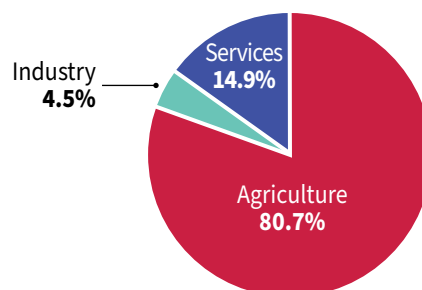


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	62.9% (7,978,224)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	81.4% (2,471,122)
Attending School	5 to 14	82.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	63.6%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Uganda are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Cultivating and harvesting coffee, tea,† tobacco,† rice,† sugarcane,† and vanilla, and acting as scarecrows in rice fields. Working with livestock, including herding cattle.† Fishing,† including catching† and selling fish, and paddling† and loading boats.† Collecting insects.



Industry

Construction,† including making† and laying† bricks. Quarrying stone† and sand,† mining† gold, and making charcoal. Manufacturing, including working in carpentry workshops.†



Services

Street work, including vending,† begging,† car washing,† working as porters,† scavenging,† collecting plastic bottles,

and collecting and selling scrap metal. Working in hair salons, hotels,† restaurants,† bars,† and video halls.† Domestic work.†



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including burglary, cattle theft, and car and house break-ins, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, fishing, and animal herding. Forced labor in factories, mining, and quarrying. Forced begging and forced labor in bars and restaurants, street vending, and domestic work.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Uganda’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Ensure that only minors ages 16 and older who have received adequate, specific instruction or vocational training are permitted to perform hazardous work, and that their health, safety, and morals are fully protected.

Increase the compulsory education age from 13 to 16 to align with the minimum age for work.

Establish by law free basic public education.

Enforcement

Fully fund the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development to carry out its mandated duties without relying on the financial support from civil society organizations and NGOs.

Ensure labor officers receive adequate training and increase their capability to follow through on child labor cases.

Put safeguards in place to ensure that the military does not support or coordinate with non-state armed groups that recruit children.

Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties.

Strengthen the labor inspectorate by increasing the number of labor inspections and integrate data on risk-prone sectors and previous incidents to initiate routine and targeted inspections.

Ensure that the inspectorate is using its existing authorities to inspect private farms and homes and to conduct sufficient routine and unannounced inspections, including in the informal sector.

Significantly increase the number of labor inspectors from 180 to 464 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 18.6 million workers.

Improve coordination between national- and district-level child labor enforcement bodies to ensure that relevant data are shared and that child labor inspections are prioritized across the country.

Ensure that child labor cases reach the Industrial Court and that penalties are assessed by addressing monitoring issues and improving the court’s reach outside urban centers.

Continue to increase efforts to ensure that public officials who facilitate or participate in human trafficking or the worst forms of child labor are held accountable, including officials who have ties with labor recruitment companies.

Strengthen mechanisms for following up on child labor claims, including children in domestic work, and prevent these children from being detained and abused by police.

Increase the capacity of criminal law enforcement agencies to respond to the worst forms of child labor by dedicating more personnel to worst forms of child labor cases and improving training for criminal law enforcement staff.

Government Policies

Ensure that district labor action plans reflect national policies implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children by defraying informal costs borne by families, including supplies, uniforms, and materials; addressing physical and sexual violence; and ensuring sufficient teachers, infrastructure, and transportation in rural areas. Moreover, ensure children have equal access to school regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Enhance efforts to ensure that refugee children have equal access to educational opportunities by accommodating their language needs, correcting their classification status as refugees, and addressing issues related to delays and costs in processing their equivalency examinations. Additionally, ensure that refugee children are attending school by addressing gender-based violence and exploitation, harassment, and refugee discrimination, and ensuring that there are well-equipped schools accessible to refugee settlements.

Enhance the availability of shelters for victims of child labor, including child trafficking victims.

Expand existing social programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, particularly in mining and commercial sexual exploitation, in all areas of the country.

A UN Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) report states that the Government of Uganda provided logistical support and transportation to the March 23 Movement (M23), a non-state armed group which forcibly recruited and used child soldiers in the conflict in the eastern DRC. However, the Government of Uganda authorities publicly denied any support to M23.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Civil society organizations and government entities report that children from rural areas, especially the Karamoja region, one of the most remote regions in Uganda, are vulnerable to human trafficking and forced into begging, street vending, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation. NGOs and media reports have indicated that children from Karamoja are also sold in open-air markets or through intermediaries and forced into cattle herding. The Ugandan People’s Defense Force noted that cattle rustlers in the Karamoja region recruit children, especially boys, for violent cattle raids. An unspecified number of these children have been killed during military operations against the cattle rustlers, and according to the Parliament’s Committee on Gender, Labor, and Social Development, cattle raids also increase children’s vulnerability to human trafficking. Moreover, reports indicate that refugee children throughout the country were at an increased risk of engaging in child labor or being subjected to the worst forms of child labor. An assessment revealed that when the monthly stipend amount for refugees was decreased in 2023, there was an increase in child labor cases from 56 in May and June to 129 cases in July and August as children were dropping out of school in order to supplement their households’ basic needs.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Research found isolated reports of LGBTQIA+ children being expelled or suspended from school. Reports also indicate that some LGBTQIA+ children were forced to flee their households due to the enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act, which likely hampered their access to education. In addition, while Ugandan law provides for free primary education, the cost of school supplies, meals, and other materials often impeded some children from attending school. Research found that these fees are paid directly to the schools, and if students are not able to pay the amount in full, they might be prevented from attending or completing their term. Other barriers to education include lack of teachers, poor school infrastructure, and lack of transportation, particularly in remote rural areas where children may have to walk very long distances to the nearest school. In addition, although free primary education laws apply equally to refugee children, reports indicate that some are wrongfully classified as “international students,” resulting in a significant increase of their education fees. Girls, especially those in refugee camps, face particular risk of being out of school and are vulnerable to exploitation due to gender-based violence, harassment, and the pressure to undertake domestic duties. Additionally, for a number of refugee settlements, such as Nakivale, schools are often located far from where refugees live and are inadequately equipped to meet the needs of the large student population.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Uganda has not ratified the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Uganda’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for hazardous work because children ages 12 and older enrolled in an educational training or apprenticeship programs may get permission from a commissioner to engage in hazardous work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act; Section 32 of the Employment Act; Regulations 5 and 8 of the Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Regulation 6 and the First Schedule of the Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations; Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 2 and 5 of the Employment Act; Sections 2–6 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Section 8 of the Children (Amendment) Act; Sections 2–6 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Section 8 of the Children (Amendment) Act; Sections 2–6 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Section 131 of the Penal Code; Section 14 of the Anti-Pornography Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 5(d) of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Article 88 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 52(2)(c) of the Defense Forces Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Section 5(b) of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Compulsory Education Age, 13 Years‡		Sections 2 and 10(3)(a) of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Sections 2, 4, 9, 10(3)(a), and 57(g) of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Uganda’s existing legal framework governing child labor does not meet international standards. While Uganda has a list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children under the age of 18, Section 8 of the Employment of Children Regulations permits a commissioner to allow children ages 12 and older enrolled in an educational training or apprenticeship program to engage in hazardous work, in violation of international standards. In addition, children in Uganda are required to attend school only up to age 13, making children ages 13 to 15 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school while also not being legally permitted to work. Finally, although Uganda has adopted policies to extend universal education through the secondary level, by law free education is limited to the primary level.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Uganda took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of a budget for the labor inspectorate to conduct labor inspections and the inability to assess penalties hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD): Formulates, implements, and enforces labor inspection policies and laws related to working conditions through its Department of Labor, Industrial Relations and Productivity. Includes the Industrial Court, which judges labor dispute cases that are referred by labor officers. Operates the Uganda Child Helpline known as *Sauti*. Although the MGLSD carried out an unknown number of labor inspections during the reporting period, these were solely funded by civil society organizations since the government did not provide any funding for the ministry’s operational activities, including for labor inspections.

Ministry of Internal Affairs: Responsible for the enforcement of criminal laws on the worst forms of child labor. The Uganda Police Force’s Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) investigates forced labor cases, the Special Investigations Division and the Anti-Human Trafficking Desk investigate cases related to human trafficking and the use of children in illicit activities, and the Sexual Offenses Desk investigates cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children. The police also work with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) to investigate and prosecute cases related to child labor, including its worst forms.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **180** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections. In addition, the government conducted **510** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **289** prosecutions, and convicted **18** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Uganda has established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor: Coordinates child labor issues and implements the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor, including by setting policy priorities, securing resources for child labor programs, and coordinating with key stakeholders. Led by MGLSD, includes members from several ministries, including the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Government, and the Uganda Police Force. In 2023, the committee met quarterly and participated in consultative meetings to develop concepts for new civil society programs to address child labor. In addition, it supported the development of the Child Labor Inspection Checklist to be used during labor inspections.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Uganda established policies related to child labor. However, the implementation of national policies was not consistent throughout all of the country's districts.</p> <p><small>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</small></p>	<p>National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor (2020/2021–2024/2025): Aims to focus government efforts on the prevention, protection, rehabilitation, and reduction of the risk of child labor, with the goal of eliminating all forms of child labor by 2025. In 2023, awareness-raising activities and education sessions related to child labor and its worst forms were carried out with local leaders in the Karamoja and Bunyoro regions. In addition, a process to review and update the plan was initiated.</p> <p>National Child Policy: Focuses on four basic children's rights: survival, development, protection, and participation. Prioritizes the elimination of child labor, launched with an implementation strategy through 2025, and outlines the responsibilities of all stakeholders in implementing child-related policies. In 2023, the policy was reviewed by stakeholders working on the protection of children's rights.</p> <p>National Action Plan for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Uganda (2019–2024): Focuses on developing sustainable systems and structures to prevent human trafficking; improving capacity for the identification, protection of and support for victims; improving investigations and prosecutions; and establishing cooperative relationships with international stakeholders. Includes the National Referral Guidelines for Management of Victims of Trafficking, which seek to improve coordination among stakeholders responsible for providing services to victims and those responsible for prosecuting criminals. In 2023, five government agencies, including the ODPP, the Uganda Police Force, and the Coordination Office for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons, developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) designed to guide the detection, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking cases. The SOPs aim to strengthen the overall effectiveness of Uganda's law enforcement strategy by providing guidance to prosecutors, police officers, immigration officers, labor inspectors, civil society organizations, and community leaders.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Uganda funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in mining and commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Uganda.</i></p> <p><i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains (ACCEL Africa): Implemented by the ILO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in Uganda, in partnership with the Government of Uganda and the Federation of Ugandan Employers. Uganda’s participation in the \$29 million multi-country project targeted child labor in the coffee and tea supply chains in the Mbale, Kabarole, Buikwe, Hoima, and Bushenyi districts. In 2023, the project was extended into its second phase, continuing to build on the foundations laid during the first phase and aiming to expand coverage by reaching more districts and partners, while also strengthening the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development’s child labor unit.</p> <p>Uganda Child Helpline:[†] Funded primarily by UNICEF with in-kind contributions from the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, comprises District Action Centers and a physical call center located in Wakiso that screens all calls for reported cases of child abuse. Caseworkers at District Action Centers follow up directly on cases of child abuse, including child labor and exploitation, assigned to them by the National Call Center and liaise with local authorities to address reported incidents. In 2023, the helpline responded to 77 cases of child trafficking between March and November and referred cases to the CFPU and civil society organizations for rehabilitation services.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

