



# 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.

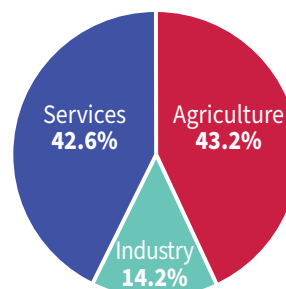


## PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

### 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, <b>16 Years</b>	✓	Article 73 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, <b>18 Years</b>	✓	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, <b>16 Years</b>	✓	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, <b>16 Years</b>	✓	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><b>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</b></p>	<p><b>National Committee on Child Labor:</b> 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><b>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</b></p>	<p><b>National Strategy for the Reduction of Child Labor (2022–2030):</b> 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><b>National Strategy to Prevent Human Trafficking (2023–2026):†</b> 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><b>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</b></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><b>Child Labor Units:</b><sup>†</sup> 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>
	<p><b>Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Agriculture Sector:</b><sup>†</sup> 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>
	<p><b>Program to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Zarqa and Amman:</b> 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>

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