



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.

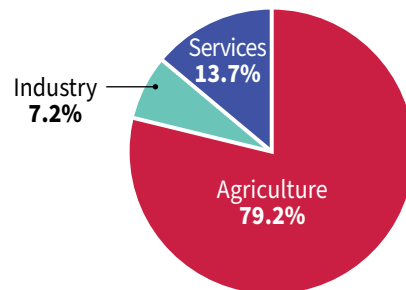


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

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