UKRAINE

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Law that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Ukraine made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Despite the ongoing aggression and territorial incursions made by Russia against Ukraine, the Ukrainian government continued to make efforts to address child labor and exploitation. The government adopted the National Action Plan for Countering Human Trafficking (2023–2025), which aims to improve anti-human trafficking efforts, including by monitoring institutionalized Ukrainian children evacuated abroad for human trafficking indicators. The Office of the Prosecutor General established a specialized unit consisting of five prosecutors focused exclusively on prosecuting human trafficking-related cases, including child trafficking. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Ukraine is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it failed to remedy Order No. 303 of 2022, which prohibits labor inspectors from conducting routine or targeted inspections while martial law is in force. The State Labor Service is also only able to conduct unannounced inspections if they met three specific criteria: (1) informal employment, (2) legality of employment contracts suspension and termination, and (3) observance of wartime labor regulations surrounding schedules, paid leave, and other contractual issues. These limitations on inspections may leave potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected in workplaces. Further, Ukrainian laws do not meet international standards for the prohibition of commercialized sexual exploitation because they do not criminalize the users of commercial sex involving children. In addition, the government does not have a coordinating mechanisms or policies to address all forms of child labor, including in hazardous work in mining, agriculture, and street work. The government does not have the opportunity to carry out law enforcement, coordinate efforts, and implement its policies and social programs to address child labor in the Russia-occupied territories.

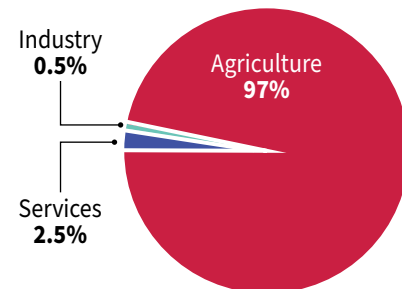


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	9.7% (385,204)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	97.2%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	12.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Ukraine are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, production of pornography, and forced begging. In addition, children are recruited by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict. Children, especially in Russia-occupied areas, also perform dangerous tasks in mining.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming and raising livestock.



Industry

Construction and mining,[†] including extracting and transporting coal and amber.



Services

Street work, including street trade, washing cars, and begging.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in the production of pornography. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict. Forced begging.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Ukraine’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from age 16 to 17 to align with the compulsory education age.

Prohibit all children under age 16 from working in hazardous occupations during vocational training.

Criminally prohibit and penalize the use of a child for commercial sex, and the use, procuring, or offering of children in pornographic performances.

Enforcement

Resume routine and targeted labor inspections.

Authorize the State Labor Service to enforce the collection of delinquent penalties to ensure that all penalties imposed are collected.

Hold perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor, including child soldiering, accountable. Ensure that former child soldiers are not penalized for crimes they were forced to commit.

Coordination

Establish a coordinating mechanism with sufficient scope to address all forms of child labor, including hazardous work in mining, agriculture, street work, and other forms of informal work, sectors in which child labor is known to occur.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all forms of child labor, including hazardous work in mining, agriculture, street work, and other forms of informal work, sectors in which child labor is known to occur.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor, including the activities carried out by children working in mining, agriculture, and street work, to inform policies and programs.

Institute a rehabilitation and reintegration program for children engaged in armed conflict.

Continue efforts and expand existing programs to ensure that all Ukrainian children, including those with disabilities, children from Roma or other minority groups, and homeless and orphaned children, especially those living in state-run institutions, are protected from human trafficking and labor exploitation.

Continue efforts to ensure that all Ukrainian children, including those with special needs and those living in conflict zones, have access to education, whether virtual or in person, that meets their educational needs.

Develop programs to ensure that all Roma children are registered at birth and are able to access education.

Ensure that there are sufficient resources and trained personnel in the Centers for Social Services for Family, Youth, and Children to assist child victims of commercial sexual exploitation in all state-run facilities that serve children in need.

Institute programs to address all forms of child labor, including hazardous work in mining, agriculture, street work, and other forms of informal work.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children in Ukraine face increased social, economic, and political challenges, which can make them more vulnerable to exploitation because of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine launched in February 2022. The increased vulnerability is most pronounced in the country’s Russia-occupied areas and areas of active conflict. Out of Ukraine’s 7.5 million children, 4.8 million have been forced to flee, with 2 million having fled abroad and 2.8 million displaced internally. Refugee and internally displaced children (particularly unaccompanied children), and children in Russia-occupied territory are especially vulnerable to exploitation in the worst forms of child labor. In addition, children with disabilities, children from Roma or other minority groups, children forcibly transferred to Russia, and homeless and orphaned children, especially those living in state-run institutions, are at risk of human trafficking, including sexual and labor trafficking. Russian occupying authorities and proxy groups backed by Russia continued to recruit children, train them in weapons use, and organize them into reserve militia battalions at militant-run camps and at school programs located in territory occupied or controlled by Russia, and in some cases, continued to illegally transfer them out of Ukraine to camps in Russia. It is impossible to monitor these camps or ensure that the children in them are not exploited now or in the future. In addition, Russian armed forces continued to use Ukrainian children as human shields in active conflict.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Education continued to be disrupted for more than 6.7 million Ukrainian children, particularly for those in the active conflict areas, due to the extensive damage and destruction of schools as a result of Russia’s ongoing full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Ukrainian government continued to provide distance and in-person learning, with half of the children in Ukraine attending in-person classes and the other half attending either a combination of in-person and online classes or only online classes, providing for over 95 percent of children in Ukraine attending school. A lack of electricity and internet due to Russia’s deliberate targeting of electricity and telecommunications infrastructure has further disrupted access to education. Some children with special needs, children from poor families, and displaced children could not follow online classes because they lacked computer equipment or internet access. Additionally, some Roma children lack birth registration, impeding their access to education. In Russia-occupied areas, occupying authorities imposed the Russian curriculum and language of instruction in schools, to include military training and war propaganda, and prevented Ukrainian children from receiving education in their native language. Ukrainian refugee children residing in several host countries in Europe had low enrollment rates in local education systems due to language barriers, difficulty accessing schools, and expectations of returning to Ukraine. While these children are likely attending school via the Ukrainian online learning platform, there is no available data to confirm their attendance.













LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Ukraine has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Ukraine’s laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for hazardous work because children between the ages of 14 and 16 are not forbidden from engaging in hazardous work as part of a vocational training program, nor on the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children because no law criminalizes the users (clients) of commercial sex involving children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 150 of the Criminal Code; Article 188 of the Labor Code; Article 21 of the Law on the Protection of Childhood
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 150 of the Criminal Code; Article 190 of the Labor Code; Article 21 of the Law on the Protection of Childhood; Ministry of Health Order No. 46

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 150-1 of the Criminal Code; Order of the Ministry of Health No. 46 on the approval of the list of heavy work and work with dangerous and harmful working conditions, in which the employment of minors is prohibited; Article 190 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 149 of the Criminal Code; Articles 21 and 35 of the Law on the Protection of Childhood; Article 43 of the Constitution of Ukraine; Article 1 of the Law on Employment
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 149 of the Criminal Code; Article 32 of the Law on the Protection of Childhood
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 149 and 301–303 of the Criminal Code; Articles 10 and 21 of the Law on the Protection of Childhood; Articles 1, 6, and 7 of the Law on the Protection of Public Morality
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 304 and 307 of the Criminal Code; Articles 10 and 21 of the Law on the Protection of Childhood
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 17 Years		Articles 15 and 20 of the Law on Military Duty and Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 15 of the Law on Military Duty and Military Service; Decree No. 447 on Measures to Enhance the Defense Capacity of the State
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 149 of the Criminal Code; Article 30 of the Law on the Protection of Childhood
Compulsory Education Age, 17 Years [‡]		Articles 3, 12, and 20 of the Law on General Secondary Education; Article 53 of the Constitution
Free Public Education		Article 53 of the Constitution of Ukraine; Article 2 of the Law on General Secondary Education

[‡] Age calculated based on available information

In 2023, the government adopted the Law On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Simplifying Access to Free Legal Aid. This law guarantees equal access for all children to free legal aid necessary to ensure the protection of their rights. It also expands the right to free secondary legal services to all human trafficking victims, including representation of victims' interests in courts, other state bodies, and local government.

As the minimum age for work of age 16 is lower than the compulsory education age of 17, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health Order No. 46 does not prohibit children between the ages of 14 and 16 from engaging in hazardous work as part of a vocational training program, which is not in compliance with international standards. Although the law specifies that children in these training programs may be onsite for no more than 4 hours and must remain in strict compliance with applicable safety norms and rules and regulations on labor protection, this is not in compliance with international standards. Ukraine does not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children because no law criminalizes the users (clients) of commercial sex involving children.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Ukraine took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of authority to conduct routine and targeted labor inspections during martial law in Ukraine hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

State Labor Service (SLS): Operates under the executive branch and enforces labor laws, including laws on child labor, by conducting inspections. Regional offices of SLS share information about child labor cases with regional offices of the National Police of Ukraine, regional employment centers, the Department of Child Affairs, trade union leaders, regional social services organizations, and centers dedicated to social protection. In 2023, SLS resumed limited unannounced inspections under conditions of martial law and also held 2,052 labor law-related consultations and 1,342 seminars, meetings, and round tables on topics that included the prevention of informal child labor and child exploitation.

Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG): Investigates and prosecutes cases related to the worst forms of child labor. Oversees a department and regional offices for the Protection of Interests of Children that focus on the worst forms of child labor. The regional offices conduct pre-trial investigations and investigations of criminal offenses, file appeals of court decisions related to children’s issues, provide legal representation to children, and support the execution of court decisions related to child protection. Operates specialized centers for child survivors and witnesses in Mykolayiv and Vinnytsya oblasts. In 2023, OPG established a specialized unit consisting of five prosecutors focused exclusively on prosecuting human trafficking-related cases, including child trafficking, and conducted regular online trainings, provided guidance, and analyzed pre-trial investigations to strengthen the regional prosecutor offices’ capacity to prosecute such cases.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

From June to November 2023, **803** labor inspectors conducted **80** unannounced worksite inspections, finding **3** child labor violations. From January through November 2023, the government also conducted **67** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **33** prosecutions, indicted **3** persons, and convicted **2** perpetrators.

