



# 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.

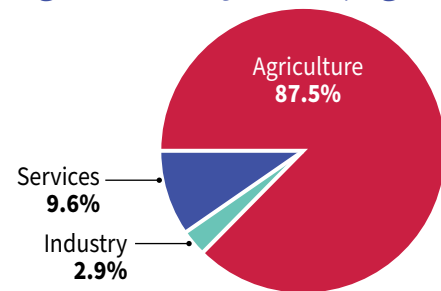


## PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

### 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, <b>16 Years</b>	✓	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, <b>18 Years</b>	✓	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, <b>18 Years</b>	✓	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, <b>16 Years</b>	✓	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.)**

<p><b>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</b></p> <p>Albania 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><b>National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons (2021–2023):</b> 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.</p> <p><b>National Agenda for the Rights of the Child (2021–2026):</b> 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.</p> <p><b>National Youth Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2029):</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>† 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.</p>	<p><b>Program of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (2022–2026):</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Cash Transfer Program (Ndihma Ekonomike):</b>† 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.</p> <p><b>World Vision Albania Centers (Children’s City Program):</b>† 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.</p>

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