



TOGO

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Togo made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted a law against sexual violence in schools and allocated 25 percent of its total budget to build hundreds of schools and recruit 4,500 teachers. Togo continued to provide free lunches and healthcare to all students. The Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women, and Literacy and the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor also conducted human trafficking awareness campaigns across the country that reached over 53,000 individuals. Further, the government established the National Commission Against Trafficking in Persons to coordinate multiple stakeholders to address human trafficking, and in March 2023, the National Commission adopted its first action plan to address trafficking in persons. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it did not publish or provide complete labor law enforcement information. In addition, the government has not devoted sufficient resources, such as fuel and transportation, to allow the labor inspectorate to conduct inspections in all sectors and fully enforce the law. Lastly, hazardous work regulations are insufficient because they allow children as young as age 15 to perform some types of hazardous tasks, including carrying heavy loads.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	44.4 (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	89.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	50.4%

Children in Togo are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and smuggling. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture and domestic work.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Herding animals and working in agriculture, including spraying pesticides† and handling fertilizers.†



Industry

Working in construction; working in gravel quarries and sand mines, including excavating and carrying heavy loads.†



Services

Engaging in domestic work.† Begging, working as street vendors and porters in the markets, scavenging for garbage, sometimes carrying heavy loads.† Working as motorcycle repairmen and in blacksmith shops. Working at restaurants, sometimes at night.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, in mining and in quarries, in mechanic shops and blacksmith shops, in household and domestic servitude, roadside vending, and in markets. Use in illicit activities such as smuggling, including the transportation and sale 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 Togo's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for all types of hazardous work from age 15 to age 16. Provide adequate training in the type of work being done for children under age 18.

Establish by law 9 years of free basic education.

Enforcement

Ensure that labor inspectors have adequate resources, including fuel and transportation, to carry out inspections in all sectors, including the informal sector, private homes, and farms.

Publish labor law enforcement information, including the number of labor inspectors, worksite inspections, child labor violations found, whether penalties were imposed for child labor violations, the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, whether routine inspections were targeted, and whether unannounced inspections were conducted.

Provide criminal investigators adequate resources, including training, to enforce worst forms of child labor laws, and investigate, prosecute, and impose penalties for convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.

Ensure that court system processes for addressing child trafficking are timely so as not to deter victims from reporting.

Refer all cases of child labor found in labor inspections to social services. Foster coordination between the criminal justice system and social services to support survivors during judicial proceedings. Report on survivor intake.

Coordination

Increase funding and budgetary oversight of the National Committee for the Reception and Social Reintegration of Child Victims of Trafficking.

Clarify mandates to empower coordinating bodies to carry out intended functions and regularly publish activities.

Government Policies

Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Plan.

Publish activities undertaken to implement the Togolese National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor during the reporting period.

Social Programs

Establish social safety net programs for low-income families to provide supplemental income and ensure children are able to attend school rather than work.

Alleviate costs of school-related expenses, increase the number of teachers and schools, and provide transportation to facilitate access to schools; especially in rural areas. Improve schools' infrastructure, including access to water, toilets, and adequate sanitation. Assure schools are free from sexual and physical violence.

Enhance access to birth registration, including for displaced children.

Target social programs to address child labor in agriculture and domestic work, and particularly in commercial sexual exploitation; alleviating poverty and promoting education.

Expand survivor support programs for child survivors to include providing protection, rehabilitation, and remedy. Enhance and publicize social safety net programs.