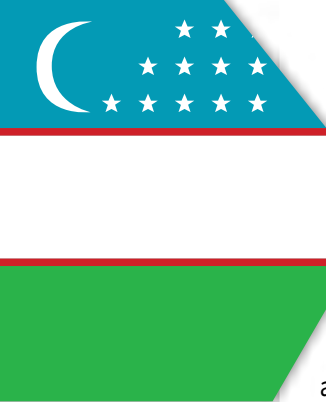
In early 2022, Ukraine issued Order No. 303, which prohibits labor inspectors from conducting routine or targeted inspections while martial law is in force. In addition, while the SLS resumed unannounced labor inspections in 2023, it was only able to conduct inspections if they met three specific criteria: (1) informal employment, (2) legality of employment contracts suspension and termination, and (3) observance of wartime labor regulations surrounding schedules, paid leave, and other contractual issues. These limitations on inspections may leave potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected in workplaces.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Ukraine established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism does not address all worst forms of child labor in the country, including hazardous work in mining and agriculture, street work, and other forms of informal work.</p>	<p>Inter-Ministerial Counter-Trafficking Coordination Council: Led by the Ministry of Social Policy (MSP), which serves as the National Coordinator for Counter-Trafficking Policy and includes representatives from government entities, regional governments, NGOs, and international organizations. In 2023, MSP continued to lead efforts in addressing human trafficking, including organizing capacity-building activities for ministry and local government officials, as well as civil society members, on identification and protection of human trafficking victims during war.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Ukraine established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all forms of child labor including hazardous work in mining, agriculture, street work, informal work, and other sectors in which child labor is known to occur.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Resolution on the Social Protection of Children and Urgent Measures to Protect the Rights of the Child: Directs the government to develop additional programs and social services to protect children against abuse, including the worst forms of child labor. Includes a provision on measures that address the participation of children in armed conflict. In 2023, the government adopted Resolution No. 339, which provides for the establishment of a Unified Register of Persons, including children, who have been deported or forcibly displaced due to the armed aggression of Russia against Ukraine.</p> <p>Ukraine’s National Strategy on Human Rights (2021–2023): Focused on 27 areas related to human rights, including children’s rights. In 2023, during a discussion forum with over 300 participants from the government, civil society, and community leaders, the government presented the key accomplishments over the past year and recommendations for policymakers to support the human rights agenda in Ukraine.</p> <p>National Action Plan for Countering Human Trafficking (2023–2025):<i>†</i> Adopted in June 2023, guides the work of the National Coordinator on Countering Human Trafficking and enhances mechanisms for preventing human trafficking, building institutional capacities and collaboration of the National Referral Mechanism stakeholders, strengthening the identification of individuals involved in trafficking-related crimes, and ensuring comprehensive protection and assistance to all human trafficking victims, including children.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Ukraine funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in hazardous work in mining, agriculture, street work, and other forms of informal work.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Ukraine.</i></p>	<p>Centers and Shelters for Socio-Psychological Rehabilitation of Children:<i>†</i> Serve children in need, including child survivors of human trafficking, through a network of centers and shelters that operate across Ukraine. Children are provided with individual social, psychological, medical, and other types of assistance. Government officials report that there is a lack of resources and specialized personnel to assist child survivors of sexual exploitation through these centers. In 2023, 12 child victims received services at these centers and shelters. In addition, the government allowed centers for domestic and gender-based violence, run by local governments and NGOs, to also provide assistance to trafficking victims, expanding overall capacity to assist these victims.</p> <p>Programs Administered by the National Social Service:<i>†</i> The National Social Service, a central executive agency which reports to MSP, implements state policy in the field of social protection and protection of children’s rights, and performs state control of social support and observance of children’s rights. In coordination with local authorities, operates active centers for social services for family, youth, and children around Ukraine, and provides social services for vulnerable children and families, including survivors of human trafficking.</p>

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UZBEKISTAN

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Uzbekistan made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government approved a new constitution that incorporates prohibitions against child labor and forced labor, and updated a list of hazardous work activities prohibited for children. It also signed a new memorandum of understanding with the International Labor Organization and the International Finance Corporation launching a Better Work pilot program to expand the authority and capacity of the labor inspectorate, as well as collective bargaining rights. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Uzbekistan is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it continued a practice that delays advancement to eliminate child labor. Labor inspectors are required to first seek approval from the Business Ombudsman before they may conduct unannounced private sector inspections; given that the Business Ombudsman's primary responsibility is the promotion and protection of private sector business interests in Uzbekistan, this requirement poses a conflict of interest that creates an administrative barrier to unannounced inspections and may result in advance notice being given to business owners and likely leaves potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected. In addition, there continue to be impediments to the operation of non-governmental organizations in addressing broader labor concerns. Human rights and civil society organizations, including those working on forced and child labor issues, have been denied official registration for bureaucratic reasons, sometimes for failing to meet registration requirements that had not been publicly specified. Some civil society organizations also reported interference by government security services when researching and monitoring labor conditions in the cotton sector.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	8.6% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	92.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	10.5%

Children in Uzbekistan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture and public works.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Raising silkworms, preparing land for crop planting, tending livestock.



Industry

Construction.



Services

Street work, including vending, portering, car washing, tire repair, and begging, collecting scrap metal, and public works, including refurbishing school grounds and facilities.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in construction, non-cotton agriculture, and cleaning parks, streets, and buildings. Use in illicit activities, including theft and the production or trafficking of drugs.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Uzbekistan's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Update the labor law's light work provisions to specify the activities and conditions in which children who have not yet completed their compulsory schooling may work.

Enforcement

Provide more detailed information on labor inspections, including the number of unannounced inspections, how many inspections are conducted onsite versus through desk inspections of documents submitted by businesses, and whether inspectors are targeting high-risk sectors.

Conduct self-initiated unannounced inspections in all sectors, including at private enterprises, even if no complaint has been filed.

Sign draft decree that will address gaps with the funding and staffing of the labor inspectorate, as well as remove the requirement for the Business Ombudsman to approve inspections of private sector enterprises.

Coordination

Remove obstacles to the registration of NGOs and other civil society organizations monitoring child labor, forced labor, and other labor rights issues, including making all registration requirements public.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Ensure educational access for all children, including refugee children from Afghanistan who do not speak Uzbek or Russian.

Remove or defray informal school fees for students and their families.

Implement targeted programs to address the worst forms of child labor in public works, street works, and agriculture sectors other than cotton harvesting.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children living in rural areas and from low-income families are at higher risk of child labor and trafficking in persons. Those living in institutions are more likely to become victims of sex trafficking.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While all children are entitled to free education under Uzbekistan's laws regardless of ethnicity or immigration status, refugee children, particularly those from Afghanistan, have limited access to school as they do not speak either Uzbek or Russian. Additionally, some schools may charge informal fees, including bribes for admission or better grades, which impede educational access for low-income families.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Uzbekistan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Uzbekistan's laws are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Articles 118 and 411–422 of the Labor Code; Article 49 of the Administrative Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 412 of the Labor Code; Article 49-1 of the Administrative Code; Article 44 of the Constitution
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Decree on Adoption of the List of Occupations with Unfavorable Working Conditions to Which It Is Forbidden to Employ Persons Under Eighteen Years of Age; Decree on Approval of Provision on Requirements on Prohibition of Use of Minors' Labor
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 44 of the Constitution; Article 7 of the Labor Code; Article 51 of the Administrative Code; Articles 135 and 148 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3 and 35 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 3 and 35 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking; Article 135 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 128, 128(1), 130, 131, and 135 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3 and 35 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 10 of the Law on Guarantees of the Rights of the Child; Articles 56 and 127 of the Criminal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 24 of the Law on Universal Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 4 and 46 of the Law on Universal Military Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 216(1) and 242 of the Criminal Code; Article 3 of the Law on Civil Organizations
Compulsory Education Age, 18 Years ‡		Articles 4 and 9 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Articles 4, 5, and 9 of the Law on Education; Article 50 of the Constitution

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In 2023, Uzbekistan passed into law a new constitution that includes an article that explicitly prohibits child labor. The Cabinet of Ministers also enacted decrees clarifying the circumstances under which children may work in athletic and creative professions, as well as an updated list of professions which are prohibited for those under 18 years of age. The Criminal Code was also amended to strengthen penalties for sexual crimes against children. In addition, the new Labor Code came into effect and has several provisions designed to protect children from child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Uzbekistan took actions to address child labor. However, cumbersome administrative requirements for labor inspections and criminal investigations hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction (MEPR): Monitors labor issues and conducts labor inspections through the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI), including inspections for compliance with child labor laws. SLI can investigate offenses of forced and child labor and refer possible criminal cases to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA). Leads the Sub-Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Decent Work. In addition to labor inspectors employed by MEPR, local governments employ 200 “assistant inspectors” who can participate in labor inspections but are not allowed to impose administrative fines. Receives complaints, including on an anonymous basis, through a telephone hotline with a short, easy-to-remember number; a web portal; and a Telegram messenger bot. In 2023, SLI received and investigated over 19,000 complaints of labor violations.

MOIA: Investigates crimes related to child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, which may then be prosecuted by the Prosecutor General’s Office. Leads the National Sub-Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons. Maintains a database of human trafficking crimes, including child trafficking crimes, which aggregates relevant information received from other government bodies, citizens' organizations, non-profit organizations, and civil society groups.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **344** labor inspectors conducted inspections at **14,513** organizations, finding **0** child labor violations. It is **unknown** how many investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor the government conducted or how many perpetrators were convicted, although it initiated **8** prosecutions.

Although labor inspectors are empowered to conduct self-initiated unannounced inspections in public sector enterprises, permission is required from the Business Ombudsman to conduct inspections at private-sector businesses, which poses an administrative barrier that may prevent inspectors from identifying and addressing labor law violations in a timely manner. The Business Ombudsman reports directly to the President, and its primary function is to promote and protect business interests in Uzbekistan. As a result, inspectors may avoid requesting permission for such inspections due to the political climate, and business owners may receive advance notice of any inspections that are approved. Reports indicate that in practice, inspectors may be reticent to enter private businesses or homes on an unannounced basis and typically only do so in response to complaints. In 2022, a draft decree was presented to the President that is intended to improve labor inspectorate funding and staffing, as well as to remove the requirement to obtain permission from the Business Ombudsman to conduct unannounced inspections; the decree, however, remains unsigned.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Uzbekistan established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the government repeatedly denied the applications of human rights NGOs to officially register to operate in the country.

