

# SAINT LUCIA

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Saint Lucia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased funding for social protection programs by approximately \$2.2 million dollars, including for programs to support youth at risk of child labor. The government also participated in CariSECURE 2.0, a United States Agency for International Development-funded initiative that focuses on reducing the number of young people impacted by human trafficking. However, Saint Lucia has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, and its laws do not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It also did not publicly release information on its labor or criminal law enforcement efforts.



## PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

### Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	7.5% (2,017)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	99.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	8.2%

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Lucia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

### Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



#### Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor<sup>‡</sup>

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

<sup>‡</sup> 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 Saint Lucia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

### Legal Framework

Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.

Criminally prohibit using a child for commercial sexual exploitation.

Criminally prohibit the military recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Saint Lucia, including non-citizens.

### Enforcement

Ensure that adequate resources, including funding, are allocated to the labor inspectorate to enforce labor laws and conduct training

Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including the number of labor inspectors employed, labor inspectorate funding, the number of inspections performed (including routine, targeted, and unannounced), the number of child labor violations found, whether penalties for child labor violations were imposed and collected, and whether inspectors received training.

**Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)**

Collect and publish criminal law enforcement data, including whether investigations into the worst forms of child labor were conducted, whether penalties were imposed for worst forms of child labor crimes, and the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted.

Employ at least 7 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 106,100 workers.

**Government Policies**

Adopt policies that not only address trafficking in persons but also address all worst forms of child labor.

**Social Programs**

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education and make it accessible for all children by ensuring that gang violence does not affect school attendance.

Design, implement, fund, and participate in social programs that specifically target and assist children engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.



**BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS**

General gang-related violence might hinder some children from attending school in select localities. Children who do not attend school are vulnerable to engaging in child labor.






**LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Saint Lucia has not ratified a key international convention concerning child labor, ILO C.138 Minimum Age for Work. In addition, Saint Lucia’s laws do not criminally prohibit the use of children for commercial sexual exploitation.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, <b>15 Years</b>	✓	Article 122 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, <b>18 Years</b>	✓	Article 122(2) of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✗	Articles 126(b) and 214 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 4 of the Constitution; Article 6 of the Labor Code; Sections 3, 5, and 10(c) of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Section 3 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Sections 3, 5, and 10(c) of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Section 3 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Article 141 of the Criminal Code; Sections 2, 5, and 7 of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Sections 3 and 5 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 141 and 560 of the Criminal Code; Section 13 of the Drugs (Prevention and Misuse) Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	

### Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, <b>15 Years</b>		Article 27 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Article 16 of the Education Act

\* Country has no conscription

† Country has no standing military

Saint Lucia has not determined by national law the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. The law allows a government minister to establish a hazardous work list by regulation, but research could not determine whether a list has been established. The use of children for commercial sexual exploitation is also not criminally prohibited. In addition, the law providing for free basic education does not meet international standards because it permits schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Saint Lucia but are not citizens, though in practice tuition fees may be covered in certain circumstances.



### ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

It is unknown whether labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Saint Lucia took actions to address child labor in 2023.

#### Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

**Ministry of Public Service, Home Affairs, Labor and Gender Affairs:** Investigates labor violations and enforces child labor laws through labor inspections conducted by its Department of Labor. Criminal violations are referred to the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force for investigation and then to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for prosecution. In 2023, employees reported that the Department of Labor had insufficient staff.

**Royal Saint Lucia Police Force:** Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Through its Vulnerable Persons Unit, in collaboration with the Division of Human Services, investigates cases of child labor, abuse, and neglect. The Vulnerable Persons Unit consists of 2 units of 12 officers each and uses a specific manual to investigate crimes related to children. Three officers are also dedicated to trafficking in persons investigations.

#### 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	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



**COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

<p><b>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</b></p> <p>Saint Lucia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.</p>	<p><b>Human Trafficking Task Force:</b> Coordinates the identification and referral of human trafficking cases among law enforcement, social services, and immigration officials. Includes public servants and representatives from, but not limited to, the Department of Labor, police, and victim services NGOs, and is led by the Department of Home Affairs. Accepts complaints, including those about child labor, from government agencies, as well as civil society. The task force uses established standard operating procedure to organize resources for victim care and to launch criminal and legal proceedings against suspected perpetrators. In 2023, the Human Trafficking Task Force coordinated with regional counterparts on investigations, victim support, and repatriations, and met monthly.</p>
<p><b>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</b></p> <p>Saint Lucia established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p><b>Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan (2023–2026):</b> Ensures that the division of tasks and roles of different agencies are clear, to help coordinate all counter-trafficking measures.</p> <p><b>National Social Protection Policy (2014–2024):</b> Aims to ensure that the government addresses all dimensions of poverty, including vulnerable populations and children. In 2023, the government increased the budget to approximately \$958,000 dollars, nearly a 30 percent increase from the previous year, in order to support efforts to strengthen social interventions and deliver public assistance.</p>
<p><b>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</b></p> <p>Saint Lucia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate because they do not fully cover all sectors where child labor is present.</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p><b>Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP):</b> Funded by the Caribbean Development Bank and overseen by the Ministry of Education to improve education policy and legislation. The project recently graduated 75 teachers from a certificate course in special needs education, provided equipment for 4 special education centers, and made climate-resilient renovations to 3 primary schools. The program is also piloting the formation of parent-teacher-community associations at several schools and drafted legislation that would raise the minimum age for work and the compulsory school age from age 15 to age 17. In November 2023, the draft legislation was presented to the public for comments.</p> <p><b>Basic Needs Trust Fund:</b> Caribbean Development Bank flagship poverty reduction program. In 2023, funding was allocated for improvements to schools and an early childhood development center.</p> <p><b>Caribbean Basin Security Initiative:*</b> United States Agency for International Development-funded initiative with three programs. Implemented by the United Nations Development Program, in partnership with various Saint Lucian government agencies, CariSECURE 2.0 focuses on reducing the number of young people affected by human trafficking, by improving identification, investigation, and prosecution of cases. The Youth Resilience, Improvement and Empowerment Activity (YRIE) and Eastern and Southern Caribbean Opportunities to Advance and Support Youth for Success will focus on reducing youth involvement in crime and violence, as well as juvenile justice reform. Under YRIE, the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment identified gaps in Saint Lucia's social services referral systems and trained officers on the systems to improve delivery of social services to at-risk youth. Launched on February 24, 2023.</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)