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



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Research indicates that sexual exploitation of children is widespread in the Greater Lomé area and other parts of the country; inflation and the security crisis in the Sahel/northern Togo has worsened the situation. Adult women from other West African countries, especially Nigeria, force girls from their families into sexual exploitation. Children living in the rural areas in central and northern Togo—Savanes, Centrale, and Kara—are also at a higher risk for trafficking to neighboring West African countries, as this region serves as primary source region for transnational child trafficking networks, and Togo is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking. Further, the Sahel security crisis in northern Togo has increased the number of children exposed to forced labor, especially forced child begging and hazardous work. Lastly, in a practice known as *confiage*, parents sometimes send their children to live with a friend or relative in a larger town or city. These children are often not sent to school and are subjected to labor exploitation.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the government is pursuing a policy of free universal public school, it is not guaranteed by law, and the associated costs—including uniforms, books, and school supplies—make education prohibitively expensive for many families. Research found that insufficient numbers of both teachers and schools have been a major barrier to education. Poor school infrastructure, including inadequate sanitation and lack of access to toilets as well as to water, and physical and sexual violence in schools are also impediments. A lack of transportation and long travel distances to schools pose additional barriers for some children, especially in rural areas. Moreover, both refugees and internally displaced people face difficulty registering children for school due to lack of identity documents. Nationwide, a lack of identity documents often hinders children in rural and semi-urban areas from taking part in national exams. In northern Togo, the on-going attacks by violent extremist organizations impose another barrier to education, forcing the closure of several schools, and creating the need to use some educational facilities to house refugees and internally displaced persons.






LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Togo has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Togo's laws do not meet international standards on free public education as education is only free through primary school.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 15 Years		Articles 192, 193, and 354 of the Labor Code; Article 262 of the Children's Code; Article 881.1a of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Articles 2, 192, 193, and 354 of the Labor Code; Arrêté 1556 Determining Dangerous Work Forbidden for Children
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2, 263, and 264 of the Children's Code; Article 319.9 of the Penal Code; Articles 192 and 193 of the Labor Code; Articles 1–11 and annex of Arrêté 1556 Determining Dangerous Work Forbidden for Children
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 7, 19, and 192 of the Labor Code; Articles 2, 264, and 411 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3 and 151 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 192 and 356 of the Labor Code; Articles 2–6 and 10–11 of Law No. 2005-009 Suppressing Child Trafficking in Togo; Articles 2, 264, and 411–414 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3, 151, 317–323, and 882 of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 192 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.f, and 387–390 of the Children’s Code; Article 224 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 192 and 356 of the Labor Code; Articles 2, 264, 276.i, and 405 of the Children’s Code; Articles 317.7, 318, 319, and 329 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 426 of the Children’s Code; Article 6, 7, and 42 of Law No. 2007-010 Regarding the General Statute of the Togolese Armed Forces
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Articles 2 and 426 of the Children’s Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 2 and 426 of the Children’s Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Article 35 of the Constitution; Article 255 of the Children’s Code
Free Public Education		Article 35 of the Constitution; Law No. 97-16 For the Creation of a Support Fund for Education; Décret 2008-129/PR for the Abolition of School Fees in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools

* Country has no conscription

Togo's Arrêté 1556 permits children as young as age 15 to perform some hazardous tasks, such as transporting heavy loads. This permission violates Article 3(3) of Convention 138, which sets the age at 18 for hazardous tasks. Only when the child has received adequate training, and as long as their health, safety, and morals are fully protected, may they engage in hazardous work at an earlier age; and that standard is 16 years old. In addition, Togo provides for free schooling only through primary school, while basic education has a 9-year standard and includes 3 years of lower secondary school. The failure to provide for complete free basic education may increase risk of children's involvement in the worst forms of child labor because it creates a gap between the conclusion of studies and the onset of legal employment. To stem sexual violence in schools, in 2023 the National Assembly adopted a law for the protection of learners against sexual violence in Togo, which includes criminalizing sexual harassment in schools and other significant measures.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor law enforcement agencies in Togo took actions to address child labor. However, civil unrest in northern Togo and insufficient allocation of government resources, including fuel and transportation, prevented the labor inspectorate from conducting inspections and from fully enforcing the law in all sectors.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Social Dialogue: Conducts labor inspections and enforces labor laws, including child labor laws. Runs a Committee for Social Reintegration of Children, which coordinates efforts on child trafficking. Through its National Working Group for the Elimination of Child Labor, coordinates the day-to-day operations of the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor, rescues children from child labor situations, raises awareness, and collects data. The government did not cease labor inspections during the reporting period; however, inspections overall decreased these last 3 years because of material and financial limitations. Inspections have become difficult to impossible to conduct in areas of northern Togo affected by the fight against violent extremist organizations.