National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Decent Work: Coordinates state and local entities' efforts to address sex trafficking; analyzes and monitors the efficacy of government programs to address sex trafficking and forced labor; organizes international cooperation on efforts to address sex trafficking and forced labor; and provides legal and policy recommendations for improvement of government efforts in these areas. Chaired by the National Rapporteur on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Decent Work. Comprises two sub-commissions to address trafficking and decent work, respectively. MOIA heads the Sub-Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and the Minister of Employment and Poverty Reduction heads the Sub-Commission on Decent Work. In 2023, the Commission met three times and adopted two roadmaps to implement international recommendations on eliminating child labor and trafficking in persons.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Uzbekistan established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the ILO and the Republic of Uzbekistan (2021–2025): Establishes terms of agreement between ILO and the government on cooperation to implement the Decent Work Country Program in Uzbekistan. It is unknown what efforts were taken in 2023 to implement this MOU.

Action Plans on Implementing International Recommendations to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Establish work plans to address international recommendations to advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Uzbekistan. Aim to improve labor and criminal law enforcement, coordination, policies, and social programs related to the worst forms of child labor. In 2023, the government approved an action plan specifically to implement the recommendations in this report, but neither provided a copy of the action plan nor specified what actions it intended to implement under this plan.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Uzbekistan funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in public works, street work, and agriculture sectors other than cotton harvesting.

Better Work Pilot Program:* The government signed a memorandum in May 2023 to launch this program, which is intended to engage ILO and the International Finance Corporation to support the improvement of labor standards and conditions in the cotton and textile industries, including the expansion of unannounced labor inspections and the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

National Rehabilitation Center:† MEPR-operated shelter that provides human trafficking survivors with emergency medical and social services and assists in social rehabilitation. Children are placed in specialized institutions, separate from adult survivors. This center continued to provide services to survivors of the worst forms of child labor in 2023.

* Program was launched during the reporting period.
† Program is funded by the Government of Uzbekistan.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects



WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

The government continues to deter the formation of any trade unions that are independent of the state-affiliated Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan. Laws protecting workers from retaliation for union activity are rarely enforced. These factors have created an environment that limits unions' independence and ability to effectively advocate for workers' rights, including reporting child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



VANUATU

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Vanuatu made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government of Vanuatu funded the School Grant Program, which provides funding directly to schools to help offset education costs. However, despite this effort, Vanuatu does not provide for compulsory and free basic education in its laws. Vanuatu also lacks a referral mechanism between criminal authorities and social services providers. Finally, research was unable to determine whether the National Child Protection Working Group, Vanuatu's primary forum for exchanging information on child protection and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, was active during the reporting period.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Vanuatu are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in forestry, including logging.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Forestry, including logging.



Services

Street work, including vending.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced labor in domestic work, logging, and street vending.

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



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Vanuatu's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Raise the minimum age for hazardous work from age 15 to age 18, to comply with international standards and determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

Ensure that the law protects children ages 12 and 13 employed in light agricultural work by specifying the activities and hours per week that are allowed.

Include heightened penalties in the law for the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Establish by law provision of free basic public education and establish age 14 as the compulsory education age to match the minimum age for work.

Enforcement

Publish information on labor law and criminal law enforcement efforts, including information related to funding, the number and type of inspections conducted, violations found, and penalties imposed and collected.

Employ at least 3 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 107,500 workers, and train labor inspectors and criminal investigators on anti-human trafficking and enforcement of child labor laws.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Strengthen coordination and sufficiently fund referral mechanisms between *Kastom* (an informal method individuals use to settle disputes), the Department of Labor, the Vanuatu Police Force, the Vanuatu Tourism Office, and social welfare services to protect and rehabilitate children involved in child labor, including its worst forms.

Ensure that the Child Desk (under the Ministry of Justice and Community Services) has adequate financial and human resources to develop and integrate national planning initiatives for child protection policies.

Formalize the complaint mechanism that reports and responds to children labor concerns and publicize information about the mechanism's activities.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Child Protection Working Group takes meaningful action to implement policies to prevent and eliminate child labor.

Government Policies

Implement the National Child Protection Policy and publish the results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Fund and implement policies as intended to address all relevant worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Ensure that social services providers and civil society organizations are registered and follow a standard set of procedures in providing care to vulnerable children.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs, including in logging and street vending.

Increase access to education for all children, including those with disabilities, by expanding teacher training, increasing access for remote students, and improving access to facilities.

Implement and fund social programs to address child labor in forestry, street work, and commercial sexual exploitation.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Traffickers exploit children through the interfamilial cultural practice, or method of paying off debts, called "child swapping," in which family members send children to live with relatives or other families in town; these children are at an increased risk of exploitation, including human trafficking.













BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Due to a lack of accessible buildings and specialized teaching skills, children with disabilities face acute challenges to accessing education. Additionally, as a nation of small islands, geographic barriers and transportation difficulties limit education access for children living in remote locations.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Vanuatu has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Vanuatu's laws and regulations do not meet international standards on the minimum age for hazardous work, identification of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children, or the prohibition of using children in illicit activities.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Sections 38 and 39 of the Employment Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 15 Years		Section 40 of the Employment Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Section 40 of the Employment Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 7 and 78(2) of the Employment Act; Section 102 of the Penal Code; Sections 2, 34, and 35 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Section 35 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 101B–D of the Penal Code; Sections 2 and 35 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Section 35 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age		
Free Public Education		Section 41 of the Education Act 2014

† Country has no standing military

Vanuatu's hazardous work prohibitions do not comply with international standards that require all children under age 18 to be protected from work that could jeopardize their health and safety, and Vanuatu does not determine by law the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. In addition, the Employment Act permits children under the age of 12 to perform light work in agricultural undertakings owned and managed by their own families, without requiring that the undertaking not have other employees and be for local consumption only; the Employment Act also permits children ages 12 and 13 to work in light agricultural work and domestic work, but it does not specify the activities or hours per week that are allowed. Furthermore, the Penal Code does not include heightened penalties for inducing children to engage in illicit activities, including in drug production and drug trafficking. Vanuatu also lacks free education by law and a compulsory education policy, increasing the risk of children's involvement in child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

It is unknown whether enforcement agencies in Vanuatu took actions to address child labor in 2023. In addition, research indicates that the lack of human and financial resources may have hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor: Enforces provisions set forth in the Employment Act, including child labor laws. Empowered to issue "spot fines" if any person or company is found to be in violation of the country's labor laws.

Vanuatu Police Force: Enforces all criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and collaborates with the Vanuatu Tourism Office to address commercial sexual exploitation of children. Prosecutes child labor cases.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, it is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted or whether prosecutions were initiated.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Vanuatu established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the government did not report specific activities undertaken during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Child Protection Working Group: Serves as the primary forum for exchanging information on child protection and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Chaired by the Director General of the Ministry of Justice and Community Services, and comprises representatives from the government, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and NGOs.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor Vanuatu established policies related to child labor. However, the government did not provide information about actions taken to implement the National Child Protection Policy.</p>	<p>National Child Protection Policy (2016–2026): Aims to protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Provides children with equitable access to services supporting reintegration and recovery when needed.</p> <p>Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (2021–2030): A strategic plan to strengthen the education sector in Vanuatu, including the education budget and monitoring of expenses. Provides access to education to all children in Vanuatu. Implements quality infrastructure based on needs. Reduces the number of out-of-school children and identifies children studying at the incorrect grade level. The program was active and supported by the government during the reporting period.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)**Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Vanuatu funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in forestry, street work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

† Program is funded by the Government of Vanuatu.

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

National Child Protection Referral Pathway: Defines the roles of different stakeholders and service providers for support provided to children, such as psychosocial support, access to healthcare, and access to safety and justice. In 2023, the Ministry of Justice and Community Services partnered with Save the Children Vanuatu to promote the Pathway in Sanma Province by hosting a 2-day training in order to increase the knowledge and skills of all provincial child protection stakeholders.

School Grant Program:[†] Funded by the Government of Vanuatu's Ministry of Education; provides funding directly to schools. The funds support students of all grade levels, including students in Years 1 through 14, to offset education costs. The grant program was active in 2023, with funds being disbursed to schools in three installments throughout the year.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

WALLIS AND FUTUNA

NO ASSESSMENT

For the 2023 reporting period, no assessment has been made regarding Wallis and Futuna's efforts to advance the prevention of the worst forms of child labor because there is no evidence of a problem and the country's legal and enforcement framework on child labor meets international standards.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence of child labor in Wallis and Futuna.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting, there are no actions needed to advance the continued prevention of child labor in Wallis and Futuna.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Wallis and Futuna is a French overseas collectivity, and, as such, cannot ratify international conventions. However, France's ratification of such conventions applies to Wallis and Futuna. France has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor and its laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 118 of the Labor Code of Wallis and Futuna
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 115 of the Labor Code of Wallis and Futuna
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles L.4153-8, L.4153-9, and D.4153-15 of the Labor Code; Decree No. 2013-915, Relative to Work That is Prohibited and Regulated for Young People Less Than 18 Years
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 212-1, 224-1 A, B, and C, 225-4-1, 225-14-1, 225-14-2, and 711-1 of the Penal Code; Article 2 of the Labor Code of Wallis and Futuna
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 225-4-1 to 225-4-9 and 711-1 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 225-5 to 12, 225-12-1, 225-12-2, 227-22, 227-23, and 711-1 of the Penal Code; Article 15 of Law No. 2021-478
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 222-34, 222-35, 227-15 to 227-28-3, and 711-1 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 461-7 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles L131-1 and L161-1 of the Education Code of France
Free Public Education		Articles L132-1, L132-2, and L161-1 of the Education Code of France

* Country has no conscription
 † Country has no standing military



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor. However, Wallis and Futuna established the Service of Labor and Social Laws Inspectorate and the French Gendarmerie Nationale to prevent child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Service of Labor and Social Laws Inspectorate: Enforces the French labor code within Wallis and Futuna and falls under the joint authority of the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Overseas Territories. There is one labor inspector in Wallis and Futuna who is trained on child labor laws.

