

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.

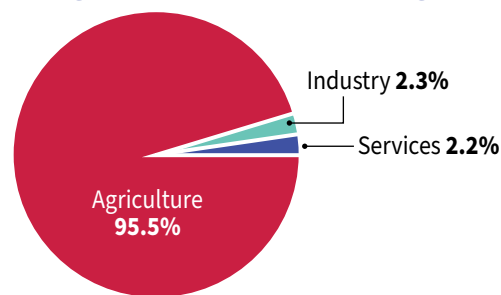


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

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