Ministry of Justice and Legislation (previously known as the Ministry of Justice and Government Relations): Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and prosecutes violators in collaboration with the Ministry of Security, which includes the Police and Gendarmerie. Coordinates on children's cases with the General Directorate for the Protection of Children (*Direction Générale de la Protection de l'Enfance, DGPE*), which serves as the central point for social services, reintegration efforts, and law enforcement under the Ministry of Social Action. The government did not publish efforts by criminal law enforcement agencies during the reporting period.

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	Yes

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. However, the government conducted **36** criminal investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **36** prosecutions, and convicted **56** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Togo established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, lack of clarity of institutional mandates and poor coordination among relevant agencies hindered efforts to effectively address all forms of child labor.</p>	<p>National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor (Comité Directeur National de la lutte contre le travail des enfants, CDNLTE): The government's coordinating body for child labor issues. The CDNLTE includes 17 ministries and representatives from NGOs. During the reporting year, the CDNLTE oversaw community-level committees consisting of government officials and community members that support vulnerable children.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Togo established policies related to child labor. However, it is unknown whether activities were undertaken to implement the Togolese National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor during the reporting period.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>Action Plan of the National Commission Against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP) (2023–2026):† Adopted by the government in March 2023, the Action Plan aims to strengthen systems to combat human trafficking in Togo, including child trafficking. This plan coordinates prevention and support efforts to enforce trafficking laws of stakeholders from multiple ministries, civil society, international organizations, and development partners. During the reporting period, the CNLTP created a working budget for 2024, and was active in national and West African regional efforts to establish standards of personal security, enhance survivor assistance, build a regional data ecosystem, share operational learnings from the administrative implementation of action plans and programs to counter human trafficking throughout the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region, and participated in the annual evaluation of the ECOWAS regional networks.</p>

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

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<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Togo funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors, including in agriculture and domestic work, and particularly in commercial sexual exploitation.</p> <p><i>* Program was launched during the reporting period.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>Survivor Support Programs: The <i>Allo 1011</i> hotline offers reporting, referral, legal information, and emergency intervention services for cases of child labor, abuse, and trafficking via short messaging service (SMS), mobile application, or through a real-time interactive website. The hotline is administered by the DGPE within the Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women, and Literacy, which runs a shelter in Lomé called the <i>Reference Center for Guidance and Care of Children in Difficult Situations</i> that supports survivors of child trafficking and child labor and provides housing as well as legal, medical, psychological, and social services. Research indicated that the hotline and shelter provided services to child survivors of forced labor during the reporting year, but detailed data were not available.</p> <p>School Assur: Provides free healthcare services to public primary and secondary school students, and has benefited 2.6 million people, to date. The program continued to offer free health care to all public-school students and has provided over 4.4 million services in total, including consultations, analysis, prescriptions, and healthcare training. In 2023, it provided approximately 800,000 services throughout Togo.</p> <p>World Bank-Funded Programs: Address child labor by improving infrastructure and social safety nets for vulnerable families and increasing access to education. During the reporting period, the World Bank approved \$100 million to increase the coverage of its social safety net program and strengthen delivery systems. The Improving Quality and Equity of Basic Education Project (2020–2026), implemented by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education and Crafts, aims to enhance teaching and learning quality, improve equitable access to basic education in select regions, particularly among girls, and strengthen sector management. The Urban Water Security Project for Togo,* a 6-year, \$100 million project implemented by the Ministry of Water and Village Hydraulics, aims to increase access to and improve quality of water supply and sanitation services, including water, sanitation, and hygiene services in schools and health care centers. Togo's First Sustainable and Inclusive Development Policy Financing was signed, consecrating \$150 million of World Bank funding to reinforcing the foundations for green, inclusive, and resilient development in Togo with a particular focus on maximizing opportunities for vulnerable populations in underserved rural areas.</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