The French Gendarmerie Nationale: Enforces legislation banning child labor.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for coordinating mechanisms, policies, or social programs to address child labor.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, the Palestinian Authority made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the areas of the West Bank under its control. The Palestinian Authority amended the child law to prohibit forced labor, child trafficking, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. However, there are no criminal penalties for recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. Labor investigators also cannot inspect worksites at night, when they suspect child labor occurs, because of insufficient funding for overtime. In addition, it is unknown whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation. Children also perform dangerous tasks in farming and construction.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Fishing[†] and farming.[†]



Industry

Mining and quarrying,[†] and construction.[†]



Services

Scavenging garbage and gravel at trash pits, and collecting scrap metal and solid waste.[†] Street work, including begging and street vending. Working in shops, hotels, and restaurants. Domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Commercial sexual exploitation. Recruitment in non-state armed forces.

[†] 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in the Palestinian Authority's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Ensure that the minimum age for work applies to all children, or excepts only those working in family and small-scale holdings producing for local consumption and not regularly employing hired workers.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Enforcement

Ensure that child labor laws are enforced in the Gaza Strip.

Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations into the worst forms of child labor and whether penalties were imposed for the worst forms of child labor.

Provide further resources and staff, including budget for overtime hours and vehicles, to the Ministry of Labor to conduct labor inspections and criminal investigations in all sectors, including family-owned businesses and at night.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Ensure that penalties against those who use child labor in contravention of Palestinian Authority laws are levied even if the employer terminates the employment of a child.

Coordination

Establish a coordinating mechanism to prevent and eliminate all relevant forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Adopt policies to address child labor in construction, street work, and agriculture.

Social Programs

Expand programs to improve access to education; for example, ensure that children are not subjected to violence, schools are weatherproof, and delays at checkpoints do not prevent children from attending school.

Expand programs to further address child labor, specifically in construction, street work, and agriculture.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children may be vulnerable to child labor in the agricultural sector, partly because the Palestinian Authority (PA) does not have jurisdiction or the resources to enforce laws in Area C's agricultural fields and Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which are administered by Israel. Some Palestinian girls from the West Bank are also vulnerable to being exploited for sex and labor in the West Bank and in Israel after family members force them into marriages with older men, in which they often experience physical and sexual abuse, threats of violence, and restricted movement.




BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The escalation of hostilities following October 7, 2023 has produced dire consequences for children in the Gaza Strip, where over 1.8 million people were internally displaced in 2023. As a result, 625,000 children were unable to access education in the Gaza Strip. Children have also faced increased barriers to education in the West Bank due to further restrictions on movement, military actions, and increased settler violence, with some schools moving to virtual classrooms. In the West Bank, long distances to schools, school closures, Israeli demolition and confiscation of schools, and attacks by settlers and harassment and detention by Israeli security forces at checkpoints prevent some children from attending school. Access to education is key to preventing children's engagement in child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The PA has Non-Member Observer status at the UN. In April 2014, PA officials presented to UN officials letters of accession to 15 UN treaties, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. In December 2017, PA officials acceded to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons and the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. However, the PA's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work, which does not apply to minors who work for their first-degree relatives, and the prohibition of military recruitment by non-state armed groups, for which there are no criminal penalties.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 3 and 93 of the Labor Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 95 of the Labor Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; Article 14 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 1 of Minister of Labor's Decree on Hazardous Work for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 1 and 48 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 1 and 48 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 1 and 48 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; Articles 306 and 310 of the Jordanian Penal Code for the West Bank; Articles 167 and 172(5) of the Penal Code for the Gaza Strip
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 48 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; Articles 27 and 44 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; Article 389 of the Jordanian Penal Code for the West Bank; Article 193 of the Penal Code for the Gaza Strip
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 46 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 46 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles 3 and 18 of the Palestinian Education Act for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; Article 37 of the Palestinian Child Law for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Free Public Education		Articles 3 and 15 of the Palestinian Education Act for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

* No conscription in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

† No standing military in the West Bank

In the West Bank, under the terms of the Oslo-era agreements between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israeli government, the Palestinian Authority has civil law jurisdiction in the areas of the West Bank designated Area A and Area B, which represent approximately 39 percent of the West Bank's land area and contain approximately 94 percent of the Palestinian population. The Israeli government has full administrative and security control over the city of Jerusalem and Area C; the latter represents 61 percent of the West Bank's land area and approximately 6 percent of the Palestinian population and the vast majority of the West Bank's agricultural areas. Although the Palestinian Authority's laws apply in the Gaza Strip, along with Egyptian, British Mandatory, and Ottoman statutes and Shari`a law, Hamas continues to exercise de facto control over security and other matters.

In 2023, the Palestinian Authority amended the child law to prohibit forced labor, child trafficking, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. However, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. The Labor Law's minimum age provision does not apply to minors who work for their first-degree relatives, which is not in line with international standards that limit the exception for family-based work to small-scale holdings producing for local consumption and not regularly employing hired workers. Additionally, there are no criminal penalties for recruiting children into non-state armed groups.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in the West Bank took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resources limited law enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL), General Administration of Labor Inspection and Protection: Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor. Includes the Juvenile Unit, which specializes in child labor.

Police Bureau for the Protection of the Family and Adolescents: Investigates violations of laws, including the commercial sexual exploitation and economic exploitation of children. Coordinates with the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) to monitor cases of child labor and economic exploitation.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2023, **138** labor inspectors conducted **18,720** worksite inspections, finding **604** violations related to child labor and issuing **490** penalties of various types. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

The Palestinian Authority established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism does not cover all relevant child labor issues.

Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) Child Protection Network: Monitors cases of child labor, ensuring that the MOL's services are provided to withdraw children from child labor. Includes eight technical committees throughout the West Bank that provide psychological and social support to children and caregivers. Coordinates with the Ministry of Education on cases of school dropouts and child labor. Works with the MOSD's 13 Youth Social Rehabilitation Centers to provide children who have dropped out of school with social, education, vocational, and cultural training. Comprising MOSD, MOL, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, and other PA and non-governmental organizations. Active in 2023. Although the MOSD Child Protection Network coordinates services, research found no evidence that the committee functions as a coordinating mechanism to address all aspects of child labor.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Research found no evidence that the Palestinian Authority established policies to address child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>The Palestinian Authority funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Palestinian Authority.</i></p>	<p>MOL's Vocational Centers:† Palestinian Authority program in the West Bank, consisting of 13 employment offices and 9 vocational centers operated by MOL, for children over the age of 15 to enroll in vocational training courses. Active in 2023.</p> <p>UN Education Programs: UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East programs that provide educational support for children and youth in refugee camps, and microfinance and other forms of support to families in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Active in 2023.</p>
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For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



WESTERN SAHARA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Morocco made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Kingdom of Morocco claims the territory of Western Sahara and administers the area that it controls with the same constitution, laws, and structures as in internationally recognized Morocco, including laws that deal with child labor. Morocco adopted a roadmap to eliminate child labor by 2030 as part of its commitment as a Pathfinder country under Alliance 8.7 and adopted the National Plan to Combat and Prevent Human Trafficking 2023–2030, along with the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking. It also increased its number of labor inspectors from 500 in 2022 to 585 in 2023 and nearly doubled the number of labor inspections completed in a single year from 29,068 in 2022 to 48,123 in 2023. However, the Labor Code's minimum age for work provisions do not meet international standards as children 15 years of age and under are not protected when working in traditional artisan and handicraft sectors. Furthermore, barriers to education such as insufficient facilities, school fees, and lack of transportation can prevent children from attending school, increasing their risk of engaging in child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Western Sahara are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in artisanal crafts, textiles, construction, and mechanics.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Morocco's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that all children aged 15 and under are protected by law, including children who work in artisan and handicraft sectors for family businesses.

Ensure that the law establishes 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military with safeguards for volunteers.

Criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution.

Coordination

Establish a mechanism to coordinate government efforts to address all worst forms of child labor in the country.

Social Programs

Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including in rural areas and in forced domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

Conduct a comprehensive study of children's activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor and to inform policies and programs, including in farming, forestry, domestic work, and the informal sector.

Remove barriers to education, such as insufficient facilities and a lack of reliable and safe transportation, particularly in rural areas.

Provide child protection units the resources to provide appropriate care to victims, including hiring a sufficient number of social workers.















BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children, particularly in rural areas, are vulnerable to child labor due to educational barriers similar to those faced in other locations in Morocco, such as insufficient facilities and lack of reliable and safe transportation.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Western Sahara is subject to the same laws as internationally recognized Morocco. Morocco has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, which the government extends to the areas in Western Sahara that it controls. However, Morocco’s laws do not meet international standards on minimum age for work because the law does not cover children working in businesses with fewer than five employees. In addition, there is no minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 4, 143, and 151 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Law No. 19-12
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 147, 150, and 181 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Law No. 19-12
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Hazardous Child Labor List, Decree No. 2-10-183; Articles 179 and 181 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings; Articles 10 and 12 of the Labor Code; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 497–499, and 503-2 of the Penal Code; Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Law number 1-73-282; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code; Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 4 of Law No. 44-18
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 1 of Law No. 04-00
Free Public Education		Article 1 of Law No. 04-00

The Labor Code does not apply to children who work in the traditional artisan or handicraft sectors for family businesses with five or fewer employees.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Morocco, including Western Sahara, took actions to address child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills (MEIPEEC): Enforces child labor laws with its 54 inspection offices throughout the country. Partners with civil society organizations working to remove children from child labor and provide them with an education or vocational training. MEIPEEC's priorities in the 2023 National Labor Inspection Plan included addressing child labor and focusing on the agricultural, construction, handicraft, textile, and automotive sectors.

General Prosecutor: Prosecutes criminal offenses against children and processes cases involving children in the court system. Serves independently as a judiciary body separate from the Ministry of Justice.

