



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