Enforcement information for Western Sahara is not tracked separately from Morocco. In Morocco, **585** labor inspectors conducted **48,123** worksite inspections. There were also **57** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, although the number of prosecutions initiated, and perpetrators convicted is **unknown**.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Morocco established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this coordinating mechanism does not address all forms of child labor in the country.</p>	<p>National Commission for the Coordination of Measures to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Persons (CNCLT): Coordinates the government's efforts to address trafficking in persons. Led by the Ministry of Justice, with 22 members representing various ministries and civil society organizations. In March 2023, the CNCLT adopted the National Plan to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings 2023–2030 and the National Strategy to Address Trafficking in Persons 2023–2026. The National Plan also includes the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking to coordinate trafficking victim identification and referral to services.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Morocco established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Roadmap to Eliminate Child Labor in All Its Forms by 2030:[†] Has three main strategic priorities which include: (1) addressing poverty, education, and professional skills; (2) improving national regulations of working children; and (3) improving governance monitoring and evaluation. Through these actions, Moroccans seek to eliminate child labor among those under 15 years of age and stop 16- to 18-year-olds from participating in hazardous work. Accepted by MEIPEEC in June 2023.</p> <p>Ministry of Solidarity, Social Inclusion, and Family (MSISF) Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children: Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to respond to the exploitation of children and other issues. MSISF operates 41 child protection units that exist to protect children from all kinds of abuses, including child victims of trafficking. NGOs have raised concerns that there are not enough social workers to support these units.</p> <p>National Strategy to Address Trafficking in Persons:[†] Aims to raise awareness of human trafficking and improve the identification and referral of victims to services. Strategy provides for regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that objectives are being met and describes stakeholder responsibilities. Enacted in March 2023 with assistance from international partners. Meetings held in 2023 to begin strategy implementation including provision of temporary housing assistance to victims.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Morocco funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not address child labor in all sectors.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Morocco.</i></p>	<p>Social Cohesion Support Fund:[†] Programs that aim to improve access to education. Also provides direct support to orphans and others in vulnerable situations. These efforts continued throughout the reporting period. Included the MSISF-funded Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program, which provided direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria. These cash transfers continued until the program ended in November 2023.</p> <p>Government-Funded Education Projects:[†] Projects that aim to assist vulnerable children, including the After-School Program for a Second Chance, which provides students with after-school educational assistance as part of non-formal education programs. There are 161 centers involved in the program, which remained active in 2023. The Child to Child program was also active in 2023; it both promotes school enrollment and assists students who have dropped out of school. A related program, Caravane for Direct Integration, worked with 7,835 students who had dropped out of school to complete end-of-studies exams in the 2022–2023 school year.</p>

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports

YEMEN

NO ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Yemen made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. There is evidence of recruitment and use of children in hostilities by government and government-affiliated armed forces in contravention of Yemeni law. Stronger enforcement measures of the government’s prohibition on child recruitment are needed to ensure children are not recruited and used by government and government-affiliated forces. Furthermore, the government failed to make efforts to address discrimination in schools against children from the *Muhamasheen* (“marginalized”) community, leading to their increased vulnerability to child labor, and the government did not conduct any labor inspections or enforce criminal labor laws due to the government’s lack of budgetary resources. Moreover, research found no evidence of a government policy on worst forms of child labor outside of child soldiering. In areas outside of government control, non-state armed groups such as the Houthis deliberately recruit children for use in combat and support roles in their armed forces. The Houthis have also subjected children to military training and indoctrination as part of “summer camps,” increasing their vulnerability to being recruited as child soldiers.

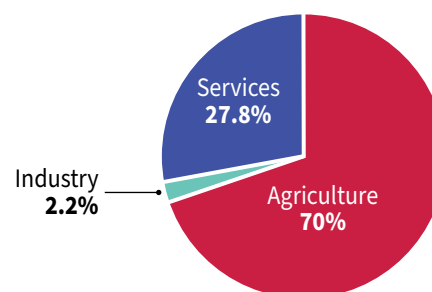


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	12.5% (Unavailable)
Boys		15.8%
Girls		8.8%
Urban		4.8%
Rural		15.4%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	30.3% (Unavailable)
Boys		44.3%
Girls		15.4%
Urban		19.7%
Rural		34.5%
Attending School	5 to 14	67.2%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	11.9%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Yemen are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in recruitment and use by state and non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict and use in illicit activities, including in trafficking of drugs by non-state armed groups.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming† and fishing.‡



Industry

Construction,† carpentry,† and working in factories and welding‡ workshops.



Services

Voluntarily recruited children used in hostilities by state armed groups. Street work, including selling items, and begging. Selling goods in stores, transporting goods, and working in bakeries. Working in auto repair, mechanic shops,† car washes, and collecting fares in taxis.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Recruitment and use of children by state and non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict and use in illicit activities, including in the trafficking of drugs. Commercial sexual exploitation. Forced labor, including domestic work, begging, and working in small shops.

† 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.

Armed groups, especially the Houthis, but also government and pro-government militias, recruited and used child soldiers in combat and support roles in 2023. According to the UN, the Houthis recruited and used 59 children, while Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) recruited and used 33 children. Pro-government militias recruited and used an additional 78 children in 2023. In areas under Houthi control, children are indoctrinated in schools and recruited into armed forces; these practices have been documented in 34 schools in 6 governorates. Additionally, children are indoctrinated and exposed to military training in “summer camps,” organized by the Houthis. Boys recruited by the Houthis are often used in combat roles, and girls are used as recruiters, guards, and spies, and in other non-combat roles. Children are also used by the Houthis to transport drugs to the frontlines and neighboring countries.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Yemen’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits forced labor.

Ensure that trafficking of children, including recruitment, harboring, transportation, transfer, and receipt, for purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation, are criminalized and that punishments are prescribed.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.

Ensure that the law adequately prohibits and provides punishments for using, procuring, or offering a child in pornography and pornographic performances, and using a child in prostitution.

Raise the minimum age for work from age 14 to age 15 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Enforce laws prohibiting children under age 18 from joining the Yemeni Armed Forces. Ensure that any children under age 18 already in the Yemeni Armed Forces and pro-government militias do not engage in combat.

Ensure that the labor inspectorate has the capacity to enforce labor laws.

Employ at least 195 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 7.8 million workers.

Ensure that authorities enforce minimum age protections in all sectors in which the worst forms of child labor are prevalent, including in temporary employment, farming, and domestic work.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies enforce child labor laws and publish information on enforcement activities.

Coordination

Ensure that the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor is active and able to carry out its intended mandates.

Government Policies

Adopt a policy that addresses all worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation and child trafficking.

Social Programs

Implement programs to address the worst forms of child labor and expand programs to improve children’s equal access to education, particularly for *Muhamasheen* children.

Institute a rehabilitation and reintegration program for children engaged in armed conflict and children involved in other worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and fishing.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Among the *Muhamasheen* (“marginalized”) minority group, generally of African origin and estimated to number 3.5 million, illiteracy rates are over 50 percent for both boys and girls, and child labor in the form of begging is prevalent. *Muhamasheen* families have difficulty affording school supplies and identity documentation. This community also suffers from general poverty and severe societal discrimination. *Muhamasheen* boys are vulnerable to sexual violence by armed actors, particularly while they engage in child labor, even if they are not directly involved in armed conflict. Research did not discover any government efforts to address this discrimination.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Yemen face significant barriers to education access due to limited government financial resources, lack of family income, the use of schools for military purposes, and attacks on schools by armed groups. In Houthi-controlled areas, obstacles include vandalism and destruction of schools, a lack of schools in many areas, lack of financial ability by families to pay for education, and Houthi recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. According to UNICEF, over 2 million boys and girls are not attending school due to poverty, conflict, and a lack of educational opportunities. Direct effects of the war, including the destruction of schools, have prevented children from attending classes. In addition, around 170,000 teachers in Houthi-controlled areas have not received salaries since 2016. Many families also continue to be unable to afford transportation costs to schools, and Yemen’s multiple crises have pushed families further into poverty, making it increasingly difficult to access education. Many *Muhamasheen* children do not have birth certificates, which are required for enrollment in schools. They face harassment, bullying, and violence at school, and are dismissed from school or asked to clean the bathrooms; this treatment leads some to drop out of school.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Yemen has not ratified key international conventions concerning child labor, including the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Yemen’s laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of forced labor because the legal framework does not appear to prohibit or provide punishments for forced labor, and the prohibition of child trafficking because it only provides criminal penalties for someone who has bought, sold, or dispensed of a child.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Articles 5 and 27 of Ministerial Order No. 11 of 2013; Articles 48 and 49 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 7 of Ministerial Order No. 11 of 2013; Articles 49 and 154 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 7, 8, and 15 of Ministerial Order No. 11 of 2013
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 6 and 26 of Ministerial Order No. 11 of 2013; Article 248 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 6 and 26 of Ministerial Order No. 11 of 2013
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 147 and 163 of the Child Rights Law; Article 279 of the Penal Code; Articles 6 and 25 of Ministerial Order No. 11 of 2013
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Section 24 of Ministerial Order No. 11 of 2013; Articles 148 and 162 of the Child Rights Law

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 149 of the Child Rights Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 6(b) of Ministerial Order No. 11 of 2013
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years‡		Article 18 of the General Education Law
Free Public Education		Article 87 of the Child Rights Law

* Country has no conscription

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Although Article 248 of the Penal Code criminalizes buying, selling, and dealing in human beings, the legal framework does not appear to prohibit or provide punishments for forced labor. The law related to child trafficking is insufficient because it only provides criminal penalties for someone who has bought, sold, or dispensed of a child. The legal framework does not adequately prohibit using, procuring, or offering a child in pornography and pornographic performances, or using a child in prostitution. The minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

Enforcement agencies in Yemen took no documented actions to address child labor in 2023.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor’s (MOSAL) Child Labor Unit: Enforces child labor laws, conducts inspections, informs the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) of any violations, and refers children found during inspections to appropriate social services.

MOI: Enforces child labor laws. Police departments within MOI handle human trafficking investigations.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Unknown
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Unknown	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	No	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No

In 2023, labor inspectors conducted **0** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **0** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **0** prosecutions, and convicted **0** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Yemen established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, this mechanism did not carry out coordination activities during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor: Coordinates child labor issues in Yemen. Comprises representatives from MOSAL, other state agencies, ILO, and local NGOs. The National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor was not active during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Yemen established a policy related to child labor. However, this policy does not cover all worst forms of child labor that exist in the country.</p>	<p>Action Plan to End and Prevent the Recruitment of Children by the Yemeni Armed Forces: Ensures that national laws comply with international standards, prohibits the recruitment and use of children in armed forces, investigates allegations of violations, and facilitates UN access to monitor compliance.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Research found no evidence that Yemen funded or participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor.</p>	

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects



WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Yemen's ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis have severely impacted workers' rights and the ability of trade unions to operate effectively. Freedom of association and collective bargaining protections also do not extend to day laborers, domestic servants, foreign workers, and other groups who together made up most of the workforce, including young workers 16-18, who are prohibited from joining a union without parental authorization. The lack of strong independent trade unions in the country hinders efforts to combat child labor and advocate for better working conditions.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ZAMBIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Zambia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security conducted 3,318 inspections in 2023, a 42 percent increase compared to 2022, opened a call center to receive complaints of labor violations, and released an analysis of child labor. The government also increased its budget for education by 18 percent, which included the hiring of 7,222 teachers and improvements to school infrastructure throughout the country. In addition, the government continued its school feeding program, which currently serves nearly 2 million students. However, Zambia's law does not meet international standards on education because the Education Act does not specify a compulsory attendance age. Despite having a mandate to do so, labor inspectors do not inspect the informal sector, which comprises 73 percent of economic activity and is the area in which most incidents of child labor in Zambia are known to occur. Finally, responsible government offices had no case management or records management systems to track whether they had assessed penalties for child labor violations or held perpetrators accountable for child labor crimes.

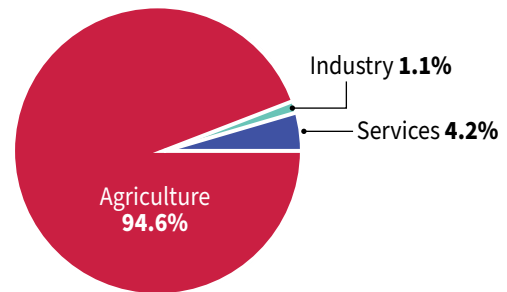


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	7.8% (400,423)
Attending School	5 to 14	74.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.1%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Zambia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and mining.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of cotton† and tobacco.† Raising and herding† of cattle.



Industry

Mining, including in copper, manganese, and gemstone production, and scavenging for ore. Working in stone quarries and construction, carrying heavy loads† and crushing stones.† Working in forestry and in manufacturing.



Services

Domestic work and street work, including begging, vending, washing cars and garbage disposal.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in agriculture and herding, mining, construction, weaving; street vending of food, selling retail goods in markets and domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging. Use in illicit activities, including the selling of drugs.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Zambia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Accede to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.

Determine the list of light work activities permitted for children ages 13 to 15.

Define by law 9 years of compulsory education, extending to at least age 15, to align with the minimum age for work.

Clarify the legal framework and responsible agencies' mandates to conduct child labor focused planned and unplanned inspections.

Enforcement

Increase planned inspections in unregistered businesses, including artisanal mining sites, farms, and private homes, to ensure monitoring of all sectors in which children are working.

Use a case management system to record and track labor enforcement information and develop a proactive strategy for routine investigations.

Publish complete information on labor law enforcement efforts.

Increase fiscal and material resources for the labor inspectorate, including office space, training, vehicles, and fuel.

Publish criminal law enforcement information and provide training to police officers on the worst forms of child labor.

Increase resources to combat human trafficking and develop and implement consistent procedures to screen and identify human trafficking victims.

Coordination

Ensure the National Steering Committee on Child Labor is active, and District Child Labor Committees are provided funding commensurate with their responsibilities to conduct child labor prevention activities.

Improve lines of communication and clarify responsibilities among agencies to improve effectiveness and referrals to social services.

Government Policies

Report efforts to implement policies, including the National Human Trafficking Policy and the National Migration Policy.

Include child labor strategies in government policies, including the National Employment and Labor Market Policy and the Education Policy.

Social Programs

Address barriers to education access by increasing the number of schools and teachers, providing transportation in rural areas, improving school infrastructure, including toilets that offer privacy and adequate sanitation, empowering married girls to continue their education, expanding the school meals program, and defraying other education-related costs, such as school supplies and suitable clothing for families in poverty.

Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem in all relevant sectors, including agriculture, mining, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children near artisanal mining sites are also more vulnerable to engaging in mining activities and vending foodstuffs. Illegal mining syndicates, called *jérabo* gangs, have been known to kidnap street boys in the mining provinces to scavenge slag heaps and load trucks with stolen copper ore, under threat of bodily harm. Young girls near mining sites and along Zambia's borders and transit corridors are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, refugee children have increased vulnerability to child labor exploitation due to their families' limited access to employment or community support networks.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Girls face multiple barriers to education due to early marriage, teenage pregnancy, and gender norms, especially in rural areas. Studies show that only 27 percent of girls in Zambia complete upper secondary school, and among the poorest children this figure falls to 3 percent. Due to Zambia's high poverty rate, the cost of basic school supplies and suitable school clothing can create a barrier for many students. In rural areas, many students must travel significant distances by foot to and from school. The number of teachers and classrooms is also insufficient to accommodate the large number of students, with the teacher-student ratio at 1:58. According to Zambia's Education Management Information System, in 2020, 24 percent of school toilets were either temporary or not working. Lack of toilets, sanitation, and a lack of bathroom privacy can be a barrier to attendance, especially for girls. In addition, increasing food insecurity and limited access to school lunches are barriers to attendance.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Zambia has not acceded to key international conventions concerning child labor, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict or the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. In addition, Zambia's laws do not meet international standards on education because there is no defined age range for compulsory education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Article 24 of the Constitution; Sections 16 and 81 of the Employment Code Act; Section 13 of the Children's Code Act of 2022.
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Section 83 of the Employment Code Act; Section 13 of the Children's Code Act of 2022.
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Prohibition of Employment of Young Persons and Children (Hazardous Labor) Order; Section 137(2)(n) of the Employment Code Act.
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 14 and 24 of the Constitution; Sections 143, 261, and 263 of the Penal Code; Sections 2 and 3 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act; Section 8 of the Employment Code Act.
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 24(3) of Amendment to the Constitution; Section 143 of the Penal Code; Sections 2, 3, and 3A of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, as amended by the Anti-Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act of 2022; Sections 80 and 83 of the Employment Code Act; Section 17 of the Children's Code Act.
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 143 and 144 of the Penal Code; Sections 80 and 83 of the Employment Code Act; Articles 19 and 27 of the Children's Code Act of 2022.

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Sections 80 and 83 of the Employment Code Act; Section 20 of the Children's Code Act of 2022.
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years	✓	Section 14 of the Defense Act.
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Section 3 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act; Sections 80 and 83 of the Employment Code Act; Section 14 of the Children's Code Act of 2022.
Compulsory Education Age	✗	Sections 16 and 17 of the Education Act.
Free Public Education	✓	Section 15 of the Education Act.

*Country has no conscription

The law establishes a light work framework for employment of children ages 13 to 15, but has not specified what work activities are included. The Education Act requires that the government provide free education up to the ninth grade and stipulates that education is compulsory for children of "school-going age." The Education Act, however, does not set a specific age for compulsory education or define "school-going age." This could allow children to leave school before they are legally able to work, thereby increasing their vulnerability to the worst forms of child labor.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, due to the lack of a case management or records system, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies were hindered in their ability to address child labor issues.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS): Though MLSS is the primary agency responsible for labor law enforcement, it does not prioritize child labor or conduct child labor-focused inspections. The MLSS primarily conducts labor inspections in registered private institutions in response to complaints such as unpaid wages, abuse of workers, and safety violations. The MLSS coordinates the government's interagency National Steering Committee on Child Labor (NSCCL). In 2023, the MLSS released its 2022 Labor Force Survey report and the 2020 Child Labor report, which analyzed child labor in Zambia and laid the foundation for more effective policies and programs. The Ministry also released a brochure clarifying its responsibilities and processes to collaborate with other agencies.

Criminal Enforcement Agencies: The Zambia Police Service (ZPS) collaborates with the Ministry of Justice to investigate and prosecute child labor cases. However, neither agency was able to cite any efforts in 2023 to collaborate on or prosecute such cases. The ZPS is responsible for enforcing laws against child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities through its Child Protection Units (ZP-CPU). These units work with immigration and local officials to respond to child trafficking and remove vulnerable children from the streets, placing them into families, foster homes, or in safe homes. In 2023, the ZPS held a 5-day training on human trafficking for selected officers. However, the ZP-CPU reported its officers did not participate in any trainings focused on child labor during the reporting period.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

For 2023, the government reported that **153** labor inspectors conducted **3,318** worksite inspections. The government conducted **5** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor. The responsible agencies were unable to provide additional information regarding the number of violations found, prosecutions initiated, or perpetrators convicted due to a lack of case management or records management systems.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Zambia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, a lack of funding resulted in insufficient coordination at the local level.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee on Child Labor (NSCCL): The NSCCL is Zambia’s primary coordination mechanism for combating child labor. However, it primarily focuses on international labor migration issues, as opposed to domestic child labor. Local-level coordination is maintained through District Child Labor Committees (DCLCs). The Office of the Auditor General criticized the NSCCL as being ineffective and noted that only those DCLCs which were supported by NGOs had resources to combat child labor. As a result, many DCLCs do not carry out inspections or awareness-raising activities, nor do they have transportation funds to convene committee members. No significant efforts to combat child labor were carried out by the committee in 2023.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor Zambia has established policies related to child labor. However, responsible agencies were unable to cite any efforts in 2023 to implement Zambia’s National Human Trafficking Policy or the National Migration Policy.</p>	<p>National Child Labor Policy: Outlines objectives for prevention and elimination of child labor and designates responsible agencies to address child labor issues. Implemented through the government’s National Action Plan (NAP) for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2020–2025), which outlines child labor activities through 2025. Under this policy, the Government of Zambia, in cooperation with international actors, implemented a pilot program to assist children on the move, including child survivors of trafficking. Over the 3-year effort, which concluded in 2023, a total of 14,245 migrant and refugee children received support, including gender sensitive services, family reunification or foster placement, and community reintegration. Learnings from the pilot program were used to inform new initiatives.</p>
<p>‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</p>	<p>National Human Trafficking Policy and the National Migration Policy: Launched in December 2022, includes strategies to protect Zambian and migrant children from human trafficking and labor exploitation. Each policy is accompanied by an implementation plan that includes sections on prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnerships. Responsible agencies were unable to cite any efforts in 2023 to implement these policies.</p> <p>Education For All Policy: Approved in December 2022, this policy increased access to education by eliminating public school fees for children from kindergarten through high school and removing school uniform requirements. The government also hired 7,222 teachers and education staff in 2023, which is in addition to the 30,496 teachers it deployed in 2022 to address the projected influx of new students.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Zambia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, the scope and impact of these programs were limited.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Zambia.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Social Cash Transfer Program (SCT):[†] Government program to provide funds to families for food security, poverty reduction, child welfare, and increasing school enrollment. Funded by the government and the World Bank. In 2023, the government contributed approximately \$138 million. An evaluation of the program found that, in some families, improved family conditions enabled higher rates of school attendance. Conversely, other families used the funds for invest in new income generating activities which, at times, required labor from the household's children to implement. However, a study found that SCT-related increase in child labor within the homestead tended to correlate with a reduction in children's exposure to more hazardous conditions involved in laboring outside the home. Moreover, the evaluation noted that caregivers intend to reduce child work when it is economically viable for them to do so.</p>
	<p>Edufinance Project (2020–2025): A \$7 million-dollar project implemented by the Zambian Ministry of Education and funded by the United States Agency for International Development. The project builds the capacity of local financial institutions to provide tailored loan products to enable families to affordably finance school-related costs. Through this program, finance institutions have provided 174 loans to schools and parents, valued at \$2.6 million, and have mobilized an additional \$1.8 million in capital from private sector donors.</p>
	<p>Home-Grown School Meals Program (2020-2024):[†] Program that provides a locally sourced meal to over 2 million children, with the goal of reducing poverty and malnutrition for learners in preschools and primary schools. Administered by the Ministry of Education and implemented in approximately 2,800 schools, in 39 districts covering all 10 provinces. In 2023, the program announced plans to expand to feed 4 million children by 2026, to address the influx of new students under the government's Education for All Policy.</p>

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For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports



ZIMBABWE

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2023, Zimbabwe made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted amendments to the Labor Act to increase penalties for forced labor and child labor from 2 years imprisonment to 10 years. The government also relaunched its National Steering Committee to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor. In addition, the Anti-Trafficking Inter-Ministerial Committee facilitated several public awareness-raising activities related to prevention of human trafficking, including a television campaign, and also provided training for criminal law enforcement personnel and prosecutors. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Zimbabwe is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because state-aligned actors engaged in a pattern of threats and intimidation of worker organizations and trade unions, which are key stakeholders in the identification and prevention of child labor. The scope of existing social programs is inadequate to address child labor in all relevant sectors, including in agriculture, mining, and commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, law enforcement agencies lack adequate personnel and operational resources to enforce child labor laws.

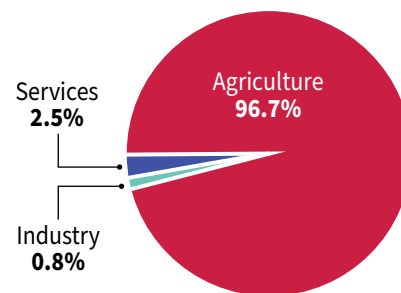


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	14.8% (617,582)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	94.0%
Combining Work and School	5 to 14	16.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Zimbabwe are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced labor in mines and on farms. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture, including in the harvesting of sugarcane and tobacco.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Farming, including in the production of tobacco and sugarcane; fishing; and forestry.



Industry

Mining of lithium and the mining and panning of gold, using dangerous chemicals such as cyanide and mercury, and extracting material from underground passages and quarries.†



Services

Street work, including vending and begging; domestic work.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; use in illicit activities, including selling of drugs; and forced labor in mining, domestic work, and agriculture, including herding.

† 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.

Government security forces engaged in a pattern of threats and intimidation of worker organizations and trade unions, which are key stakeholders in the identification and prevention of child labor. In 2022 and during the run up to the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections, the government and state-aligned Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) political party engaged in a variety of tactics intended to obstruct, hinder, and in some cases violate the rights of workers and worker-aligned organizations advocating for better working conditions, including the identification and prevention of child labor. As civil society organizations and labor unions have been integral to reporting and advocacy on identification and prevention of child labor, including in the mining and agricultural sector, these actions significantly inhibit Zimbabwe’s progress in eliminating child labor.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Zimbabwe’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure the law criminalizes the use of a child for prostitution and the use, offering, and procurement of a child for the production of pornography and pornographic performances.

Ensure the laws do not require physical movement of a child in order to criminalize and prosecute for child trafficking.

Ensure that laws prohibiting forced labor criminalize slavery.

Establish, by law, free basic education by removing the ability of the Education Minister to impose discretionary school fees.

Enforcement

Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations.

Increase operational resources, including vehicles and equipment, and the number of labor inspectors to 355 to address labor violations and enforce minimum age protections in all sectors, including agriculture.

Publish information on the government’s labor law enforcement efforts, including the number of child labor violations found, penalties imposed for child labor violations, and penalties imposed that were collected.

Publish information on the government’s criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations, prosecutions initiated, convictions, and whether the government-imposed penalties.

Government Policies

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.

Social Programs

Cease interfering with and harassing labor unions and worker-aligned organizations advocating for conditions of work and social protection, including the elimination of child labor.

Improve access to education by ensuring that all children are registered at birth and providing children with identity documents so they may take secondary school examinations.

Remove barriers to education access for children living in rural areas by improving access to water and hygiene facilities within schools, reducing travel distances to schools, addressing language barriers in instruction, and increasing the number of teachers.

Improve systems for the distribution of social support benefits from the Basic Education Assistance Module program to ensure that allocations reach vulnerable households that are most in need of the benefits.

Expand existing social programs to address child labor, especially child labor in agriculture, commercial sexual exploitation, and mining.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Sharp divisions in income, resources, and quality of life between rural and urban areas likely contribute to increased vulnerabilities of rural children to labor exploitation. Rural households are likewise vulnerable to climate-related emergencies, such as flash floods, crop failures, drought, and cholera, all of which further strain their economic security. In addition, research indicates human traffickers target migrant and refugee children for labor exploitation in urban centers and marketplaces.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Research indicates some children in Zimbabwe face continued challenges related to birth registration and acquisition of national identification documents. Refugees and undocumented children who come to Zimbabwe from neighboring countries and children who otherwise lack birth certificates face barriers to education because beginning in grade seven, children must present identity documents to sit for national exams. In addition, school fee requirements; poor school infrastructure, including lack of water and hygiene facilities; an insufficient number of teachers; language barriers within schools; and long travel distances to reach schools may contribute to higher dropout rates and vulnerability to child labor, particularly in rural areas.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Zimbabwe has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Zimbabwe's laws do not meet international standards on prohibition of slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor. In addition, the Zimbabwe law providing for free public education is insufficient.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years	✓	Section 11 of the Labor Act; Section 10A of the Children's Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years	✓	Section 11.4 of the Labor Act; Section 10A(4) of the Children's Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Section 3.1 of the Labor Relations (Employment of Children and Young Persons) Regulations; Section 2 of the Children's Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✗	Sections 54 and 55 of the Constitution; Sections 2 and 4A of the Labor Act; First Schedule (Section 3), and Sections 2 and 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	First Schedule (Section 3) and Sections 2 and 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Sections 61, 83, and 87 of the Criminal Law Act; Sections 2, 8, and 10 of the Children's Act; First Schedule (Section 3) and Sections 2 and 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Section 156 of the Criminal Law Act; Section 10 of the Children's Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 16 Years	✓	Sections 5, 9, and 10 of the National Service Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Section 9 of the National Service Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years ‡	✓	Sections 2 and 5 of the Education Act
Free Public Education	✗	Sections 5, 6, and 13 of the Education Act

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In 2023, the government enacted an amended labor law, which reaffirms preexisting articles on child labor but also raises penalties for forced labor and child labor from a maximum of 2 years to a maximum of 10 years in prison. However, Zimbabwe does not adequately criminalize the use of a child for prostitution or the use, offering, and procurement of a child for the production of pornography and

pornographic performances. Further, Zimbabwe does not adequately criminalize child trafficking because the law requires physical movement of a child in order to prosecute for child trafficking. Lastly, laws prohibiting forced labor are not sufficient as they do not criminalize slavery. In addition, although the Education Act establishes the right of children to state-funded education up to age 16, the law maintains the ability of the Minister of Education to institute instructional fees.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of authority of labor inspectors to assess penalties for labor violations hinders adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

The Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Welfare (MPSLSW): Enforces labor and anti-human trafficking laws and investigates labor-related complaints, including those involving child labor. In addition to its designated labor inspectors, MPSLSW coordinates with Occupational Health and Safety inspectors, National Employment Council representatives, and inspectors from the Ministry of Mines to identify and remove children from child labor. Also conducts industry- and sectoral-based labor inspections through appointed agents of national employment councils, comprising representation from both employers' associations and trade unions.

Zimbabwe Republic Police: Enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor in conjunction with MPSLSW, the judiciary, and the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Zimbabwe established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Coordinates government efforts to address the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by MPSLSW and includes the Ministries of Health and Child Care; Primary and Secondary Education; and Youth Development, Indigenization, and Economic Empowerment. Also includes international organizations and civil society groups, such as workers' and employers' organizations. The Steering Committee reconvened in 2023 after several years of inactivity and began work to integrate a child labor pillar into a larger National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, which the government is expected to introduce in 2024.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Zimbabwe established a policy related to child labor. However, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor: Promotes understanding of child labor issues and coordination related to child labor cases. Consists of three focus areas: education assistance, poverty assistance through a cash transfer scheme, and health assistance.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Zimbabwe funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including in agriculture, commercial sexual exploitation, and mining.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Zimbabwe.</i></p>	<p>Harmonized Social Cash Transfer:[†] Government-funded unconditional cash transfer program, with support from UNICEF, to assist labor-constrained and food-insecure households to avert coping strategies, such as child labor. In 2023, the government and UNICEF launched the next phase of its Emergency Cash Transfer program, to provide economic resiliency, child services, and nutritional support to 19,000 highly vulnerable households.</p> <p>Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM):[†] Government program that provides basic financial assistance to families for education costs, such as tuition and examination fees. Aims to keep children in school and to enroll children who lack access to school because of economic hardship. In 2023, BEAM provided educational assistance to 1,515,047 learners, and care and protection services for 59,701 children. Research, however, has found misalignment between the government’s budgetary allocation for BEAM and actual disbursement, and benefits under the BEAM programs do not consistently reach targeted families in need of educational assistance, limiting the capacity of the program to fully address child labor that results from poverty and auxiliary educational expenses.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

TO HELP ADDRESS CHILD LABOR & FORCED LABOR

ASK QUESTIONS

- Could some of the goods I buy be made by child labor or forced labor?
- Do workers have a voice to speak out against labor abuses?
- What are companies doing to end child labor and forced labor in global supply chains?
- What are governments doing to combat child labor and forced labor?

TAKE ACTION

- Empower yourself with knowledge by downloading USDOL's *Sweat & Toil* app and accessing *Comply Chain* and *Better Trade Tool*.
- Make your voice heard by spreading the word among friends, family, and with the companies where you spend your money.
- Show your support for organizations that are working to end these abuses.

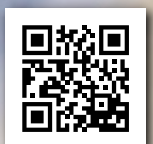
DEMAND CHANGE

ADVOCATE FOR A WORLD IN WHICH:

- Workers everywhere can raise their voices against child labor, forced labor, and other abuses.
- Companies make serious commitments to ensure that global supply chains are free of products made by child labor and forced labor, especially those on USDOL's *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*.
- Your investments have a positive social impact by promoting responsible labor practices.
- Governments work vigorously to adopt the country-specific suggested actions in USDOL's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*.



Learn more: dol.gov/EndChildLabor
To contact us, please email GlobalKids@dol.gov
Follow us: @ILAB_DOL



www.dol.gov/ilab

For more information or to contact us, please visit USDOL's website at:
<https://dol.gov/ChildLaborFindings> or email us at: **GlobalKids@dol.gov**



Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
Bureau of International Labor Affairs
United States Department of Labor